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Virtues and optimal moral education in the values education in Australian schools project

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Virtues and Optimal Moral Education in the 
Values Education in Australian Schools Project.

Thesis submitted for the degree of Master (Philosophy and Theology) by 
Martin Fitzgerald, School of Philosophy and Theology, The University of Notre Dame, Australia, 2014
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Abstract

This thesis argues that a sustained treatment of virtue is missing from the project undertaken to introduce values education into Australian schools over the period 1999 – 2010. It maintains that the inclusion of a focus on virtue, both in relation to the cognitive content and the behavioural impact of education in the virtues is an indispensable part of optimal moral education. One of the aims of the Australian values education project was that it should serve as a form of moral or character education. The absence of a serious treatment of virtue has resulted in an impoverished understanding of that part of the project which claims to provide a guide to moral or character education. For values education in Australian schools to provide an optimal moral education, the cognitive appreciation and the crucial behavioural dimensions of virtues must be included.
Declaration

I declare that this thesis is all my own work and contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

........................

Martin Fitzgerald
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Martin Fitzgerald
Introduction

Interest in values education in Australian schools intensified in the late 1990s. The main reason seems to have been a perception that the 30 years following the social revolution of the 1960s had resulted in a values vacuum. The values assumed by the largely monocultural Australian community before that decade no longer seemed apt and relevant for the 1990s but there was a general consensus that the vacuum needed to be filled.

The Values Education in Australian Schools Project (VEASP)\(^1\) was the response on the part of the Australian Government, working mainly through the Department of Education, to these concerns. It also provided the stimulus for this present research which aims to explore the philosophical underpinnings of the VEASP and in particular to make explicit the role of virtue in values education. This research also seeks to clarify the interaction between the concepts of virtue and value in values education and proposes that a combination of both is necessary for optimal moral education.

The Values Education in Australian Schools Project commenced formally with the Adelaide Declaration of 1999. This Declaration signalled a mutual agreement by the Australian State and Federal Ministers of Education to explore what was needed to enable Australian schools to introduce values education that responded to extant concerns into the curriculum of all Australian schools.

The most obvious practical outcome of the VEASP up until now, as far as all Australian Schools are concerned, has been the legal requirement to have a poster

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\(^1\) “The Values Education in Australian Schools Project” (VEASP) is my terminology. I have coined the phrase to encompass all phases of the initiative funded by the Commonwealth Government. None of the terms used for the different parts of the project, for example the “National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools”, includes the action projects, forums and Framework as one project. The reduction of the Project to an acronym adds yet another acronym to the many that are used in this work, but hopefully makes the work more readable overall.
outlining the “Nine Values for Australian Schooling”\(^2\) stipulated by the VEASP displayed in a prominent place in all schools.

There is now more than a decade of National Values Education Forums that have supported the implementation of the VEASP; forums have focussed on the trialling of diverse methods of introducing values education into 316 schools, reporting by schools on their progress and on measuring of the effects of different values education initiatives in schools. The work done on this project has been extensive, both in terms of its quantity and the breadth of its investigation.

Reporting on the positive effects of the values education initiatives has indicated that the different approaches adopted to implement values education have been successful in raising awareness of the importance of explicit education as regards values. In particular, changing the language in which social interactions in schools are expressed, improving pro-social behaviour amongst students and improving relationships amongst students and between students and teachers were found to facilitate positive outcomes.

However, this thesis will argue that the VEASP attempted to address too many concerns under the banner of values education. It attempted to address a perceived decline in, or loss of, the type of values that are regarded as necessary to sustain communities within the Australian democratic tradition; to increase pro-social and limit anti-social behaviours in schools; to address the decline in adolescent well-being as measured on a number of indicators; and to assist in the development of character and moral education.

The thesis argues that amidst the variety of goals the VEASP was aimed at, moral education was ill served by the failure to incorporate the vital notion of virtues into the Project. The Project therefore failed to provide orientation as to how schools could present an optimal moral education to students.

Values were defined in the *Values Education Study* in 2003 as

\(^2\) See Appendix, p. 144
the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to
behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or
desirable. ³

Values education considers these “principles”, “fundamental convictions” and
“standards” as constituting goals towards which it is worthwhile that students aim.
What is missing is the cultivation of the behaviour which actualizes these goals. And
this is what a focus on virtue brings to values since virtues are the dispositions a
person has acquired, by dint of habit or repetition of acts, to do good actions. Virtues
are concerned with the behaviours necessary to enact the principles, fundamental
convictions and standards which constitute values.

This is not to say that values education should be replaced by a program of virtues
education. Any virtue has a value or values contained within it, although the terms
are sometimes used interchangeably. However, behaving justly for example implies
that we value fairness, being temperate implies that we value moderation in the use
of pleasures (whether these be the more classical pleasures of food and drink or
modern ones such as computer games). Students need to understand the values they
are aiming at and they must want to enact or achieve them. But it is not enough to
know what one’s values are and to want to achieve them. Students must also know
how to achieve them and that is where virtues play an indispensable part in moral
education. Virtues cultivate the dispositions to act in certain ways and thus provide
people with some ease in acting that facilitates their reaching their goals.

Values have been learned if they issue in behaviour congruent with the values being
taught. When values are not linked in young people’s or educators’ minds to some
understanding that they need to be put into action to be authentic, the danger is that
the values can be thought of as goals that are correct and right and good, but they are
unlikely to impact upon action. Students may have a cognitive understanding that
some action should be done or avoided but they have not developed the dispositions
to carry out or avoid the action as the case demands. An analogy would be knowing
that fixing a car is a good idea but not knowing how to do it, or knowing how to fix a
car but not having the strength and dexterity to carry out the repair.

³ Values Education Study (2003) p.2. The definition comes from Halstead, J M and Taylor, M J,
“Learning and Teaching about Values: a review of recent research”, Cambridge Journal of Education,
Despite its theoretical and explanatory value however, the term virtue and the
cognitive content of virtue are rarely discussed in the VEASP. There are scattered
references to virtues as part of an overall values package, but no extended
explanation of what a virtue is or how a virtue differs from a value is presented.

This constitutes a lacuna in the VEASP and has resulted in values education being
perceived as constitutive of moral education whereas for an optimal moral education
a focus on virtues is also necessary.

Chapter 1 of the thesis begins with a description of the main phases of the VEASP,
which involved Forums and Action Research Projects conducted over a period of 8
years. The descriptions and explanations of the VEASP’s achievements and its
limitations are drawn from these Forums and Projects. The documentation from
these Forums and Projects also points towards the philosophical assumptions
underlying the Project. Chapter 1 also explains the reasons that a new approach to
values education in schools was deemed necessary and discusses the school and
societal problems which values education was aimed at addressing. Lastly, Chapter 1
addresses the VEASP’s understanding of values education.

Chapter 2 outlines the principles of good practice in values education educed from
the VEASP. These principles of good practice are important since, when they are
looked at from a virtues education perspective, it can be seen that these best practices
are what would be expected of moral education if the crucial place of virtues in such
education were recognised. Virtues seem tailor-made for the best practice principles
which were derived from a ground-up approach to seeing how values are best
inculcated.

Chapter 3 begins a critique of the VEASP which covers both Chapters 3 and 4. The
critique explores in more detail the reasons why values education was introduced
into Australian schools and highlights two important principles of the philosophy of
education that the VEASP endorsed. The first is that there is no such thing as values
neutrality in education; and the second is that there is a core of common values
which can be taught to Australian students, not only because they are agreed upon by
Australians but because they have claims to be considered universal. The jettisoning
of value-neutrality is a departure from the principles of educational philosophy
which predominated in Australian education in two different periods: before the
1960s when State schools claimed they were value free; and in the radical articulation of values neutrality after the 1960s. The claim that a core of common values existed was necessary to justify a nationwide effort to introduce values education; and that claim strikes at the heart of the radical values relativism that was widespread between the 1960s and the 1990s.

The end of Chapter 3 begins that part of the critique of the VEASP which concerns the notion of optimal moral education. It does so by pointing out the difference between values education and moral education. This is necessary because the two are vaguely conflated in the VEASP. This chapter also includes a section on the role and limits of cognition in moral education. Moral education includes cognitive elements but it involves much more than cognition.

Chapter 4 contains the main argument of the thesis, which is that moral education is optimal when it includes a focus on virtues as well as on values. Some objections to education in virtues are addressed in the first part of the chapter. This first part of Chapter 4 also claims that an education in virtues and not just values implies the need for role-modelling and explains the importance of relationships in moral education. The latter parts of Chapter 4 document just how often the VEASP Forums and Action Research Projects incorporate notions and practices which are more in accord with an understanding of virtues than values. This is especially so of the case of Service Learning, given that its potential for fostering positive change in young people was highlighted in the concluding phases of the VEASP. The documentation mentioned here indicates that the findings of the VEASP unwittingly rely on an understanding of virtues.

What this thesis aims to show is that values education as understood by the VEASP provides only an anaemic version of moral education compared to that which could have been promoted if the VEASP had incorporated into its deliberations the notion of virtue and the depth of understanding of moral behaviour that the concept of virtues engenders.
1. The Development of the Values Education in Australian Schools Project (VEASP)\(^1\)

1.1 The Phases of the Project

1.1.1 *The Adelaide Declaration 1998*\(^2\)

The Values Education in Australian Schools Project (henceforth VEASP) began with *The Adelaide Declaration*\(^3\) in 1998. The Declaration was an agreement between the Australian Federal and State Ministers of Education that all Australian schools needed to include in the curriculum the teaching of certain values which the Ministers identified as essential for the harmonious development of Australian society and for the well-being of Australian youth. The National Goals recommended the following objectives for school leavers which stipulate that students should:

Goal 1.2: have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members, and

Goal 1.3: have the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they

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\(^1\) “The Values Education in Australian Schools Project” (VEASP) is my terminology. I have coined the phrase to encompass all phases of the initiative funded by the Commonwealth Government. None of the terms used for the different parts of the project, for example the “National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools”, includes the action projects, forums and Framework as one project. The reduction of the Project to an acronym adds yet another acronym to the many that are used in this work, but hopefully makes the work more readable overall.

\(^2\) The references for the official documents of the VEASP are contained in the first part of the Bibliography. There, too, I indicate how they will be cited, so as not to repeat the internet citation.

\(^3\) *The Adelaide Declaration* (1999).
are (sic), to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives, and to accept responsibility for their own actions.\textsuperscript{4}

The first goal focuses on the personal and psychological qualities of young people and the second one is aimed at how these young people function in society. The second goal includes the intellectual development of young people and the role of morality and ethics within moral education. The first goal however, also has implications for moral education. The personal qualities mentioned, particularly commitment, are relevant to all young people who wish to fulfil their potential and be able to form reliable and stable relationships, contribute to their community and be financially independent.

To follow up on the resolution ratified by the Education Ministers in 1999, the Australian Commonwealth Minister for Education commissioned a study in July 2002 which would come to be known as the \textit{Values Education Study}.\textsuperscript{5} This Study contains much of the focus of the Values Education initiative which lasted until 2010.

\subsection*{1.1.2 \textit{The Values Education Study 2003}}

The \textit{Values Education Study} was designed to:

- enable schools to develop and demonstrate current practices in values education;
- provide an informed basis for promoting improved values education in Australian schools; and
- make recommendations on a set of principles and a framework for improved values education in Australian Schools with reference to the values identified in the Adelaide Declaration.\textsuperscript{6}

The practical implementation involved:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{4} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{5} \textit{Values Education Study (2003)}.
\item \textsuperscript{6} \textit{Values Education Study (2003)}, p.1.
\end{itemize}
• action research with a range of schools;
• a comprehensive literature search; and
• research via focus groups which involved surveys of “parent, teacher and student views on the values the community expects Australian schools to foster”.7

1.1.3 **Action Research Projects 2004 - 2010**

The most important practical recommendation of the *Value Education Study* was the action research which various schools and clusters of schools undertook as a consequence of the Study. This action research was directed towards what some schools were already doing at the grass roots level in values education and toward the experiences of schools that tried to implement values education without previously having done so.

The information about the experiences of values education in schools was gathered by means of reports by the schools involved in the different action research projects.

There were four of these action research projects:

1. *Values Education in Action: Case Studies from 12 Values in Education Schools*. 12 of the schools involved in the project were asked to redact more detailed case studies so that they could be used in the National Values Education Forum in 2004.8

2. *Implementing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools - Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) - Stage 1 Final Report, September 2006*.9

3. *At the Heart of What We Do: Values Education at the Centre of Schooling – The Final Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) – Stage 2, August 2008*.10

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7 Ibid.
9 *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1* (2006).
10 *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2* (2008).
4. The Values in Action Schools Project (VASP). This project was designed in 2010 to supplement and extend the work which had been reported in the documents of the VEGPSP stages. The VASP, in its own words, constitutes the third iteration of the VEGPSP. It builds upon the work previously undertaken by funded project schools since the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools was adopted by all Australian Education Ministers in 2005. This Final Report presents an evaluation of the impact of VASP on teachers, students and parents.\textsuperscript{11}

This Final Report completed that part of the Values Education Project which I have called Action Research or Case Studies.

There was some overlap between the schools involved in these different action research projects, but overall nearly 430 schools were involved. Once allowance is made for overlap I calculate that close to 360 schools provided input to the VEASP.\textsuperscript{12}

The action research projects revealed a variety of approaches to values education ranging from importing established values programs\textsuperscript{13} to a focus on particular features of values education such as the development of emotional intelligence, civic

\textsuperscript{11} Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project (October, 2010).

\textsuperscript{12} 69 schools participated in the Values in Action, 12 Case Studies (2004) even though only 12 of the case studies were published. 2 schools from this project continued their work amongst the 166 schools which participated in the VEGPSP Stage 1. The VEGPSP Stage 2 involved 143 schools and 32 schools from the VEGPSP Stage 1 continued their work into Stage 2. The VASP in 2010 involved 85 schools and up to 10 schools from the VEGPSP Stage 2 may have been involved with this last phase.

\textsuperscript{13} Tribes TLC® is the name of the program that uses Tribes Learning Communities that are aimed at “creating a positive school or classroom environment by used a number of skills such as “attentive listening”, “appreciation/no put downs”, “mutual respect” and “the right to pass” (http://www.tribes.com/); Restorative Practices is a program aimed at “building and maintaining good relationships between teachers and students so that students gain a capacity to self regulate” (http://www.restorativepractices.org.au). Restorative Practices is often run in conjunction with Real Justice® (http://www.realjustice.org/); The Virtues Project™ aims to “inspire the practice of virtue in everyday life” (http://virtuesproject.com/). Other virtues based programs used were Six Pillars of Character®. These six pillars are Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. They are the traits promoted by one of the two biggest character education providers in the USA (http://charactercounts.org/sixpillars.html) ; The Rock and Water Program is designed to help young people and adults to grow in “self awareness, self-confidence and social functioning” (http://www.connectedself.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=31&Itemid=54). The program is used by the University of Newcastle (http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/fac/workshops/rock-and-water/). Relational Learning is designed to help young people especially “read” or “identify” the language of relationships (http://relationalearning.com/).
and social values and resilience. Some schools focused on service programs.\textsuperscript{14} Within the \textit{Values Education Study} these ways of implementing values education were combined by schools in such a way that one of three initial approaches to values education was taken.

The first one of these was what most schools called a “whole school” approach. Nearly all of the schools involved saw that a “whole school approach” was a necessity for values education to be effective; in other words the values had to have an effect on the school ethos.\textsuperscript{15}

While nearly all the schools in the VEASP recognized the need to have a whole school approach to their values education initiatives, broadly speaking, two different approaches were taken by the schools with regard to the main thrust of the values education which they chose to implement. One approach concentrated on fostering “a range of what might be called ‘coping strategies’ or self-management qualities such as personal responsibility and self-discipline, connection to the school (and sometimes the community as well), a sense of school community and civic engagement, participation and service, and overall confidence and self-esteem.”\textsuperscript{16} The development of these qualities, attributes and behaviours was generally characterized as “resilience”.

The other approach generated lists of values which were considered to be important. The lists drawn up by different schools often included similar values, such as respect and honesty.\textsuperscript{17} At times this approach also included reference to the intellectual development of young people so that they might be able to identify values and discuss what their implementation would mean within the context of their own school or within in the larger society.

The \textit{Values Education Study}, in attempting to identify key values made the case for a “high degree of commonality about the core values to pursue in schools.”\textsuperscript{18} Initially it identified these as responsibility, tolerance, respect, care and honesty.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Values Education Study} (2003), p. 2.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 4. In the \textit{Forward} to the report \textit{Values Education in Action12 Case Studies} (2004) the then Minister for Education styles this first approach as that of “focusing on the school ethos”.
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, p.6.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, p.7.
Here I wish to point out another aspect of the VEASP which I think is important. Within the broad framework of the VEASP, the schools involved in developing values education programs were given a good deal of latitude in implementing programs which would be suitable for the circumstances of their schools. At a philosophical level, this “ground up” approach has been recognized as an effective way of implementing a values education which also purports to be moral education. Amélie Rorty has highlighted how important “ground up” approaches are to moral education.\footnote{Rorty A O, “Morality as an Educational Institution” in Halstead J M and McLaughlin T H, \textit{Education in Morality}, Routledge, London, 1999, p. 18.} Rorty makes the point that what is important in the implementation of moral education for school age children are not grand schemes of educational reform but the practicalities of trying to help children acquire behaviours which are conducive to social and personal flourishing. This implies a view of moral education that sees it as broader than values education and as more practically oriented. Putting the practicalities of implementing the value education in the hands of schools has meant that teachers, students and parents in schools have been involved in the values education initiatives. This meant that even though the National Framework, described below, recommended certain values which could be introduced into schools, no rigid set of values was imposed by the Australian Department of Education and Training. But as this thesis will attempt to show, putting the practicalities of implementing values education into the hands of teachers, students and parents also opened up debate as to the best approach to take if the VEASP was to effectively achieve its aims.

1.1.4 The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools 2005

Part of the 2003 \textit{Values Education Study} was the “Draft Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools”. The Framework reflected a desire to condense the experience of the work which had been done and was continuing to be done in the area of values education in Australian Schools.

Thus, one outcome of the \textit{Values Education Study} was the \textit{National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools} which was published in 2005. The National
Framework included a “vision” in which all Australian Schools would provide values education in a planned and systematic way by:

- articulating, in consultation with their school community, the school’s mission/ethos;
- developing student responsibility in local, national and global contexts and building student resilience and social skills;
- ensuring values are incorporated into school policies and teaching programs across the key learning areas and;
- reviewing the outcomes of their values education practices.\(^{20}\)

The central purpose of the National Framework is made clear in one of the reports of the action research phases mentioned above, the *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2.*

In essence the central purpose of the National Framework was to help schools provide values education in a planned and systematic way, and as a core part of schooling. The National Framework laid the foundation and defined the direction of the subsequent Australian Government values education initiative of 2004-2008.\(^{21}\)

The most palpable practical consequence of the Framework was the drawing up of what are called the “Nine Values for Australian Schooling”. These Nine Values are incorporated on a poster which by law is displayed in every school in the country.\(^{22}\) The Nine Values are stated and then a small explanation of them appears on the poster as follows.

1. Care and Compassion
   Care for self and others.

2. Doing Your Best
   Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence.

\(^{20}\) *National Framework* (2005) p. 3. Whenever National Framework is referred to in the text, it refers to this document.


3. Fair Go
Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society.

4. Freedom
Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others.

5. Honesty and Trustworthiness
Be honest, sincere and seek the truth.

6. Integrity
Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds.

7. Respect
Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person’s point of view.

8. Responsibility
Be accountable for one’s own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment.

9. Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion
Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society being included and including others.  

Any discussion of the VEASP needs to give close attention to these nine values as they indicate the values the federal and state Ministers of Education who initiated

this project saw as important values to inculcate in the minds and hearts of Australia’s young people.

The Framework also contained a list of eight “Guiding Principles”\(^\text{24}\) for values education in Australia. The “Guiding Principles” are meant to inform the implementation of the nine values listed above.

These “Guiding Principles” indicate a particular conception of values education and stipulate the context in which it should occur, so that it is education that:

1. helps students understand and be able to apply values listed within project documents as care and compassion; doing your best; fair go; freedom; honesty and trustworthiness; integrity; respect; responsibility and understanding, tolerance and inclusion;

2. is an explicit goal of schooling that promotes Australia’s democratic way of life and values the diversity in Australian schools;

3. articulates the values of the school community and applies these consistently in the practices of the school;

4. occurs in partnership with students, staff, families and the school community as part of a whole-school approach to educating students, enabling them to exercise responsibility and strengthening their resilience;

5. is presented in a safe and supportive learning environment in which students are encouraged to explore their own, their school’s and their community’s values;

6. is delivered by trained and resourced teachers able to use a variety of different models, modes and strategies;

7. includes the provision of curriculum that meets the individual needs of the students; and

8. regularly reviews the approaches used to check that they are meeting the intended outcomes.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., p.5.
In summary these “Guiding Principles” imply that the values education which is to be taught in Australian schools should involve a methodology with the following stages:

1. Clarification and articulation of the values that are to be transmitted by means of the young people’s education.
2. Development in young people of the capacity to act on the values that they have.
3. Adoption of strategies so that the two aims above are embedded in teaching and learning.
4. Continuous evaluation regarding how these values are being internalized by students.

These four steps are common in many training and management practices as the PDCA (plan, do, check, act) cycle used for continuous improvement in corporations. When these same steps have been transferred to educational institutions the acronym for the cycle has been changed to PCSA but the methodology remains the same. It is not surprising that the “plan, do, study, act” cycle was used by a number of clusters of schools in the VEASP.

The Framework also identified “Key Elements and Approaches that Inform Good Practice” in values education and which were central to the implementation of the “Nine Values for Australian Schooling”. These Key Elements include each particular school’s approach to planning, its efforts to construct partnerships with the school community and to involve the whole school in values education, its ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for its students and the quality of teaching in the schools.

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25 This methodology is based on the “Plan – Do – Check – Act” cycle used for continuous improvement in manufacturing and business. See the American Society for Quality (http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/project-planning-tools/overview/pdca-cycle.html). The “plan, do, study, act” action research methodology is used widely in education. See the webpage of the Loyola University Medical Centre accreditation process in the United States (http://www.strich.luc.edu/lumn/MedEd/softchalkhdht/CMEFacDevWebPage/CMEFacDevWebPage_print.html).

26 For example see Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), pp. 23, 47 (in the section of the Report which deals with the principles of best practice) and p. 50 (part of the key messages from the Lanyon Cluster of Schools in the ACT).

27 Ibid., p.6.
1.1.5 The National Values Education Forums (2004-2009)

In addition to the advice schools received by way of the publication of the case studies referred to above, from 2004 to 2009 National Values Education Forums were held annually, to assist schools by revisiting the meaning of values education and highlighting the strategies adopted by various schools to implement the goals of the project. International guest speakers at these forums added a global dimension to the discussions of values and values education implementation.  

Even though the last Forum was held in 2009 the VEASP is ongoing, mainly in the form of the Values Education website which is maintained under the auspices of the Commonwealth Government’s Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations. This website contains many of the documents mentioned in this thesis and continues to provide resources for schools attempting to implement Values Education in the Curriculum for all Australians attending Primary and Secondary School.

1.1.6 Conclusion to the Development of the VEASP

The main part of the Project to establish a values education in Australian Schools came to a close with the last Forum in 2009 and with the publication in October 2010 of The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project (¨Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education¨) 30, which also brought to a close the Values Education Good Practice Schools Projects mentioned above.

This outline of the different phases of the program identifies many steps and cross currents indicating how Australia recently undertook to introduce values education into its schools. The outline is necessary since the documents it produced are the

28 See the bibliography for the Reports.
29 http://www.valueseducation.edu.au
30 Final Report VASP (October, 2010).
prime material I will be using in attempting to come to grips with some of the philosophical assumptions and implications of the project.

1.2 Why a Values Education Project?

There appears to be one major reason why it was thought necessary to introduce values education in an explicit way into Australian schools. This is the alleged or perceived loss of moral understanding and behaviour amongst young people since at least 1960; and an associated perceived lack of values which young people hold dear and are prepared to work at maintaining. These two intertwined concerns were exacerbated by a concern over a perceived apathy amongst young people towards their civil and democratic duties.

Professor Brian Hill, Emeritus Professor of Education at Murdoch University in a keynote address at the 2004 National Values Education Forum identified the societal shifts that made it possible to begin the discussion about values education in all Australian schools and to eventually have values education considered as part of the National Curriculum.

Hill summarized the history of how schools in Australia saw themselves in the 1950s. He identified the Government Schools’ reluctance in the 1950s to consider questions of values education and the tendency of non-Government schools in Australia to think that their value systems were proven and secure.\(^{31}\)

Australian society in the 1950s was largely mono-cultural and many values were simply assumed. Hill claimed that this status quo was challenged by the changes in society in the 1960s. Amongst these changes, Hill signalled the sexual “liberation” brought about by the availability of the contraceptive pill, the opposition of young people to the Vietnam War, the anti-authoritarian stance of young people when they

\(^{31}\) Hill, B V “Values Education in Schools: Issues and Challenges”, p. 3. This is one of the articles recommended in the Resources section of the Values Education for Australian Schooling website of the Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training, (http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/va_acsa_paper.pdf Retrieved 14/12/2013). I am citing Brian Hill’s observations here. Further on in this work, claims about the troubles that youth are facing now will be supported by evidence.
found themselves faced with the possibility of a nuclear war and the advance of consumerism with the advent of television. In addition, Hill also pointed to the effect of mass immigration to Australia on the mono-culture mentioned above.

These changes had positive and negative far-reaching effects. Hill identifies marriage breakdown and youth suicide as two of the negative effects and claims that the changes meant that many of the “old” values lost their hold, particularly on young people, and that permissiveness began to breed disillusionment and new intolerances.

According to Hill, these changes were the catalysts which disturbed the “dogmatic slumbers” of those who thought there was no need to teach values in schools or who claimed that schools ought to be “value-neutral”.

Terence Lovat has pointed out in similar terms why there is more openness to the idea of values education in schools now than in the immediate post World War II era. He points to changes which are impacting on the wider conception of schooling and the role of the teacher. Amongst these he includes “the greater breakdown of family as once known, the greater fluidity of the moral authority of religion over the mainstream population, what are seen to be more complex social issues of a heterogeneous society, as well as the global issue of a divided world with powers of self-immolation.”

Despite the fact that education has usually been seen as involving moral education, after the second World War the idea that schools, especially government schools, should be neutral with respect to values was championed by many educators. As

32 Ibid., p. 3.
33 Lovat, T “What is Values Education All About?”, 1998, pp. 1 -2. [http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve_/resources/Terry_Lovat_VE_Newsletter.pdf](http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve_/resources/Terry_Lovat_VE_Newsletter.pdf) Retrieved 14/12/2013]. For a similar appraisal of why values education has assumed importance from a United States perspective, see Kirschenbaum, H, “A Comprehensive Model of Values Education and Moral Education, Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 73, no.10, June 1992 ([http://www.hi-ho.ne.jp/taku77/refer/kirsch.htm](http://www.hi-ho.ne.jp/taku77/refer/kirsch.htm)). We will look at this and another of Kirschenbaum’s articles below, but for now it is worth noting that his analysis would seem to be valuable given that he was one of the major figures in the Values Clarification movement. He came to realize that it was not enough for students just to clarify what values they had but that there needed to be some sort of “non-neutral” educational instruction, either implicit or explicit, in certain positive values. Kirschenbaum also refers to the impact of corporate scandals that rocked the US business communities. The poignancy of this is heightened by the fact that his paper was published 18 years prior to the GFC.
Lovat says of this view, “[Values education] risk[ed] being dismissed altogether in many public schools which [did not] really see it as part of their charter.”

Hill recognizes that value-neutrality in education is impossible and Lovat points out that “the notion... that public education is part of a deep and ancient heritage around values neutrality is mistaken and in need of serious revision.”

The Values Education Study is sometimes strident in its claims that the idea of value neutrality in education must be jettisoned. In the section about shared values to be fostered in Australian schools, after acknowledging the diversity of values in Australian society, the Study contains the following unambiguous statement:

For all that, Australia’s schools cannot, in an increasingly value-laden world, operate as value-free zones, failing to make explicit the values which guide their work.

In another section the Values Education Study reiterates the challenge to the idea that schools can be value-neutral by stating that “schools are not value free or value neutral zones of social and educational engagement.”

This suggests that if some values are not explicitly promoted by schools then socially less desirable attitudes can, by default, fill the values space: the tacit acceptance of bullying, of early sexual and drug initiation or of “looking after No.1” might come to the fore to the detriment of the school community.

The clear implication of rejecting values neutrality in education is that it is legitimate to be explicit about the values that are being promoted; and in fact the Values Education Study does this by claiming that there are a group of “shared values” that need to be “fostered” in Australian schools.

34 Ibid., p. 1.
37 Ibid., p. 16. This is echoed again by Terence H McLaughlin, University Lecturer in Education at the University of Cambridge in a forum discussion at the National Values Education Forum (2005), p.10.
38 Values Education Study (2003), p. 12.
39 Ibid.,. p. 16. At the practical level, when values were to be introduced in the clusters of schools which trialed the Values Education initiative there were a good number of references to the impossibility of value neutrality, cf. Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), (inter alia) pp. 17, 30, 42, 77, 172-173, 179. Also of interest is the NSW Public Schools’ statement on Values Education which includes an answer to the question “Shouldn’t public schools be values free?”. The answer is that “public schools have never been values free”.... but “have always
The VEASP then is a response to perceptions that young Australians need to be taught values in schools which will:

a) enable them to be good citizens of a democratic society. This goal is stated above in the Guiding Principles in the National Framework.

b) enable them to behave well. This latter goal is construed principally in two ways - either as those behaviours needed for people to live together without damaging each others’ lives and property or behaviours which are regarded as morally good.

The Project takes it for granted that these values need to be taught to children and that schools need to assume a significant part of the task of educating children to develop these values.

It is fairly clear also that the Australian attempt to put values education in schools was influenced by what was happening in other Anglophone countries at the time. As is made clear in the Values Education Study, the perceived need for values education took its cue from experiences in the United States and Britain. The Values Education Study states that “[i]n the past decade discussions of values education have become part of the educational discourse both in the United Kingdom and the United States”.

drawn on the broadly accepted values of the community”. This is a clear admission that values neutrality, which was sometimes upheld by the State School system as distinguishing it from the values espoused by faith-based schools was only possible when there was an anglo-celtic monoculture in Australia, that broadly assumed Judeo-Christian values. See http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/values/questions/index.php#Q7 retrieved 14/12/2013.

Ibid., p. 5. Many of the schools that received grants to pursue values education initiatives focused on a range of what might be called “coping strategies” (as noted above on p.4); one of these was “a sense of school, community and civic engagement, participation and service”.

See page 6 n. 2 above which cites the National Framework (2005), p.4.

Ibid., p. 5. See the section on the collection of qualities, attributes and ultimately behaviours which are generally, according to the Study, characterized as ‘resilience’. The Values Education Study saw it as legitimate that under the heading ‘values education’, many projects might concentrate on “student welfare and discipline as well as seeking to establish a firmer moral base – a values-based approach – for student behaviours and how they were managed.”

As Lovat has pointed out, owing to many of the reasons mentioned above, “the role of the school and the teacher are being called on for more. Increasingly, they are being turned to as major socialising forces, quite beyond those of mere academic tutelage, with assumed powers to be able to make some real difference in the lives of the students.” Lovat, op.cit., p. 2.

Ibid., p.8. David Carr writes of “a general upsurge of professional, public and political interest in this field in the currently fashionable guise of ‘values education’ … accompanied by a worldwide increase in central administrative attention to the values aspects of schooling”, see Carr, D, “The Primary Moral Concerns of Values Education”, Educational Theory, Urbana: Winter 2000, Vol. 50 Issue 1, p. 49. Carr appreciates the attempts to introduce values education and sees its goal as
There has been lively discussion in the United States about values education as part of a more general discussion of moral education since the 1960s. Pre-empting Australia by only a few years, “Citizenship” was included in the values, aims and purposes of the National Curriculum instituted in 2000 in Britain. “Citizenship” was also included as a subject in the National Curriculum. These initiatives in British Education used many of the ideas contained in an earlier document, *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools*, also known as the Crick Report from 1998. Despite the name “Citizenship”, many of the concerns the Citizenship program was designed to address are similar to those that the VEASP sought to address. These included the inculcation of “a broad set of common values and purposes that underpin the school curriculum and the work of schools,” the transmission of “enduring values” and the development in young people of “the principles of distinguishing between right and wrong.”

“primarily ethical”. Yet he sees three goals contained in this grab-bag approach – a) overcoming social disgregation caused by cultural pluralism, b) responding to what he calls “public panic” over the break-down of pro-social behaviours and c) a professional concern that recent educational policies have been overly concerned with the economic rather than the moral benefits of education. He claims that the attempt to address all these problems through “values education” is fraught with difficulties because all three aims address different issues. There is some overlap in the problems which are addressed so the solution to one issue might help with the solution to another, but equally, concentrating on solving one issue may hinder the solution to one or both of the others (ibid., p. 58).

For an overview of the period between 1970s and 1982 in the USA, see H. Muson, “An Overview of Educational Efforts to Improve Character” in McClelland D C, *Education for Values*, Irvington Publishers, New York, 1992, pp. 1-25. These “educational efforts to improve character” have mostly revolved around Kohlberg’s stages of moral development, Values Clarification programs and most recently Character Education. There is still a grab bag of different approaches to moral education in the USA. Character Education is the most popular of these approaches but it has not been adopted universally. The biggest promoters of Character Education in the USA are the “Character Education Partnership” (http://www.character.org/) and the “Character Counts” coalition (http://character_counts). For what seems to be the standard paper which articulates the need for character education in the USA, see Lickona, T “The Return of Character Education”, *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 51, no.3, November 1993, pp. 6-11.

http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3and-4/subjects/


1.3 What is values education?

What is meant by values education in the context of the VEASP?

As Lovat says, values education takes on:

diverse forms of moral, character, citizenship or civics education as well as service learning and programmes designed to address social problems such as sex, drugs, alcohol, resiliency education and the like.\(^{52}\)

The Values Education Study defined values as:

the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable.\(^{53}\)

This definition was later adopted by the National Framework in 2005\(^{54}\) (which gave the definition something of official status) along with one by Brian Hill which he articulated in one of the National Values Education Forums.

[Values are] the ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities that we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly.\(^{55}\)

When Lovat’s observation about the diversity of what is included in values education is contrasted with the definitions above, some of the difficulties associated with trying to untangle the philosophical strands that make up values education are clear.

The definition given in the Study however, attempts to clarify what is meant by Values education.

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Some see it simply as the explicit, conscious attempt to teach about values. This excludes other more implicit, unconscious forms of inculcating values; and ‘to teach about values’ underplays the action and behaviour outcomes that many educators (and parents) would want to see flow from effective values education. Accordingly, the definition underpinning this report is that ‘Values education’ is broader and refers to 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.  

In the midst of these different emphases and interests in behaviour there lies a consistent conviction that “education is as much about building character as it is about equipping students with specific skills”.  

While these definitions are very helpful in understanding the way the VEASP developed, Brian Hill suggests another way of looking at values that also had an influence on the Project. He claims that there are a number of values “domains” to which people address themselves when they think about values. His observations clarify the distinction but do not imply a discontinuity between what is commonly regarded as the moral or ethical domain of our lives and other actions which are involved in the pursuit of interests or purposes.

Most commonly, talk about values turns out to be talk about matters of morality. But the beliefs we live by, and the objects and activities we treasure, involve not only our moral approach to life but other interests and purposes which make for a rounded life… For convenience it is useful to speak of these various aspects as types or domains of value, i.e. areas of life in which we

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36 Emphasis in the original.
37 Values Education Study (2003), p. 2.
38 Ibid., p. 10. The Minister for Education at the time of the Values Education initiative, Brendan Nelson, declared explicitly in his intervention in the 2004 National Values Education Forum his conviction that education “is also about the fact that in the end, character is what counts”. In his letter launching the national report on and support for values education, the phrase quoted in the Study appears exactly as here; see Ministers Letter (2003).
operate according to certain values that are appropriate to the activity in question. Our values are the selves we are becoming.\(^{59}\)

The final sentence of this quotation might seem curious, however Hill’s claims within this quotation are used in the Values for Australian Schooling Professional Learning Resource Kit for Secondary schools to support the idea of the individual building his or her very individuality or self in these various domains. 11 domains are identified: religious/spiritual, ethical/moral, cognitive/intellectual, technical/vocational, political/civic, economic, educational, socio-cultural, physical/recreational, aesthetic and interpersonal/relational.\(^{60}\)

While it may be acceptable to divide up the domains of interest and purpose of students for the sake of analysis, one of the abiding concerns in values education is the integrity of the person. The thinking here is that the person who is applying value to the different domains is not one who adopts a different persona in different contexts according to different values, but the very same person acting across the different domains.\(^{61}\)

In the first part of this Chapter I have tried to describe briefly the different phases of the Values Education in Australian Schools Project. I have also indicated that


\(^{60}\)Ibid., p. 6. It is interesting that the domains identified here by Hill overlap substantially with John Finnis, Germaine Grisez and Joseph Boyle’s “diversity of basic goods” which are “aspects of the fulfillment of persons.” See Grisez G, Boyle J and Finnis J “Practical Principles, Moral Truth and Ultimate Ends”, American Journal of Jurisprudence, Vol. 32, 1987, pp. 99 – 151 reprinted in Finnis, J (ed), Natural Law Vol I, Dartmouth, Aldershot (UK), 1991, pp. 236ff. Grisez, Boyle and Finnis’s knowledge and aesthetic experience overlap with Hill’s cognitive/intellectual and aesthetic dimensions. Their “certain degree of excellence in work and play” overlaps with Hill’s technical/vocational, economic and physical/recreational dimensions. Living at peace with others, neighbourliness and friendship in the natural lawyers’ account overlap with Hill’s political/civic and interpersonal/relational dimensions of life whilst the necessity for harmony among one’s judgements, choices and performances corresponds to the ethical/moral dimensions Hill identifies. Finnis’s “attempts to gain or improve harmony with some more-than-human source of meaning and value” correspond to Hill’s identification of a religious/spiritual dimension. See Grisez, Boyle and Finnis op.cit., pp. 107 – 108. In Chapter 3 we will revisit the idea of basic human goods and values in citing especially Sabina Alkire’s comparison of different accounts of basic human goods. (Alkire, S “The Basic Dimensions of Human Flourishing: A Comparison of Accounts” in Biggar N and Rufus Black (eds) The Revival of Natural Law: Philosophical, theological and ethical responses to the Finnis-Grisez School, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000, pp.73-110).

\(^{61}\)Grisez, Boyle and Finnis make this very clear; “integral human fulfillment is not a basic good alongside the others, nor some sort of supergood transcending all other categories of goodness”. It is what all the other goods are aimed at, thus “integral human fulfillment is the ultimate natural end of persons and communities.” See Grisez, Boyle and Finnis, op.cit., p.132.
schools were encouraged to take different approaches in implementing values education and pointed out some of the different emphases adopted by these pilot schools. In the section on the National Framework for Values Education I have listed the values recommended by the government.

In the second part of the chapter, I have endeavoured to explain why it was thought there was a need for a values education program to be introduced into Australian schools.

In the third part of the chapter, I have shown how the term values has been understood by educators and researchers in the area of values education and indicated which of these definitions have been privileged in the Project.

In Chapter 2, I will outline the way in which the VEASP was put into practice in schools and the principles of good practice which were extracted from this implementation. These practices not only point towards what works best in the implementation of values education but also highlight important aspects of the aims and concerns which constitute values education.
Chapter 2

2. Necessary elements in the VEASP: principles of good practice derived from VEGPSPs

The aim of this chapter is to extract the most important principles and practices of values education which arose from the attempt to introduce values education into Australian schools.

This will be done first by highlighting the elements necessary for good practice in values education as these were educed from the Values Education Good Practice Schools Projects (VEGPSP)\(^1\). I will also explore the major impacts of values education as articulated by the Values in Action Schools Project\(^2\) because it supports many of the findings of VEGPSP projects.

Chapter 1 responded to the question of what the VEASP was intended to do, while Chapter 2 responds to the question about what it did and what its conclusions were.

The Final Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project, completed after Stage 2, enunciated ten principles of good practice in values education grounded in the practical attempts by the project schools to introduce values education. These ten principles were as follows:

1. Establish and consistently use a common and shared values language across the school.
2. Use pedagogies that are values-focused and student-centred within all curriculum.
3. Develop values education as an integrated curriculum concept, rather than as a program, an event or an addition to the curriculum.
4. Explicitly teach values so that students know what the values mean and how the values are lived.

\(^1\) Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006) and Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008).

\(^2\) Values Action in Schools Project (October, 2010).
5. Implicitly model values and explicitly foster the modelling of values.
6. Develop relevant and engaging values approaches connected to local and
global contexts and which offer real opportunity for student agency.
7. Use values education to consciously foster intercultural understanding, social
cohesion and social inclusion.
8. Provide teachers with informed, sustained and targeted professional learning
and foster their professional collaborations.
9. Encourage teachers to take risks in their approach to values education.
10. Gather and monitor data for continuous improvement in values education.³

In the following sections I focus on the main themes which emerge from the ten
principles listed above, although not necessarily in the order in which they appear.
These main themes are: the importance of a whole school approach to teaching
values, the necessity of using a common values language in the implementation of
any values program, the need to teach values explicitly and to model these values
and the recognition that values education is about behavioural change. The last
theme I wish to focus on is the development of positive relationships within schools.
Even though the fostering of positive relationships in schools does not occupy a
place in the principles of good practice enumerated above, we will see below that
this could constitute a serious omission given the importance of relationships in
values education. The work done by the clusters of schools in all the phases of the
VEASP clearly suggests that, on the one hand, the development of positive
relationships, especially between students and teachers, is necessary for values
education to be successful and on the other, that the development of positive
relationships indicates that values education initiatives have been internalized by
teachers and students.

I intend to show how these important focuses of the Project recurred in the different
values in action research projects which I have signalled in Chapter 1: Values
Education in Action (2004), the Professional Learning Resources (2004), VEGPSP –
Stage 1 (2006), VEGPSP – Stage 2 (2008) and then the VASP in 2010. Sometimes I
have also included content from the Values Education Forums. This may give the
appearance of repetition. But every observation which shows the recurrence of the

³ Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), pp. 9-12.
focuses is from a different part of the project and this shows the permanence of these focuses throughout the Project.

2.1 The whole school approach to teaching values in schools

“…. [not] a program, an event or an addition to the curriculum.” 4

This quote is used in Principle 3 above in reference to the integration of values into the curriculum. Certainly the integration of values into the curriculum, that is, into the subject areas within the curriculum is a requirement of any thoroughgoing values education and indeed of any whole school approach to values education. Nevertheless, this integration is an enormous and ongoing task which did not receive detailed treatment in the VEASP and thus is beyond the scope of this thesis. I use the quote here because it helps to make clear that many of the schools participating in the VEASP desired a whole school approach. They recognized that values education could not just be another subject or program within the curriculum. To be effective, values education needed to pervade the everyday workings of the school.5

The finding that there needs to be a whole school approach if values education is to acquire traction in schools was one of the most consistently reported findings of the approximately 360 schools involved in the VEASP.6

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5 There were some schools that started immediately to integrate their values into the curriculum. The value of sustainability in reference to environmental concerns was even incorporated into the name that one cluster of schools chose for itself, the Sustainable Values Townsville Cluster in Queensland. See Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), p. 90. The Sea and Values Cluster, South Australia likewise integrated their environmental concerns into the curriculum, Ibid., pp. 102 – 104. Some subject areas such as Physical Development, Health and Physical Education and Civics and Citizenship lend themselves more easily to the integration of values into the curriculum. ‘Philosophy in Schools’ seems particularly promising as a curriculum subject that would help in critically assessing which values are to be integrated into the curriculum, see p. 58 below and footnotes 113-114.

6 The following are only a sample of the many references to the need for a whole school approach: National Framework (2005), p. 5 Guiding Principles n.4; Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), pp. 5 (No.2), 12, 15-16, 178, 215 n.2; Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008) pp. 9, 10, 75 (n.3), 76-78, 80-81, 84, 105; Final Report VASP (2010), pp. 5, 7, 8, 92. See also accounts from individual schools reported in the National Values
It is clear then that values education cannot be limited to “a program, an event or an addition to the curriculum.” It has to be implemented and seen to be implemented by the stakeholders in each school as part of the school ethos. Otherwise, the attempt to implement the values runs the risk of being seen as the preserve of a particular part of the school. In faith-based independent and Catholic schools for example, it is then too easy to consign the concerns of values education and the hard work in implementing it to the pastoral care team of the school. The risk then is that values education becomes part of the preserve of a department within the school and other departments and their teachers may feel they need not take explicit responsibility for it. The involvement of the pastoral care personnel and the leadership of the school in values education is necessary but not sufficient.7

When schools began the process of implementing values education they were often aware that its success would depend on “bringing people on board”. Some schools started by organizing meetings for teachers and for parents about what values they needed to emphasise.8 Others decided that, in order to overcome the scepticism of staff, they needed to start the program in one section of the school with the hope that the results would speak for themselves and other teachers would then adopt the successful approach.9 In both cases, there was an understanding that there would be opposition or at least inertia with respect to the initiative and that such opposition or inertia needed to be overcome.

The recognition of the need for values education to be implemented in a whole school fashion suggests the community basis of values. Values do not exist in schools in isolation from their relevance and practice in other sections of the

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7Education Forum (2004), p. 30 (Lance Holt School, WA); p.44 (Cherbourg State School, Qld); and p. 46 (Glendale East Public School, NSW).
8Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p. 166 (Birrigai Outdoor School Cluster, ACT)
9Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), pp. 48, 53 (the Airds-Bradbury Cluster NSW); pp. 85, 86 (The Bourke Cluster, NSW); p. 121 n. 7 (Gold Coast North Cluster, Qld); pp. 121, 128 (Calwell Cluster, ACT); p.188, 193 (Fremantle Cluster, WA); pp. 194, 291 (Merrylands Cluster, NSW). Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), p. 50 (Lanyon Cluster ACT); p. 71 (Values Newcastle Cluster); p. 74 (Ferny GroveCluster); pp. 116-117 (Manningham Cluster); p. 122 (Biosphere Cluster). On teacher reticence see VEGPSP – Stage 1, p. 36ff. (Chapel Hill Cluster Qld); p. 103 (BEAVALE Cluster, Vic); p. 109 (Gold Coast North Cluster, Qld); p. 124 (Calwell Cluster, ACT); p. 136 (SA Alliance of Schools Cluster, SA); p. 173 (Northern Territory Tribes Cluster, NT).

community and there are certain values that have to be agreed upon if a social group, even one as small as a school, is to implement an ethos in the directly etymological sense of this word – a group of customs of a particular people.

In their final cluster report for the VEGPSP –Stage 1, the Implementation Team for the Maroondah North Cluster of Schools in the ACT captured the peremptory need to establish values education across the school.

We are very firm in the belief that if values education is to be sustainable it should not be packaged as a programme, but rather, should be approached as an evolution of teacher pedagogy. In this way it is less likely to be regarded as an ‘add on’ and less likely to be ‘taught’ in a contrived fashion with no specific linkages to the whole school programme/culture/identity.\(^\text{10}\)

This need was reinforced by experts from overseas who participated in the National Values Education Forums. Dr Andrew Furco, from the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, spoke at the 2007 Forum about Character Education programs in the USA which, while widely embraced by schools, were separate and distinct from the curriculum itself.\(^\text{11}\) In the same forum, Furco spoke about the importance for moral development of both the explicit and implicit curriculum\(^\text{12}\) and praised the whole school approach which most of the schools participating in the VEASP had adopted.\(^\text{13}\)

In 2008, Martin P Seligman addressed the annual Values Education Forum and spoke about that part of values education which relates to well being. Seligman is the founder of “positive psychology” which seeks to encourage the personal traits which he and his team have identified as making for a good and flourishing life.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p.63. Apropos the “add-on” phenomenon that Clusters tried to avoid see p. 55 (Airds-Bradbury Cluster)


\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 25.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 26.

Seligman was in Australia for 12 months precisely to implement a whole school values education program at Geelong Grammar school in Victoria.\(^{15}\)

### 2.2 The need to establish a common values language.

“Establish and consistently use a common and shared values language across the school.”\(^{16}\)

The need to use a common language in order to embed values education in schools was stated repeatedly by the schools involved in the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project.\(^{17}\) For example, amongst the recommendations made by the VEGPSP – Stage 1 about the principles of good practice in values education was the following:

1. It is essential to reach agreement within the school community about the **values that guide the school and the language in which they are described** (my italics).\(^{18}\)

The writer chosen to contribute to the VEGPSP – Stage 1 report on behalf of the Bourke Cluster of schools in NSW also recognized the importance of the development of a common values language in order to implant values education in schools when he argued that:

> the experience of the schools involved really tends to suggest that getting an agreed set of values, and language to explicate these is a precursor for being able to build values education into the curriculum in a planned and coherent way.

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\(^{16}\) Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), p. 9.

\(^{17}\) Values Education in Action 12 Case Studies (2004) p. 42 (Cabramatta High School, NSW); Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006): p. 77 (Broken Bay Diocese Cluster, NSW); p.172-173, (Northern Territory Tribes Cluster, NT); p. 179 (Northern Territory Catholic Cluster, NT). Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008): p. 52 (Lanyon Cluster ACT); p. 69 (Values Newcastle Cluster, NSW); p. 80 (Toowoomba North Cluster, Qld); pp. 103-104 (Sea and Values Cluster, SA); p. 109 (Darebin Schools Network, Vic). These findings were reiterated in the final values education conference: National Values Education Conference (2009), pp. 34,35, 43 and in the Final Report of the Values Education in Schools Project, Final Report VASP (October, 2010) pp. 38-39 (on the importance of a shared language to the “Wellness” impact of values education), p. 62 (on the importance of a shared language to the “Connectedness” impact of values education) . Also in the former report, see p.91 for a specific cluster (Flinders Park-Wyalla Link Cluster).

\(^{18}\) Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p. 5.
The Bourke Cluster’s critical friend from the University Associates Network \(^{19}\) also made this clear with the following recognition.

First, that teaching and learning values in isolation is not an easy thing to do, especially with secondary students. Second, values exist implicitly in a wide variety of teaching opportunities in the school’s curriculum. Third, once a common understanding is achieved of what each value means to all members of the school community, then the formal explication of values in the curriculum becomes that much easier.\(^{20}\)

Dr Thomas Nielsen, the UAN adviser for the Lanyon Cluster in the ACT made even more explicit claims for the use of a common language in attempts to begin and sustain values programs in schools, arguing that:

> [d]eveloping a common language for students to discuss, reflect and act on their learning in relation to values has had positive, exponential effects that go beyond communicative competence. Having a shared language seems to be at the centre of developing deeper understandings of values, as it allows students to engage in discussions, clarify their thinking and develop socially constructed connections to values.\(^{21}\)

Dr Nielsen explained that the importance of using a common language was due to language’s centrality to social interaction and communication – and perhaps even to the very process of thinking itself. It opens up for students the realms of emotional literacy, empathy and pro-social behaviour. In this way, the language makes students ‘value literate’ and this has an empowering effect that contributes to student autonomy.\(^{22}\)

2.3 **Values must be explicitly taught**

\(^{19}\) Each cluster in the various projects had a University Associates Network (UAN) critical friend who worked with the teachers.


\(^{21}\) *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2* (2008), p. 25.

One of the long standing questions of moral education, whether it be in connection to values, virtues or good behaviour is whether the positive values as opposed to the negative values, virtues as opposed to vices, or pro-social as opposed to antisocial behaviour, can be taught at all. In other words, when students are exposed to values and adopt values, do they adopt them because these values are taught explicitly or do they adopt them because they see what influential others, particularly adults do and then emulate them? The question is often simplified to the question of whether values are “taught” or “caught”.

The question is phrased in the taught/caught dichotomy because it is obvious to many teachers that attempts to didactically teach good values do not necessarily result in students practicing those values. It is equally true that some young people simply seem to know how to behave well without attempts to teach them didactically in the classroom. The dichotomy is used also because educators are familiar with the fact that teaching moral attitudes or stances to young people is often met by resistance if not cynicism or rebelliousness. The difficulty of attempting to teach values didactically might suggest that if students do appear to respond positively to moral education and to exhibit the kinds of pro-social behavioural traits and habits which teachers aim for, then these traits and habits have been “caught” via the example of those who are influential in their lives – usually parents, other people they admire and (possibly) teachers.

The taught/caught dichotomy also contains within it another question central to educational philosophy, particularly with respect to moral education; many educational philosophers fear the idea of the explicit teaching of values or any type of moral education because of the connotations of indoctrination that this brings with it.23

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This concern about indoctrination is not restricted to the rarefied atmosphere of academic Philosophy of Education. One of the Clusters of schools in the VEGPSP – Stage 1 began its initiative to implant values by having a consultation with staff. One of the comments which came out of that initial consultation, along with the question of whether values are taught or caught was precisely, “this all smacks of indoctrination”.\textsuperscript{24}

Despite this initial reaction in one of the Clusters in the VEGPSP – Stage 1, one of the most consistent findings of the VEASP is that values must be taught explicitly. Once the schools embarked on values education, it became clear that if values education was to be implemented there would have to be explicit articulation of the values involved. The evidence for this is overwhelming\textsuperscript{25}; and this is clearly one aspect of explicit teaching. Given the emphasis in the Project on the necessity of a common shared language for values education to be effective, this is hardly surprising.

The Executive Summary of the VEGPSP - Stage 1, also included amongst its recommendations to Australian Schools about the principles of good practice in values education the direction that values must be taught explicitly. Number 4 amongst the recommendations reads as follows and was incorporated into the professional learning resources for values education produced by the Department of Education, Science and Training in 2005\textsuperscript{26}:

Values are intrinsic to all that a school does. The Good Practice Schools Project experiences support the conclusion that effective values education involves the explicit articulation and explicit teaching of the values. This means values education is integrated with the ‘mainstream’ curriculum

\textsuperscript{24} Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006): p. 32 (Chapel Hill Cluster, Qld).

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 55 (Airds-Bradbury Cluster, NSW); p.144 South Australian Alliance Cluster, SA); p. 156 (Canterbury Cluster, Qld); p. 189 (Fremantle Cluster WA).

rather than being seen as an ‘add on’ or something separate to teach. It means the values spoken are the values modelled. It means creating opportunities for students to practice the values. And it means seizing the opportunities to reinforce the values in those ‘teachable moments’ offered in the unplanned incidents in everyday school life.\textsuperscript{27}

The VEGPSP – Stage 2 Final Report in 2008, reasserted the Stage 1 finding “that values must be explicitly articulated and taught.”\textsuperscript{28} Thus explicitness, whose importance was educed from the work of the clusters involved,\textsuperscript{29} clearly emerged as one of the features guiding pedagogies identified as good practice in values education. For example, one of the “Key Messages”\textsuperscript{30} of the Dunmunkle Cluster of Schools in Victoria stated that “[s]econdary teachers should understand that values concepts need to be taught explicitly and consistently, and should not assume that their students have an understanding of these concepts.”\textsuperscript{31} This challenges the claim that values can only be “caught”, rather than “taught” and suggests precisely what is entailed in explicitly teaching values.

In the report of the Values in Action Schools Project concluded in 2010, one of the clusters of schools involved went further to stipulate that not only does explicit teaching of values need to occur but that it is necessary oftentimes to “unpack” the values for children, that is, to break the value down into behavioural components in such a way that the following question could be asked of the children: what would it (e.g. courage) look like in a friendship, for example, or a playground interaction, if

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{27} I\textit{bid.}, p. 6. This is simply an expanded version of the 10 principles of good practice on pp. 1-2 above.
\textsuperscript{28} I\textit{bid.}, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{29} Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008): p. 57 (Griffith Primary and Secondary Schools Cluster, NSW); p. 69 (Values Newcastle Cluster, NSW); p. 80 (Toowoomba North Cluster, Qld); pp. 83-84 (Oxenford Cluster, Qld); p. 103 (Sea and Values Cluster, SA); p. 106 (The Broader Horizons Cluster, Tas); p. 113 (Dunmunkle Cluster, Vic); p. 117 (Manningham Cluster, Vic); p. 127-128 (Eastern Goldfields Cluster, WA); p. 131 (The WA Distance Education Cluster, WA). Interestingly, this was also the case in the Juvenile Detention Centres Cluster where it was found that the ‘disengaged’ young people in the detention centres needed a “vocabulary that identifies and names values.” See \textit{National Values Education Forum (2009)}, p. 34. This Cluster reported their work in \textit{Final Report VASP (October, 2010)}, pp. 77-79.
\textsuperscript{30} In the Final Report of the VEGPSP – Stage 2, the presentation of the work done by each Cluster of schools began with an enumeration of the “Key Messages” about values education that the Cluster had discovered.
\textsuperscript{31} I\textit{bid.}, p 113.
\end{flushright}
we were really living in accord with this sort of value? The cluster argued that it is by this questioning and answering that teaching occurs as students grow in their understanding of the different values.\textsuperscript{32}

Experts in the area of values education are in agreement about the need to teach the values explicitly. Dr Ruth Deakin Crick a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Bristol in the UK, one of the keynote speakers at the National Values Education Forum in 2008, was unequivocal about the need for explicit teaching of values. Being explicit about values teaching, she argued, encourages spiritual and moral vocabulary, adds an ethical dimension to lessons, encourages students’ creative and critical thinking and sets spiritual and moral development in a ‘real life’ context. Beyond this it can encourage service learning, engage students at a number of levels, require teachers to engage ‘with bigger stories’ and is ultimately in Deakin Crick’s view, ‘easy for teachers’, because it builds on what they already do.\textsuperscript{33}

Professor Terence Lovat speaking at the National Values Education Conference in 2009 noted that the team working under him analysing the VEGPSP – Stage 2 Projects had become more confident over time in their assurance that values had to be taught explicitly. Lovat chose to illustrate this, with the following two quotes from his team members.

The principle of explicitness applies more broadly and persuasively than has been previously recognized.\textsuperscript{34}

Values [are]….. explicitly taught across all key learning areas and articulated in all co-curricular activities. They are also explicitly present in the physical school environment, its signage, the ceremonies and rituals as well as policies, administration and key comments. The explicit values become ubiquitous, and values teaching and values learning become part of the embedded consciousness within every school activity.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32} The Final Report VASP (October 2010), pp. 88 – 90 (Far North Queensland Cluster).
\textsuperscript{33} National Values Education Forum Report (2008), p. 23.
\textsuperscript{34} National Values Education Conference (2009), p. 21.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 21.
It is almost as if best practice means that the more explicit and widespread the notion of values are in a school the more successful the values education will be. At the same National Values Education Conference in 2009, Amanda Day, the Assistant Director, Student Engagement Centre spoke on behalf of the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. She spoke very stridently on the need to explicitly teach values, describing the explicit teaching of values as “a key to cultural change in schools and society”. 36 She even went so far as to claim that “schools that are engaged in values education are explicitly providing character training and moral education”37 and that they should do this.

As noted above, the unanimity of the need to explicitly teach values cuts to the heart of the taught/caught dichotomy. There has been a wariness of explicitly teaching values to young people because of the fear of rejection and rebelliousness that was mentioned above. The VEASP has shown that teachers and members of school communities accept that it is impossible not to pass on values, because schools are not value free zones and if certain pro-social values are not taught in the sense of being articulated, explained and emphasised, the other, less pro-social or risk laden values may occupy the values space. The explicit teaching of values that schools see as important is one step toward assisting the process of the inculcation of desirable, pro-social behaviours; however as also noted above, while explicit teaching is necessary, it is insufficient to make values education effective.

Another of the findings of the Project is that for values to be taught and afterwards taken up by the students as genuine, they have to be modelled by the teachers in the school. This is stated clearly as the fifth of the ten principles of good practice in values education and it is the third of the aspects of the Project that I wish to highlight here.

2.4 The necessity of modelling values

36 Ibid., p. 48.
37 Ibid., p. 48. Day cites the work of Lord Richard Layard who co-authored the (British) Children’s Society February 2009 Report and his arguments that society is currently in a moral vacuum and that a scientific approach should be employed to research what makes people happy and then insert the findings unapologetically into school curricula.
“Implicitly model values and explicitly foster the modelling of values.”

Already in the National Values Education Forum in 2004, there was feedback that modelling of the values by teachers was essential if students were going to see the values as important and adopt them as their own. An intervention by Salisbury High School in South Australia during the Forum emphasized this when it noted that conversations with staff, students and parents quickly revealed that the core values developed by the school community were unlikely to be taken seriously by students unless they saw them actively practiced by their teachers.

The experience of Salisbury High School was not unique. Other schools commented in a similar vein and in the Executive Summary section of the VEGPSP – Stage 1, it is clear that schools understood the importance of teachers modelling values. The Executive Summary quoted the following observation:

…. [S]tudents identify the values [that are] prominent in a teacher’s manner when interacting with students, and ... students look to teachers for example.

So it is not surprising that one of the recommendations of Stage 1 of the VEGPSP had to do with modelling of values. Recommendation No. 5 reads as follows.

It is critical to student learning that there is consistency and congruence between the values espoused and the values modelled.

The explanation of this recommendation reveals the importance given to some of the findings of this Stage of the VEASP concerning modelling when it states that:

values education is as much about how students are taught as what they are taught; hence the quality of teaching is essential. In this respect consistency and congruence between the values espoused and the values modelled and

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38 Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), p. 10.
40 Ibid., p. 46 (Glendale East Public School, NSW). Also, in their initial “values audit” St Monica’s Secondary College in Victoria included “Staff as role models” as one of four key aspects of school life identified for particular focus and action, p.49.
42 Ibid., p. 6.
enacted in the teaching and learning exchange have a critical impact on student learning, understanding and adoption of the values.\textsuperscript{43}

Again, a representative of a cluster of schools from the western suburbs of Melbourne articulated the need for modelling on the part of teachers most clearly, arguing that:

\begin{quote}
[\textit{t}eachers have to practice the values they espouse, which sometimes means rethinking their approach to dealing with their students. A failure to ‘walk the talk’ sends a mixed message to students, which undermines values education in the school.\textsuperscript{44}}
\end{quote}

As the Broken Bay Diocese Cluster in New South Wales commented, the effort to insert values into the schools in the Cluster had the effect of helping teachers to respond to this imperative to model behaviour they wished to see in their students.\textsuperscript{45}

The Bourke Cluster of schools in New South Wales tried to build their values initiative around respect because as their report claimed, “kids from volatile backgrounds respond to and reciprocate respect”; their report also indicated that at times “teachers had to bite their tongues to begin with. Then by showing respect for background, for culture and location, things began to change.”\textsuperscript{46} The ‘biting of tongues’ can be seen as an attempt on the part of teachers to be patient and show respect for students in the way they spoke or corrected them; doing so modelled the respect that the teachers wanted to see in their students, in situations perhaps where the first reaction of the teacher could have easily been a derogatory comment or a harsh rebuke.

Stage 2 reiterated the Stage 1 finding that modelling is an integral component of successful values education approaches because “once values are explicitly

\begin{footnotes}
\item[43] Ibid., p. 6.
\item[44] Ibid., p. 46 (WITS Cluster, Vic).
\item[45] Ibid., p. 77 (Broken Bay Diocese Cluster, NSW).
\item[46] Ibid., p. 88 (Bourke Cluster, NSW). This comment was used in the \textit{National Values Education Forum (2007)} to illustrate the importance of teachers modelling the values taught in schools. See p. 14.
\end{footnotes}
established within the school, the modelling implicitly reinforces the values learning.”

These observations are supported by statements from those involved in the clusters. One cluster coordinator expressed it the following way.

The students learn more from the person we are being and the behaviours we demonstrate than the content we are teaching.

While this statement might seem exaggerated, modelling by teachers can, for good or ill, influence the learning of students. The noted educationalist Ken Rowe emphasised this in the National Values Education Forum in 2004 when he spoke about students’ assessments of great teachers.

Other commentators were more measured but still emphatic. The Ferny Grove Cluster coordinator summarised the findings of that cluster with respect to the effect on values education of modelling by teachers noting that:

[w]e observed that those teachers whose classrooms were characterised by an inclusive culture of caring and respect and where character development played an important and quite often explicit role in the daily learning of students were those same teachers who also demonstrated a high level of personal development, self-awareness of, and commitment to their own values and beliefs.

More than one cluster of schools found that the experience of trying to implement values education in schools led directly to teachers having to examine their own values in order to model values for their students.

In the Cross Borders Cluster which included schools from the Northern Territory, Western Australian and South Australia, teachers examined how they model values not only with students but also within the wider community. The Stage 2 Report made this clear.

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48 Ibid., p. 39.
49 In 2004 Rowe was the Research Director, Learning Processes and Contexts of the Australian Council for Educational Research. He is the author of significant works on boys’ education, quality teaching and bullying.
[Teachers] asked questions about their own professional conduct and were willing to reassess their behaviours on the basis of a values audit of their ‘ethical, professional and interpersonal behaviours’. In this context, the process of implementing and modelling values in values education can involve teachers in very personal professional learning.\textsuperscript{52}

One particularly interesting insight came from one of the cluster schools in Queensland. One of the teachers, in the context of the values education project, had examined her own struggle trying to teach a particularly difficult student and her adoption of strategies which, in the end, were positive for both the student and herself. In her reflections written for the Project this teacher made the following observation which sheds light on the need for teachers to model values.

Teachers need to be brutally honest about how mature they are in their dealings with students – \textit{they are the adult[s], the students are children, but sometimes it is hard to tell which is which when a teacher loses it} (my italics). Values education must be embraced by the teachers and acted out by them.\textsuperscript{53}

A similar statement came from one of the teachers involved in the Broader Horizons Cluster in Tasmania.

We cannot expect our children to live by a set of values and norms if we are unable to adhere to them ourselves.\textsuperscript{54}

The Stage 2 Report concludes the section on modelling of values with the following summary.

Teacher modelling is a powerful contributor to student knowledge about values and more importantly, a key element in developing values attitudes, values dispositions and social skills as Deakin Crick (2005) has shown.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 39. This need for self-reflection on the part of teachers is also mentioned in the report of the “Shire 4 Values Cluster” in New South Wales. Amongst the “key messages” they extracted from their values initiative was the comment that “teachers need to interrogate their own values and explore how they are expressed in classroom practice before they can teach values dispositions.” See p.63.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 107-108 (The Broader Horizons Cluster, Tas).

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 40. See also, p. 57 (Griffith Primary and Secondary Cluster, NSW); pp. 75-77 (Ferny Grove Cluster, Qld); p. 81 (Toowoomba North Cluster, Qld); p. 83 (Oxenford Cluster, Qld); p. 104
The theme of modelling and integrity amongst teachers was revisited in the other values forums just prior to and after the publication of the VEGPSP – Stage 2 findings. For example, Dr Andrew Furco from the University of Minnesota in the National Values Education Forum in May 2008, before the release of the VEGPSP – Stage 2, pointed to the importance of the implicit teaching of values which included the modelling by teachers of the values that they wanted to impart in their schools. And Jean Illingworth of Djarragun College in North Queensland, by far the majority of whose students are indigenous, went a little further than merely saying that teachers needed to model the values they wanted to teach their students. She claimed that the values education project had to start with the teachers.

The focus... should initially be on ourselves, rather than our students, and on the way we model values through our behaviours every day.

We have already seen in Amanda Day’s contribution to the National Values Education Conference in 2009 her insistence in advocating for explicit teaching of values. She was equally convinced of the need for teachers to model values. Citing the work of Terence Lovat and Ron Twoomey in the area of values education and quality teaching, she said that “the promotion of values must be followed by teacher modelling and enacting of values”.

In fact, the Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project indicated that many teachers were conscious of their role in modelling positive values for their students before they began the project. However the Project clearly reinforced this as a crucial aspect of values education.

2.5 Values education is about behavioural change

(Sea and Values Cluster, SA); p. 105 (The Broader Horizons Cluster, Tas); p. 113, 115 (Dunmuckle Cluster, Vic); p. 123 (Students for the Biosphere Cluster, Vic).

Andrew Furco gave one of the keynote addresses at the NVEF 2007 when he was the Director, International Center for Research on Civic Engagement and Service Learning at the Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley. He gave another keynote addresses at the NVEF in 2008. By then he was the Associate Vice President of Public Engagement and Associate Professor in Educational Policy and Administration at the University of Minnesota.


Ibid., p. 43.

From the first steps of the VEASP, the project had a practical bent.

The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools eventually adopted two definitions of values education. These definitions were mentioned in Chapter 1 but it is worth repeating them here.

[Values Education refers to] ... the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable.”

It also refers to

the ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities that we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly.”

The importance of actions as bearers of values is clear in both these definitions. The definitions indicate that values education would not be complete unless the standards and ideals which they mention included reference to resultant actions.

As noted in Chapter 1, the definition underpinning the Values Education Study from 2003 was as follows.

... Values Education is broader [than teaching values] and refers to 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 enact particular values as individuals and as members of the wider community (my italics).

While it is inaccurate to say that values are purely about action and behaviour and that they have no cognitive content as noted above, there was a realization early in the Project that if values are not translated into behaviour then it is unclear whether any values education has occurred.

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61 Ibid., p. 8.
62 Values Education Study (2003), p. 5.
The first schools to implement values education in the broader VEASP were the 12 schools involved in “Values in Action: Case Studies from 12 Values Education Schools” to which we have already referred. \(^{63}\) The very name of this first report indicates the importance of the behavioural change aspect of values education.

St Monica’s school in Victoria was one of the 12 schools involved in these Case Studies. The following statement comes from St Monica’s own reporting of its social service program which was a key part of its values education.

> When students engage in social service, they learn lifelong lessons about human dignity and social responsibility. No matter how much theory students are presented with, it is not until the jump from thought to action is made that the lesson is truly learnt. \(^{64}\)

The “jump from thought to action” mentioned in the quote is a reiteration by those involved in values education at St Monica’s school that there must be behavioural change if values education is to be real.

The report of the VEGPSP – Stage 2 contains the following quote which explains the connection between behaviour and values.

> Educators have characterized taking action as moving from cognitive understanding of values towards manifesting values in personal and pro-social behaviours (my italics). Students [who take action] live and practice the values rather than simply knowing about them. \(^{65}\)

The statement above was also reiterated in the elaboration of number 6 of the recommendations of the VEGPSP – Stage 2 report, which emphasized the importance of student agency arguing that:

> [i]n many of the Stage 2 projects students can be seen to move in stages from growing in knowledge and understanding of the values, to an increasing

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\(^{63}\) *Values Education in Action: 12 Case Studies* (2004)

\(^{64}\) Ibid., p. 24.

\(^{65}\) *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2* (2008), p. 27.
clarity and commitment to certain values, then concerted action in living those values in their personal and community lives.\textsuperscript{66}

There were many examples in the Project of initiatives designed to facilitate this movement from an understanding of values to living those values in students’ personal and community lives. Many of these revolved around a pedagogical strategy known as service learning.

The value of service learning as part of values education was emphasised by Andrew Furco, the Director of the International Centre for Research on Civic Engagement and Service Learning at the University of California when he spoke at the 2007 National Values Education Forum. He has developed a program called “Head, Heart and Hands (H3)\textsuperscript{,} which is used in schools in the United States and integrates service learning in the community with the education of the head and the heart; this is education that aims to impact upon thought and feeling. The reference to “Hands” in the program corresponds to action and the impact of “what we do” and “how we act”.\textsuperscript{67}

Furco pointed to research which shows that when primary school children move to adolescence much of the values education they have been exposed to in primary school is lost. However, the more service learning primary school children have been involved in, the less likely they are to lose what Furco calls their “values assets”. In other words, the research indicated that the more students were able to be involved in service activity that was clearly allied to putting values into practice, the less likely they were to forget or give up on their values framework.\textsuperscript{68}

Even before the intervention of Furco in the 2007 National Values Education Forum however, schools involved in the VEGPSP – Stage 1 were concentrating on behavioural change. The Chapel Hill Cluster in Queensland adopted something akin to Furco’s H3 program and explained that the hands meant “the necessity to engage in opportunities to practise and demonstrate espoused values”. \textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p. 40.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 30.
\textsuperscript{69} Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p. 34.
Other examples of values education initiatives which were focused on behavioural outcomes were the WITS Cluster in Victoria which, in an effort to boost social capabilities and skills, drew up a list of how to speak and interact with adults as a manifestation of respect for them.\textsuperscript{70} The North Midlands Cluster in Tasmania\textsuperscript{71} reported that through their use of the “ruMAD”\textsuperscript{72} program they were able to get students involved in community projects which involved serving others. According to the Cluster report this necessarily involved engaging in behaviours that some of the students had not engaged in before.

Some clusters of schools put their service learning experiences at the very centre of their values education efforts. The Canterbury Cluster in Queensland organized for their students to help at an aged care facility.\textsuperscript{73} The Red Earth Community Cluster in Victoria also had their students helping in aged care and retirement homes. Year 9 students from the Secondary School in the cluster helped in local primary schools and raised funds for cancer patients.\textsuperscript{74}

The Sea and Values Cluster in South Australia which concentrated on civic and environmental projects noted that the influence of creating a values-rich school environment was seen in children taking “more responsibility for their own and others’ learning and behaviour”.\textsuperscript{75}

In Stage 2, the Edmund Rice Ministries Cluster in South Australia engaged in service learning in much the same way as clusters in Stage 1\textsuperscript{76} had done. The Manningham Cluster of Catholic schools used the service learning involved in their Stage 1 project to develop Values Action Teams of students which had direct input into the implementation of values education in their own schools. In this way, the schools in this cluster were endeavouring to hand over agency to their students so as to involve the students in the work entailed in values education.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p. 38, 43 (WITS Cluster, Vic).
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 93 (Northern Midlands Cluster, Tas).
\textsuperscript{72} “ruMAD” is a toolkit that enables young people to lead social change and become active citizens. It is focused on values and led by students but, according to its website, benefits the whole community. See \url{http://www.rumad.org.au/}.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., pp. 156 – 162.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., pp. 202-203.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 103.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 99 (Edmund Rice Ministries Cluster, SA) and see footnotes 64-69 above.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., pp. 116-119 (Manningham Cluster, Vic).
Achieving the goal of positive changes in the behaviour of students was a vital part of the Action Research cycle adopted by the Values in Action Schools Project (VASP) in 2010. The cycle of reflection → planning → acting → observation and then the return to reflection once again, put the emphasis in this Project clearly on behavioural outcomes. The ‘acting’ stage and observation of that ‘acting’ fed directly into the reflection on whether the goal of positive changes in behaviour were being achieved and the reflection was then used to adjust for positive changes in behaviour.

The VASP Report aimed at a qualitative assessment of the impacts of Values Education in schools. Its methodology is different from some of the earlier stages of the VASP. It concentrated on what is known as ‘Most Significant Change’ narratives in the feedback from teachers and students so as to explore the values education that had occurred in schools. This change of methodology has to be taken into account in drawing evidence from the Report, but the Report clearly emphasised the importance of behavioural change in values education, not only amongst students, but perhaps more importantly, amongst teachers. At the same time, the contents of the report do not unequivocally prove that the behavioural effects noted in the report were the result of the values education initiatives. However, teachers and students alike both explained behavioural change in terms of the impact of the values education projects undertaken by schools and hence there is good reason to correlate the changes with the projects.

The Report contains accounts of students being able to make positive changes to their relationships at school by changing their behaviour in relation to tasks set in class. It records incidences of students changing their behaviour towards a particular ethnic group, a change which was led initially by only one student who

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79 Ibid., p. 16. This research cycle has clear similarities to the PDCA cycle mentioned on p. 17 n. 1 of Chapter 1.
80 Final Report. Testing and Measuring (2009) p. 3 “The VASP project methodology combined highly structured qualitative and all-of-cluster quantitative methods to identify project impacts…. The key qualitative data-gathering tool applied in all clusters was the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique; Davies and Dart (2005)” This qualitative assessment is open to criticism because it seems much less solid than quantitative methods but in values education change is difficult to measure quantitatively and quantitative methods ignore some of the notable impacts of values education.
81 The Final Report VASP (October 2010), p. 25.
then brought his friends around to seeing things the same way he did; and it also
notes instances of students being much more accepting of others. One student
reported how behavioural change came about because the behaviours required by
certain rules within school were now able to be connected to an overarching value
which made the reason for the behaviour more understandable. Another reported
being proactive in helping to get a friend accepted in peer group activities.

Two of the important outcomes of values education identified by the VASP were the
effects on students’ well-being and student agency as it related to behavioural
change. Under both these headings the aspect of giving to others in some way was
seen as an important contributor to these purported outcomes of values education.
The Greater Brisbane Cluster of schools noted that the very fact of doing something
for older people within a service learning program led to self-discovery on the part of
some students.

A similar outcome was reported by those involved with what most would agree was
a more difficult group of students, those in juvenile detention centres. The
experience of doing something for other people was reported by the teachers of the
Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster as very positive for the well-
being of the students. Teachers argued that it contributed to making the detention
centres more humane and improving the quality of the students’ schoolwork; teachers also noted that when the students in the centres focused on doing things for
others they appeared to value themselves more and come to understand values
better. One teacher commented with respect to the service learning projects that
“values learning occurs through purposeful projects that occur as a result of a
genuine need or issue, not by learning out of a book.”

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82 Ibid., p. 26. See also p. 51.
83 Ibid., p. 30.
84 Ibid., p. 34.
85 Ibid., p. 52.
86 Ibid., p. 54.
87 Ibid., p. 79.
88 Ibid., pp. 50, 77-79.
89 Ibid., p. 70.
With respect to changing behaviours, the reports from the Far North Queensland Cluster of schools⁹⁰ are instructive. One teacher spoke about having explained values in class and then having expected certain types of behaviour, such as acts of kindness or manners, to simply happen. She eventually discovered she had to break the notions of kindness and manners down into concrete actions if the students were to learn what they meant. According to this teacher, this deconstruction of the values into concrete actions increased the depth of understanding of the values for the children and this suggests that this kind of deconstructive activity is an important aspect of value clarification and values education.⁹¹

The very last observation in the report of this cluster focused on behavioural change in students; as the report states, “the ‘values in action’ aspect of the work saw students transferring their new learning into personal action.”⁹² This cluster’s summary of key outcomes reinforced this by referring to “changed classroom and playground behaviours.”⁹³ It is significant too that this cluster’s report linked the changing behaviours to a greater understanding and ownership of values in such a way that the changed behaviours were taken to provide evidence of this greater understanding and ownership.

### 2.6 The importance of relationships in values education

In the documents of the VEASP one of the most often repeated assertions made concerning the efforts to implement the Project was that values education was about the improvement of relationships within the school amongst teachers and parents, amongst teachers and teachers and amongst teachers and students. As we will see below, one of the principles of good practice in values education recommended by the VEGPSP – Stage 1 concerned the centrality to values education of developing positive relationships in classrooms and schools. The centrality of fostering good relationships was not translated into one of the ten good practices in values education

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distilled from the VEGPSP – Stage 2. This might be explained by the likelihood that it would be taken as implied in many of the principles. The frequency with which the theme of relationships was highlighted as important in the implementation of values education and also as a positive outcome of values education cannot be ignored.

As noted above, at all stages of the VEASP participants voiced their approval of the positive relationships that emerged from the implementation of the Project, while also pointing to the development of these positive relationships as one of the best outcomes of the project. In some cases the development of positive relationships appeared to be taken as a marker of the success of the implementation.

Before the release of the reports of the two stages of the VEGPSPs the first of which was published in 2006, the quality of relationships in a school was signalled as one of the areas of school life which the introduction of values education enhanced. It was also earmarked as one aspect of the values education project which needed to be targeted if values education was to succeed and consequently the question of the nature of ‘relationships’ was distilled as one vital area that needed to be worked on within the values education project. Thus it is understandable that one of the “Suggested approaches” in the Key Elements identified by the Values Education Study is precisely to focus on improving relationships within schools so as to provide an important support for students.94

Initially, the Values Education Study of 2003 gave grants to 69 schools to begin values education projects. From these 69 schools, 50 projects were completed. One of the initial findings of the Values Education Study was that

> [v]irtually all of the 50 projects were underpinned by a clear focus on building more positive relationships within the school as a central consideration for implementing values education on a broader scale. The development of more positive relationships is arguably not a value per se, but it does constitute an important background focus and in some cases, an important outcome or objective for the use of the values education grants.95

95 Values Education Study (2003), p. 3.
Of the 50 projects that were funded by the *Values Education Study*, 12 schools were asked to prepare case studies for the National Values Education Forum in 2004. The report of these case studies was mentioned above. It is called “Values Education in Action: Case Studies from 12 Values Education Schools”.

One of the schools in this early study, Albany Primary School, used an educational tool called Tribes which seeks to set up learning communities that focus mainly “on building relationships and student connectedness to school”. Early in their project, after surveying students and staff, the school observed “a positive shift in the relationships within classes and the playground’ and a 30% reduction in behavioural referrals to the deputy principal with no student exclusions”.

Salisbury High School it will be recalled, was also one of the 12 schools chosen for the “Values Education in Action” project. The importance that Salisbury High School gave to relationships is clear when the title of their project is compared to two of the other schools which participated in this first Stage of the consultation for the VEASP. While the Don College in Tasmania chose the name “Enacting our Values” and St Monica’s College in Victoria chose the name “Faith and Values” for their respective efforts at implementing values education in their schools, Salisbury’s attempt was entitled “Valuing Relationships at Salisbury High”. In other words Salisbury began with the assumption that relationships were a key to the successful implementation of values education. Its contribution to the “Values Education in Action” report included the following statements:

> Developing positive relationships has been the hallmark of all programmes and activities at Salisbury High School... Effective relationships depend on a common and shared set of values within the school community, and subsequent commitment to putting these into practice each day.

> As evidenced throughout this case study report, relationships are at the heart of the Salisbury High approach to values education and improving student outcomes... The school has, for many years now, worked with a care case

97 See footnote 13, Chapter 1.
98 *Values Education in Action: 12 Case Studies* (2004), p.120.
management approach, which encourages ‘positive, lasting relationships between students, care teachers and parents’. The results of the community values survey have confirmed the lasting impact this system has had.  

In fact the majority of these first twelve “Values Education in Action” schools highlighted the importance of improving relationships in their schools as a goal of their values education initiatives and as a marker of the success of their initiatives.

In the final round table session of the 2004 Forum which included many of the schools already mentioned there was broad agreement on the proposition that "relationships form an underlying precept for values education in schools both in terms of the processes pursued and the outcomes that are sought.”

It is instructive that the message about the importance of relationships in values education was emphasised by such different schools. Relationships were regarded as important as much in Abbotsleigh, one of the premier girls’ schools in Sydney as in Matthew Hogan High, a school for homeless teenagers established by Youth off the Streets. There does not seem to be any social class distinction when it comes to the link between values education and relationships. At least at the school level this link is important regardless of the composition of the student population. Raul Moran from Westall Secondary College claimed that in a scenario in which the values of students and teachers differed widely, any values education had to be preceded by teachers working on their relationships with students as a way of understanding students and their behaviours. Once the relationships had been forged, values education programs could then deal with differing values and beliefs.

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102 Ibid., p. 35.
103 Ibid., p. 12 (The Don College, Tas); pp. 23-24 (St Monica’s College, Vic); p. 40 (Cabramatta High School, NSW); p. 62 (Campbell High School, ACT); pp. 109, 113 (Alice Springs High School, NT). See also the contribution by St Monica’s College to the 2004 National Values Education Forum: “Placing importance on relationships between all those in the school community, and being deliberate and persistent with regard to how these are lived out and reconciled, is a key factor to building connectedness at the school. The quality and depth of these relationships form the launching pad for all other aspects of values education.” National Values Education Forum (2004), p.50.
104 Ibid., p. 84 (Matthew Hogan High, NSW); p. 95 (Pedare Christian School, SA); p. 111 (Alice Springs High School, NT).
105 Ibid., p. 61.
The Professional Learning Resources for Secondary Schools in 2004 also emphasized the role of positive relationships; noting that the resources “rest on the belief that it is teachers and quality teaching that will, in the first instance make a significant difference to strengthening values education and improving student outcomes in all schools”.\(^\text{107}\) When this document refers to teachers and quality teaching as making a significant difference to strengthening values education and improving student outcomes, the relationships that teachers form with their students is implied, as the document’s citation of Terence Lovat’s work in 2005 makes clear.\(^\text{108}\)

The relationships established by teachers provide the underpinning for all learning. Indeed, research tells us the care of the teacher has the single most profound influence on student achievement including academic achievement. In the light of this, values education is at the heart of the teacher’s role.\(^\text{109}\)

Similarly, the seventh of the ten recommendations of the VEGPSP - Stage 1 focused directly on the importance of the development of good relationships in the classroom and the school if the implementation of values education is to be successful.

At the very heart of building values-based schools is the development of positive relationships between students, teachers and parents – in classrooms and schools, and between schools and their school communities.\(^\text{110}\)

Even though relationships between teachers, students and parents are mentioned, the impression is that the main relationships that had to improve for values education to successfully proceed were those between teachers and students.

It is interesting that the improvement of relationships was not only a recommendation of the VEGPSP – Stage 1, it was also an observed outcome in certain of the schools involved in Stage 1. Amongst the outcomes which Stage 1 listed was the claim that the very attempt to implement values education could

\(^\text{107}\) Values for Australian Schooling Professional Learning Resources – Secondary (2005), p.2
\(^\text{110}\) Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p. 6, (see also p. 216).
1. lead to changes in teacher professional practice in classrooms and, in particular, in the way teachers relate to and communicate with their students.

and

2. produce strong positive relationships between students and between students and teachers. 111

The fact that “strong positive relationships” and changes in teacher practice which enhanced those relationships were seen as an outcome of the attempts by various schools to implement values education poses the question of whether the improved relationships were a product of the attempted implementation or a necessary precursor to it. Data from the project clearly suggest that values education will not succeed without the improvement of relationships between teachers and students but that data also suggest, that the very reflective process involved in the implementation of values education in schools does produce those better relationships, particularly as teachers reflect on their practice. When teachers change their approach this seems to have a positive effect on their students.

As we have seen above, the VEGPSP Stage 1 clusters of schools were almost unanimous in their emphasis on the importance of building relationships in any values education initiative. 112 One of the ‘key messages’ in the report from the Maroondah Cluster in Victoria can be considered representative of how many of the clusters in this phase of the VEASP viewed the importance of building stronger relationships.

The significance of relationships in the learning process and striving to actively develop these relationships cannot be underestimated. Consciously get to know students, facilitate them (sic) getting to know each other, and invite them to get to know the teacher as well. 113

112 Ibid., p. 55 (Airds-Bradbury Cluster, NSW); p. 63 (Maroondah North Cluster, Vic); p. 73 (Manningham Catholic Cluster, Vic); p. 79 (Broken Bay Diocese Cluster, NSW); p. 88 (Bourke Cluster, NSW); p. 102 (Brighton Cluster, Vic); p. 127-128 (Calwell Cluster, ACT); p.141 (SA Alliance of Schools, SA); p. 179 (Northern Territory Catholic Cluster, NT).
113 Ibid., p.63.
The information coming from the VEGPSP – Stage 1 served to confirm Professor Lovat’s view, noted above, that quality teaching and values education have more to do with “the relationship of care, mutual respect, fairness and positive role modelling established with the student” than any other factors.\footnote{Lovat, T, \textit{Values Education: the Missing Link in Quality Teaching}, A summary of the Keynote Address at the National Values Education Forum, Canberra, May 2006, p. 2.}

The emphasis placed by the VEGPSP – Stage 1 schools on the importance of building stronger relationships and the inclusion of this in the recommendations of the Stage 1 report probably meant that the VEGPSP – Stage 2 schools were more sensitive to the importance of this aspect of the implementation of values education. Certainly many of the clusters of schools in Stage 2 saw the building of stronger relationships in their schools as having a necessary place in their values education initiatives.\footnote{Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008): pp. 53, 56 (Airds-Bradbury Cluster, NSW); p. 60 (Merrylands-Guildford Cluster, NSW); p. 69 (Values Newcastle, NSW); pp. 75 – 78 (Ferny Grove Cluster Qld); pp. 79 - 82 (Toowoomba North Cluster); p. 86 (Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre Cluster, Qld); p. 96 (E-Schools Yorke Peninsula Cluster); p. 103 - 104 (Sea and Values Cluster, SA); p. 106 - 108 (Broader Horizons Cluster, Tas); p. 113 (Dumm books Cluster, Vic); p. 118 (Manningham Cluster, Vic); p. 122 (Students for the Biosphere Cluster, Vic).}

Some clusters in the VEGPSP – Stage 2 put the pedagogy of Philosophy in Schools at the centre of their values education initiatives. While Philosophy in Schools allowed teachers and students to engage in intellectual inquiry into concepts of value, these clusters also noted that the very methodology of Philosophy in Schools, which requires such skills as respectful listening and taking turns to speak, facilitated the development of better relationships between teachers and students.\footnote{Ibid., p. 77 (Ferny Grove Cluster, Qld).} One of the clusters that used Philosophy in Schools noted that it “inherently” developed stronger relationships between teachers and the students.\footnote{Ibid., p. 28. This page is in the summary section of the Final Report on the VEGPSP Stage 2 and the “inherently” quote is from the Ferny Grove Cluster. The same page reports that the Oxenford Cluster adopted the Philosophy in Schools program with similar findings to those of the Ferny Grove Cluster.}

Lastly, I wish to draw attention to a number of comments from the schools in the VEGPSP – Stage 2 project that illustrate the importance schools attached to the improvement in relationships for the success of values education.

… [V]alues education is primarily about relationships. A person’s values determine how they relate to the world. Thus each individual teacher has the
capacity and responsibility to demonstrate and explicitly deliver values education to their students … one person can make a difference.\textsuperscript{118}

From one of the final reflections of the Ferny Grove cluster in Queensland there came this short sharp comment:

Values education is fundamentally about the way we live together – it’s about relationships.\textsuperscript{119}

One of the reasons mentioned above that the VEGPSP - Stage 2 clusters may have been particularly attentive to the role of relationships in values education was Stage 1 recommendation which asserted that “the very heart of building values-based schools is the development of positive relationships.”\textsuperscript{120} It does seem that the VEGPSP Stage 2 clusters took this recommendation seriously. As we have seen their findings simply reinforced the findings of Stage 1 about the importance of the development of positive relationships. It is therefore difficult to see why the good practices which were the eventual outcome of Stage 2 did not refer to relationships directly.

Despite the findings of the clusters on the ground about the importance of the development of positive relationships as critical for values education the recommendation from Stage 1 about relationships seems to have been subsumed into No. 7 of the principles of good practice which arose from Stage 2. No. 7 of these principles of good practice emphasizes “intercultural understanding, social cohesion and social inclusion”.\textsuperscript{121}

In my view this is unfortunate since the comments from clusters addressed above emphasised the importance of relationships and reported that this emphasis often came about as a result of reflection on the part of the teachers about the values they wished to foster in their class. This reflection led some teachers to examine the need to improve their relationships with their students. In addition, one cluster made it clear that it was those teachers who reflected about their own values, made decisions about the values they wished to transmit and committed themselves to that transmission who had more success with the values education in general and in their

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 56 (Airds-Bradbury Cluster, NSW).
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 77 (Ferny Grove Cluster, Qld).
\textsuperscript{120} Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p. 6 (see also p. 216).
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p. 11.
relationships with students.\textsuperscript{122} Thus an important step in values education – that of teachers reflecting on their own values, then putting them into practice, then changing their behaviour towards their students ended up being downplayed and substituted for the more impersonal notions mentioned above, of “intercultural understanding, social cohesion and social inclusion.”\textsuperscript{123}

Despite this, the theme of the importance of relationships did not disappear from the later stages of the VEASP. The closing phases of the Project again drew attention to their significance. For example in 2009 Professor Terence Lovat produced the \textit{Report of the Project to Test and Measure the Impact of Values Education on Student Effects and School Ambience}.\textsuperscript{124} In his conclusions, Professor Lovat makes it clear that one of the consequences of introducing values education in Australian schools has been the strengthening of student/teacher relationships; and he argues that this has flowed over into a calmer school ambience, with less conflict and fewer behavioural problems.\textsuperscript{125}

The improvement of relationships was also emphasised within the \textit{Values in Action Schools Project (VASP) Report} which concluded the ten year VEASP and was subtitled “Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education”. According to the VASP the key impacts of Values Education are

1. Values consciousness
2. Well being
3. Agency
4. Connectedness
5. Transformation\textsuperscript{126}

The improvement of relationships within schools amongst parents, teachers and students comes under the heading of “Connectedness” in this schema. Evidence from the VASP indicates that better connections between students, teachers and parents were developed through shared goals and practices for values education; through the

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 82 (Toowoomba North Cluster, Qld).
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Final Report. Testing and Measuring (2009)}.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{National Values Education Conference (2009)}, p. 22. See also pp. 19-20 where Lovat comments on the two VEGPSP reports and p.22 where he makes it clear that schools which introduced values education experienced a “rise in the levels of politeness and courtesy, open friendliness, better manners, offers of help, and students being more kind and considerate”.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Final Report VASP (October, 2010)} p. 5.
development of mutual feelings of respect, trust and safety; and through varied opportunities for collaboration.

This connectedness had many advantages:

The relationships forged between students, teachers and parents in many of the clusters supported student engagement in learning; improved parent engagement in their children’s learning; and allowed teachers to develop new relationships with their students, each other and the parents and families in their school community…. 127

Although the project also emphasises the relationship of partnerships between teachers and parents for the benefit of the students at the schools, the emphasis in these statements is on relationships between students, teachers and parents and these latter relationships are the focus of this chapter. 128

Many individual accounts of how values education had an impact on members of school communities are reprinted in the VASP Report as part of its Most Significant Change methodology 129. The statements contained in the summary above are corroborated by the student accounts below.

One student wrote,

[a]nd like (sic) with the teachers that worked in my group with my school, I don’t just see them as teachers anymore, they are like friends. 130

Another young student who could not write well, when asked to write a sentence about his classmates did so despite the task proving long and laborious for him. The students had been asked to write a series of “put-ups”, rather than “put-downs” about their classmates. This student’s comments were described as encapsulating the view “that acceptance and building relationships can lead to quality teaching, quality outcomes and quality (real!) change”. 131

127 Ibid., p. 8.
128 See VEGPSP- Stage 1,. Some reports in the VASP speak of “the ‘huge enthusiasm and desire’ of the parents to be involved at a deeper level in their child’s values education with the school.” See p. 9.
129 See note 77 above.
131 Ibid., p. 25.
To sum up, values education in schools is only successful when the fundamental relationships within a school, those between students and teachers, are based on respect for each other. The effort to introduce values in schools led many teachers to recognize this. It led many students to recognize that teachers’ attitudes to them changed as a result of values education and therefore their own attitudes towards teachers changed. And the marker most often named as pointing to the success of the implementation of values education in schools was precisely the improved relationships between teachers and students.

This chapter has claimed that the VEASP has unearthed some fundamental, structural elements that are necessary for any moral education which includes values in a school setting; these include - a whole school approach, explicit teaching of the values that are expected of students, a focus on behavioural change as proof of the adoption of values and a focus on modelling by adults of the values they expect of their students.

The explicit teaching and modelling of the values when values education is introduced enthusiastically and genuinely in schools enhances the relationships within the school, particularly between teachers and students, although not exclusively between them.

In clarifying the conditions of successful values education, the VEASP has, it seems to me, indicated the need to change the way we think about moral education. Specifically, it suggests four important features that must be recognized. These are listed below.

a) Moral education has to be clear about what it teaches. The values it emphasizes must be presented to young people such that their meaning is explained, preferably in terms of the actions that accepting and upholding these values imply.

b) The significant people in students’ lives must model these values or values education will not be effective or seen as genuine.
c) Adopting values implies behavioural change in the person or persons who adopt them. If not, there is no evidence that those values are present in the person.

d) There is an inextricable link between values and relationships. Values education is effective when there are good relationships between teachers and students; and good relationships between students and teachers are necessary for values education to be effective.

The significance of these findings which point to fundamental or structural elements necessary in values education and, by extension, in the moral education which was envisaged by the values education initiative, will be revisited in Chapter 4 where they will be looked at from the perspective of the introduction of the concept of virtues in values education in order to arrive at an optimal moral education.

Before returning to these four important features of values education and a fuller treatment of optimal moral education, it is helpful to delve further into the VEASP.

In Chapter 3 which follows, I will discuss the motivations behind the introduction of values education into Australian schools. This discussion is the beginning of a critique of the VEASP which highlights important findings of the Project that have implications for the Philosophy of Education underlying the values education initiative in Australian schools. Having pointed these out, Chapter 3 then opens out to a critique of the type of moral education envisaged by the VEASP.
Chapter 3

3. A Critique of the VEASP

This chapter has three parts.

Section 3.1 discusses the motivations behind the introduction of the Values Education in Schools Project.

Section 3.2 outlines two important positive findings of the Project which seem to imply a change in the way the discipline of Philosophy of Education looks at values. This change implies firstly that it is no longer reasonable to talk of value neutrality in schools and secondly that values common to all human beings exist.

Section 3.3 contrasts values education with moral education and looks at the role and limits of cognition in moral education.

3.1 Why introduce Values Education into Australian Schools?

In Chapter 1 it was pointed out that the VEASP was a grab bag of approaches to the education of values in Australian Schools.

It was argued that these approaches corresponded to the divergent aims of the Project, that they were to be expected given these divergent aims; and that these aims in turn corresponded to imperatives within the present social and political milieu in Australia. The next section will explain the aims of the project in more depth to make clear the motivations behind the introduction of the Project and to argue that the philosophical underpinnings of the program are not fully or well-articulated as they apply to behavioural change.

The first aim of the Project was to somehow make values explicit in schools after the 40 years following the 1960s and the social revolution that had occurred over nearly
half a century after that time. The social revolution and its consequences have been outlined in Section 2 of Chapter 1 (“Why a Values Education Project?”)\(^1\) where I cited a number of authors who claimed that the rise of values education or citizenship education in Britain, the United States and Australia was a reaction to what was seen as the break-down of pro-social behaviour towards the end of the forty years leading up to the year 2000. David Carr has said that some of this reaction was owed to what he called “public panic”.\(^2\) With some justification, Carr maintains that a number of people have used this concern about deteriorating social behaviours to further their own agendas as to how to “fix” the problem. But “public panic” is a derogatory term and I think clouds the fact that there has been a rising concern that the waning of the predominant Judeo-Christian culture of Britain, the United States and Australia has left a values “vacuum”.\(^3\)  This was the argument of the speakers in the Values Education Forums which were part of the Project.\(^4\)

It seems a settled view that values which were accepted by the three countries mentioned above and which formed a moral monoculture for well-nigh two hundred years changed in the period 1960 – 2000. Gertrude Himmelfarb gives some insight into this process in her work *The De-Moralization of Society*.\(^5\) She claims that the discourse concerning morality in Victorian England was a blend of “Utilitarianism on the one hand, Evangelicalism and Methodism on the other.”\(^6\) In other words, while Christianity continued to hold some sway in England up to the 1950s, the Ten Commandments offered rules of behaviour which sat, however uncomfortably, alongside utilitarian principles as guides in people’s lives.

\(^1\)\ See Chapter 1, pp 8-12, particularly footnotes 41 and 42.
\(^2\) Carr, *op.cit.*, p. 58.
\(^3\) See Chapter 2, footnote 34 and the reference to the British educationalist Lord Richard Layard.
As the influence of Christianity waned and with it, that of the Commandments, a vacuum was created.

The first aim of the VEASP therefore, as noted above, was to search for a set of values which could be agreed upon as the common values of society and then to teach them explicitly. These values would somehow form the basis of a new “moral education” or formation.

The second aim of the VEASP focused on the effect the purported values vacuum mentioned above might have on a healthy democracy. The values the Project came up with were aimed at the future stability of Australian democracy. The British values education program eventually became focused on Citizenship and the final Report whose recommendations the British Government tried to implement in schools was entitled *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in School*, also known as the Crick Report (1998). As we have seen above, in addition to creating good citizens, the British values education drive also had the further aims of inculcating “a broad set of common values and purposes that underpin the school curriculum and the work of schools”; the transmission of “enduring values”; and the development in young people of “the principles of distinguishing between right and wrong”. Some of this citizenship training has been viewed with suspicion precisely because citizenship training can be seen as manipulation by the State for political purposes. The State surely has a stake in educating children to be good citizens but because the grab-bag approach of the Project forced a mixing of moral education and citizenship education, there is concern that this can simply mask a political drive for social control or a mechanism for getting citizens to do what the government decides is in the national interest.

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9 Ibid., p.2, Aim 2.
10 Ibid.
11 See Carr, D, “Cross Questions and Crooked Answers: Contemporary Problems of Moral Education” in Halstead, J M and McLaughlin, T H, *Education in Morality*, Routledge, New York, 1999, p. 27. It is interesting that the national newspaper in Australia recently contained an editorial looking to the proposed national curriculum to support our democratic values in the face of polls.
The third aim of the VEASP was to address the decline in young people’s well-being. This decline was seen by some as a product of the type of society which was developing because of the loss of values and the purported increasing sense of anomie associated with it. These concerns were mentioned in Chapter 1. They mainly involve risky behaviour concerned with alcohol, drugs and sex but are not limited to these. Behind these behaviours and more sinister ones, ranging from NSSI (Non Suicide Self Injury – whose most common manifestation seems to be cutting) to youth suicide was concern at the type of mindset that contributes to these self-destructive behaviours in young people. The numbers of young people being diagnosed with depression may lend weight to the validity of these concerns.

During the period 1999 – 2010 when the VEASP was being implemented new concerns about the well-being of students have surfaced regarding cyber-bullying,

which show an increasing detachment amongst young people from adherence to democratic values (Editorial, “A dangerous ignorance”, The Australian, 25th June 2013, p. 11).


http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@nsf/Lookup/4102.0Chapter5002008 Retrieved 28.08.2008


13 Males between the ages of 15 and 24 are still the group most likely to commit suicide in Australia despite the fact that suicide rates amongst young men fell steadily from 1993 until 2007 in both the 15 – 19 and the 20 – 24 age brackets with a small upturn in the latter age bracket in 2005 and a trend upwards in 2007. ABS 2010, Causes of Death, 2008 and 2006 see http://abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%Subject/1370.0–2012–Chapter–Suicide%20(4.5.4), Retrieved 14/7/2012. This upward trend in 2007 and 2008 occurred during the development of the Values Education in Australian Schools Project. The trend has continued but does not seem to have worsened. See the Centre for Adolescent Health, The Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne Youth Suicide in Australia http://www.rch.org.au/cah/research/Youth_Suicide_in_Australia/#facts. Retrieved 16/8/2012.

14 At any point in time, up to five percent of adolescents experience depression that is severe enough to warrant treatment and around 20% of young people will have experienced significant depressive symptoms by the time they reach adulthood”. See http://www.headspace.org.au/what-works/research-information/depression#5A, Retrieved 14/12/2013. As to the question of whether the rate of depression is increasing amongst the young, it is virtually impossible to tell, as it is possible that similar percentages have existed amongst young people for a long time, and the depression was simply not diagnosed. See Costello, EJ, Erkanli, A, Angold, A, “Is there an epidemic of child or adolescent depression?” Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 47:12 (2006) pp. 1263 - 1271.

15 See “Covert and cyber bullying”, TIPSHEET No.09, February 2010, Australia’s national research and knowledge centre on crime and justice, www.aic.gov.au ISSN 1836-9111,
the early sexualization of young people, particularly girls; the ever easier access to pornography; and binge drinking by both sexes.

The possibility that something is now missing from our society, which may or may not be giving rise to the behavioural concerns just mentioned, has been raised by Charles Taylor in his work, The Ethics of Authenticity. In this work he describes three malaises of modernity; the loss of meaning that is very much allied to the anomie mentioned above; the eclipse of ends or goals which we hold in common, in the face of the rise of ‘instrumental reason’; and the loss of freedom in a society in

http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/19/6%7B196C613C-E600-4592-9530-31DB7F4BA95FDrip09.pdf, retrieved 14/7/2012. There is definitely an upward trend in cyber bullying but as this document suggests, it could be just the latest trend in bullying overall. Two characteristics of cyber bullying that fuel concern over it are the particular difficulty in detecting it and the fact that, for those young people who depend on social media to stay connected with their friends, it can happen day and night for an indefinite period of time.


which the combined forces of the market and governmental bureaucracy hinder
democratic majorities from influencing the “leviathan state” in any meaningful way.
The people in most modern democracies, argues Taylor, are so fragmented in their
aims and goals that they are incarcerated in the ‘iron cage’ of the bureaucracy and
the market.\textsuperscript{20}

If Taylor is correct about these malaises and the fragmentation consequent upon
them it is understandable that people would look to schools to address these issues.
Nevertheless the existence of such malaises and fragmentation determine that
adopting a prescriptive set of values which are politically and educationally
acceptable to all was always going to be difficult. It is understandable therefore that
there were many intersecting interests involved in the Project, including that of those
who desired it to be philosophically well grounded and consistent.

Be that as it may, most people would agree that the values that were eventually
chosen as the “Values for Australian Schooling” - Care and Compassion, Doing
Your Best, Fair Go, Freedom, Honesty and Trustworthiness, Integrity, Respect,
Responsibility, Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion\textsuperscript{21} are values worth
inculcating in young people. At the very least, most people would agree that it is
better for young people to hold these values rather than eschew them.

\subsection*{3.2 Two important findings of the Values Education in Australian Schools
Project}

\subsubsection*{3.2.1 Value Neutrality No More}

Before any consideration of which values were to become the focus of the Values
Education in Australian Schools Project, a long standing issue in the Philosophy of
Education had to be addressed; the idea that education should be value neutral.

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., pp. 93 – 108. See Chapter IX pp. 93 – 108. On the ‘iron cage’ specifically see p. 98. On
fragmentation, see Chapter X “Against Fragmentation”, pp. 109 – 121. Taylor sees that the ‘iron
cage’ and the ‘fragmentation’ of modern society are both inextricably bound up with the dominance
of “instrumental reason” – the reason based on scientific and technological progress - which does not
allow for any credible motives for action other than science and technological advancement.

\textsuperscript{21}National Framework (2005) p. 4.
Chapter 1 surveyed some of the speakers and authors who claimed that schooling in Australia could no longer be considered value neutral. This is worth exploring further. After a period of time during which one sector of the Australian education, that of the denominational or independent schools was considered to be value-laden, while the other predominant school system, that of the State schools, was considered value-neutral, it is now accepted that there can be no value neutrality in education. I consider this to be one of the most important admissions of the *Values Education Study*. The Study explicitly recognizes that values of some sort are imparted whenever education is undertaken. Some of the statements made in the Study are worth quoting to remind ourselves of this:

For all that, Australia’s schools cannot, in an increasingly value-laden world, operate as value-free zones, failing to make explicit the values which guide their work.\(^\text{22}\)

It may be a confusion of thinking to say that the world is becoming “increasingly value-laden” but I think what is meant by this statement and other similar ones is that there are clearly positive and negative values present in the world of young people and these necessarily impact upon the schools these young people attend. There is an imperative therefore for schools to make it clear which values of the many available, are privileged in schools. Thus the work of the VEASP has had an effect in schools already in jettisoning value neutrality since, as we have seen in Chapter 1, in 2011, public schools in New South Wales no longer claimed to be value free.\(^\text{23}\)

In another section, the *Values Education Study* reiterates the challenge to the idea that schools can be value-neutral by stating that “schools are not value free or value neutral zones of social and educational engagement.”\(^\text{24}\)

\(^{22}\) *Values Education Study*, p. 16. This is echoed again by Terence H McLaughlin, University Lecturer in Education at the University of Cambridge, in a forum discussion at the National Values Education Forum (2005), p.10.
\(^{23}\) See Chapter 1, footnote 39.
\(^{24}\) *Values Education Study*, *op.cit.*, p. 12.
The Values for Australian Schooling Professional Learning Resources for Secondary contains the following statement: “Schools have always been engaged in values education, though in varying degrees of explicitness and consciousness.”

The impossibility of a value neutral education was taken up forcefully by Nazreen Dasoo of the Department of Education Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg. Dasoo was one of the international guest speakers who gave a keynote address to the National Values Education Forum in 2008. Dasoo acknowledged that some scholars argue that values education has “no place in the classroom and that teachers’ practices must be oriented as much as possible towards disinterestedness, allowing learners to make their own voluntary choices regarding how to conduct their lives.” She claimed, however, that such a notion of schooling was “foolhardy”. Human interaction, she said, is “saturated with messages of what people value or not and we, whether overtly or covertly through our behaviour send such values messages”. I think Dasoo touched on the root of why the idea of values neutrality is untenable. Values, Dasoo claimed, are not just “overtly taught, but are also embodied in patterns of social relations, interactions, codes of conduct and modes of discourse amongst learners themselves as they engage in school activities and in their interaction with the teachers”. Values education, she went on to claim, “is a complex, yet culturally invaluable practice precisely because of these encounters.”

This perspective was supported by another international visitor to the National Values Education Conference in 2009, Ameeta Wattal, the Principal of Springdales School, in New Delhi, India. Wattal stated that the “basic concern of education is to enable children to make sense of life and develop their potential, to define and pursue a purpose and recognize the right of others to do the same.” Wattal called these “time-tested tenets” the foundations of any meaningful education and argued that they imply that education cannot be value-neutral or values free.

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 National Values Education Conference (2009), p. 24
31 National Values Education Conference (2009), p. 24
The emphasis placed on the impossibility of values-neutrality in schools in the literature of the VEASP is part of a reaction to the past 40 years or so of educational philosophy which has been scattered with assertions about the relativity of values and the deeply personal nature of these values. As one educational writer has commented:

> It is fashionable these days in discussing moral education to ask 'if we are to teach values, whose values are we to teach?' This is often asked rhetorically as if to silence anyone who believes that values should be taught, and certainly is used to label as naïve anyone who thinks that there could be any values we all hold in common.\(^{32}\)

The assertion of the relativity and subjectivity of values has often been accompanied by a rounded criticism of any sort of judgement of others’ values. The paradoxical nature of this position is apparent in that claims of relativity and subjectivity have not stopped criticism of all values. For example some of the negative values which are roundly condemned in schools include bullying or using power inequities to get what one wants, putting others down in order to raise one’s own self worth and privileging one’s own sex or race to the detriment of other races or the other sex. However, this paradox seems to have escaped many, probably because innately, the majority of people easily see the injustices in such values so that there is a consensus about their condemnation. This in itself implies that there is common agreement about the values of justice and the consistent treatment of others.

In the context of commentary on common values and judgementalism, George Orwell made some acute observations. He realized how easy it was to fall into the paradox of apparent non-judgmentalism accompanied by censure of certain “heterodox” opinions in his own time.

> At any given moment there is an orthodoxy, a body of ideas which it is assumed that all right-thinking people will accept without question. It is not exactly forbidden to say this, that or the other, but it is not done to say it, just

as in mid-Victorian times it was not done to mention trousers in the presence of a lady. Anyone who challenges the prevailing orthodoxy finds himself silenced with surprising effectiveness. A genuinely unfashionable opinion is almost never given a fair hearing, either in the popular press or in the highbrow periodicals.\textsuperscript{33}

It is this sort of orthodoxy that has dominated educational philosophy for many years and with which the speakers and documents of the Project I have cited disagree. It was orthodoxy for many years that education had to be values free. But this orthodoxy masked the fact that there were certain values which were embedded in education, even if they were not acknowledged explicitly. The acknowledgment that there is no such thing as value neutrality in education is an important philosophical position adopted by the VEASP. It paves the way for a renewed emphasis on values education in schools.

\subsection*{3.2.2. Common Values Exist}

The VEASP was based on another assertion: that there are certain values which are common to all Australians and which it is desirable for all Australians to adopt.\textsuperscript{34} This assertion has not been defended philosophically within the VEASP.

To claim that some values are recognised as non-negotiably good is a reversal of the view commonly held in the 40 years prior to the change of the millennium and noted above; that is, the view that values are subjective and that therefore all individuals had the privilege of surveying the values available to them and choosing those which

\textsuperscript{33} George Orwell, \textit{The Freedom of the Press}. This article was apparently intended as the Preface to \textit{Animal Farm}, but was omitted from the first edition. The article is a lament by Orwell occasioned by the unwillingness of publishers to have anything to do with \textit{Animal Farm} during or after World War II. The novel was a biting satire of the USSR and the USSR, an ally of Britain at the time. The article is printed as Appendix 1 in Orwell, G, \textit{Animal Farm}, Penguin Modern Classics, London, 1989, pp. 97 – 107. Orwell’s observation may account for the paradox of an attitude of non-judgmentalism which nevertheless does judge certain opinions, values or views as worthy of being condemned by all.

\textsuperscript{34} The Professional Learning Resources for Secondary refers to “a set of core shared values”, see \textit{Values for Australian Schooling Professional Learning Resources – Secondary (2005)}, p. 1.
they deemed appropriate or suitable for themselves without fear of being judged by others.

This view was problematized by Neil Hawkes, the keynote speaker at the 2006 National Values Education Forum when he stated that values-based schools operated on the basis of “‘universal values’ (love, peace, respect, cooperation, justice etc.) that people want regardless of the community in which they work”. The purpose of values education was to enable “the school to think about positive universal values and the ways to develop and express them, and to inspire pupils to live expressing positive values in their lives”.35

This contribution to the 2006 Forum by Hawkes was viewed positively because there was a groundswell of approval in the Project for the proposition that certain universal values do exist. I have already mentioned that the official documents of the Project claimed that there are core or shared Australian values.

Such a declaration on the part of the Project is hardly surprising given that the main document of the Project was the National Framework which articulated the Nine Values for Australian Schooling. But Neil Hawkes’ declaration goes further and claims that the values are not only common to Australians, but are universal. We will see that other presenters at the forums made the same claim; that there are universal values which we need to inculcate in all children.

Before examining what I have been referring to as the common values which many contributors to the VEASP claimed existed amongst Australians, a distinction should be made between common values, community values and universal values. Common values can be understood simply as those which are held by many people and the work of the VEASP has shown that there is a broad consensus regarding these in Australia. Community values are those which belong to a group and these were plumbed in some of the school audits that I will look at below. As we will see, these community values overlap substantially with the common values that formed part of the consensus mentioned above. It is these common and community values which

are referred to as "shared, core values" in the VEASP documentation.\textsuperscript{36} Universal values on the other hand, are those which would be held by all thoughtful and well-disposed human beings. Hawkes' contention, above, that the common or community values that can be isolated in Australia are also universal needs to be examined. To this end, I would like to briefly survey some of the philosophical arguments underpinning the claim that universal values exist.

Firstly then, a brief survey of some of the arguments for the existence of universal values.

The idea that there exist universal values which belong to all people is not a settled proposition in philosophy but there are certainly writers who have defended their existence. One of the most useful expositions of this proposition is that of Sabina Alkire who has produced a comparison of accounts of human flourishing. Alkire compared the philosophical accounts of universal human goods from scholars in the fields of philosophy, psychology and social science. From philosophy she used the accounts of John Finnis, Germaine Grisez and Joseph Boyle\textsuperscript{37}, Martha Nussbaum\textsuperscript{38}, and James Griffin\textsuperscript{39}; from the field of psychology, the accounts of Milton Rokeach and Shalom Schwartz; and from social science those of Manfred Max-Neef, Robert Cummins and Maureen Ramsay. From the values identified by these writers, Alkire then constructed a list of values common to all of them. The first seven of these are:

1. Life (health, security, reproduction);
2. Understanding for its own sake;
3. Skilful performance and production;
4. Creative expression (play, humour, sport);
5. Friendship and affiliation;
6. Meaningful choice and identity;
7. Inner harmony between feelings judgements and behaviour.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{37} Grisez, Boyle and Finnis, “Practical Principles, Moral Truth and Ultimate Ends”, \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{40} Alkire, S, “The Basic Dimensions of Human Flourishing: A Comparison of Accounts”, \textit{op.cit.}, p 99.
Alkire’s list does not pretend to be exhaustive or final but it is interesting that amongst these seven can be found values which overlap with the Nine Values for Australian Schooling.\(^4^1\)

It could be argued for example, that in Alkire’s list, “Understanding for its own sake”, “Skilful performance and production” and “Creative expression in play, humour and sport” are the central business of schools; it could also be argued that amongst the Nine Values identified in the VEASP are some such as “Responsibility”, “Doing your best” and “Freedom” that complement or are necessary for the three values identified by Alkire to be fulfilled in students.

“Life” as the first of Alkire’s values is clearly linked to the VEASP values of “Care and Compassion” since the preservation of life and health demands care of self and others. “Friendship and affiliation” overlap with “Understanding, tolerance and inclusion”, a “Fair Go” and “Respect”, as well as with care for others. Inner harmony between feelings, judgments and behaviour, the seventh value on Alkire’s list, is linked to “Integrity” and “Honesty” in the Nine VEASP Values; while “Meaningful choice and identity” are linked to “Freedom”.

The idea of universal values is also reinforced by the consensus of South African teachers who identified Respect, Responsibility, Tolerance, *Ubuntu* (a mixture of human dignity and solidarity), Honesty and Love as values they regarded as commonly held or essential.\(^4^2\) Four of these “South African” values coincide exactly with four of the values identified in the VEASP.\(^4^3\) So we can feel more confident of arguments that suggest these four values: respect, responsibility, tolerance and honesty are universal values and hence that they contribute to enabling human beings to live well in society. The common values which have emerged from the very different contexts surveyed within this study of the VEASP were those mentioned above as well as fairness (or justice).\(^4^4\)

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\(^4^3\) *National Framework* (2005). It seems fairly clear too that the overlap could be highlighted even more if *Ubuntu* and Love in the African context were translated to “Fair Go” and “Care and Compassion” respectively in the Australian context.
\(^4^4\) See Hawkes, footnote 30; Dasoo, footnote 31; Furco, footnote 32; Salisbury High, footnote 38 and Glendale East, footnote 40. Also footnote 53 below.
Dr Andrew Furco, mentioned above, during the National Values Education Forum in 2008 made an important contribution to the understanding of the idea that there are values which are universal. While taking for granted that there are such universal or core values as love and respect, his research on these core values showed that these values are nuanced in different cultures mainly because of how they were interpreted and put into practice, or in his words, “operationalized”. 45

This allowance for cultural nuance by Furco explains how there can be universal or core values and at the same time, that customary expressions of these values within different cultures can make the values appear to be different. 46 In other words, what can sometimes be seen as a divergence of values is not really a divergence in the values themselves as much as a difference in how these values are expressed.

Furco’s understanding is reinforced by work in other professions. Grace and Cohen in their work on business ethics have stated that there can exist a pluralism of moral principles in the cultural sense which are themselves grounded in “commonly shared universal principles”. 47 Analogously, there could be culturally different values which nevertheless remit to universal values. Another expression of this idea by the same authors is that “although specific rules might differ from culture to culture, they are nevertheless grounded in the same overarching principles.” 48

From these examples defending the validity of the notion of universal values, I would now like to explore views about values implicit in the Professional Learning Resources produced by the VEASP before examining conclusions by many individual schools involved in the VEASP. In both of these contexts, the view that common values exist and should be promoted in Australian Schools is clearly expressed. I will then explore what has been called the “bottom-up” approach to

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45 National Values Education Forum (2008), p. 30. Dasoo, mentioned above, also emphasized how the values she found most often mentioned by South African teachers are often “operationalized” in different ways by different people depending on how they judge certain actions. She emphasized the presence of values implicit in school practices. 46 Ibid., p. 30.
48 Ibid.
identifying values in the Project, an approach that some experts have seen as a strength of the values education initiatives in Australian schools.

In the Professional Learning Resources published in 2005 to assist with the implementation of the Values Education in Australian Schools, it is clearly stated that one of the assumptions of the Draft Framework is “that there are some core values that can be identified and broadly agreed on as the values that underpin the sort of democratic and civil Australian society we aspire to be”. The same document recognizes that schools exist within societies which present students with “a plethora of influences and values options .... that may contrast and conflict with the values regimes that the school community is trying to foster.” The document also made it clear that a school that is:

carefully fostering inclusive, collaborative sharing and peaceful forms of conflict resolution will need to assist students in dealing with contrasting options such as competitiveness, intolerance and the use of force or bullying that can sometimes present themselves in peer groups, media news, TV programmes, sport and even the public behaviours of celebrities.

The Professional Learning Resources therefore privileges the idea of an “agreed set of values” and “common ground that schools can work in”, rather than concentrating on a possible plurality of values. There are also many examples of schools in the Project claiming that common values need to be taught in schools. I have chosen three examples to highlight this point.

The examples I will use could be viewed simply as a consensus on community values because they arise from a reflection within restricted populations or communities. Nevertheless as mentioned above, what is notable about the values chosen by the communities is their continuity with the values distilled from the

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50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., p. 12.
52 Ibid., p. 12.
philosophers and thinkers that Alkire compared in her work on universal values. In the absence of a wide discrepancy between the common and community values referred to in the documentation of the VEASP and these universal values, the case that the principal common and community values isolated in the VEASP are universal is reinforced.

The first example comes from Salisbury High School, already mentioned above. Salisbury High began its values implementation with a values survey of the whole school community: parents, teachers and students. Some of the teachers at the school were apprehensive about this approach as they feared it would show a disparity between what they thought were good values and what the parents or students might think were values worth pursuing. However, the school surveys “revealed an incredibly high commonality between the three groups”\(^{54}\), according to the report the school wrote for the study; in fact all groups agreed that “relationships, respect, organization, success and honesty”\(^{55}\) were the most important values. Despite the agreement of the groups, clearly “relationships”, “organization” and “success” are not values. Rather relationships refer to the contexts of interaction within which values can be exemplified and developed; effective organization also provides a context for the development of desirable values; and success refers to the fulfilment of potential in those activities which are the goals of schooling in Australia – academic, artistic and sporting competence or excellence.

The inclusion of the terms relationships and organization as values by the authors of the report is likely to reflect the school community’s desire to highlight the necessity of valuing positive relationships and good organization, since they encourage the development of respect, care, responsibility, diligence and other values. The differences amongst the parents, teachers and students resided in the priority each one of these groups gave to the values. The Salisbury High School example which points towards common values is particularly convincing as the survey it carried out did not just concentrate on sample studies. It reached 90% – 100% of parents, teachers and students in the Salisbury High School Community.

\(^{55}\) See the table on *ibid.*, p. 31.
The second example comes from the same 2004 Study. Glendale East Public School on the Central Coast of NSW adopted the Living Values program\(^6\), associated with the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University\(^7\) which has UNESCO and UNICEF support. Brahma Kumaris promotes positive change through the adoption of values as well as virtues. Its importance in the present context is that it claims that the values and virtues it promotes are universally beneficial. The worth of the Living Values program in the eyes of those who were promoting Glendale’s values education implementation resided precisely in the common language it provided for students, parents and staff to deal with conflict resolution and manage social interaction.\(^8\)

The third example I wish to use comes from the Chapel Hill Cluster of Schools in Queensland. The report by this Cluster recorded initial objections by the staff to the introduction of values education in their school. These objections included the following statements:

- Whose values are we talking about?
- This all smacks of indoctrination.
- Are values taught or caught?
- If values is (sic) about moralizing, I’m not interested.
- Values are easy to agree on until you start unpacking them in real contexts, with real people who hold different world views.\(^9\)

These responses indicate an initial reluctance to adopt any values education initiative. The reluctance was overcome by challenging the teachers to think of values education less in terms of the questions they had posed and more in terms of “engaging young people in passionate, relevant and rigorous debate about the deeper questions confronting their lives and their world, and providing them with the intellectual tools to be able to confidently participate in the process”.\(^6\)

\(^6\) Ibid., p.50.
\(^9\) Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p. 32.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 33.
This example of reframing what values education consists of highlights the importance of inquiry as a crucial element of values education. Values education which involves inquiry into values divides it neatly off from mere indoctrination or moralizing. The following description of how the Chapel Hill cluster implemented their values education program illustrates this inquiry based approach and shows how successful it was in bringing the sceptical teachers on board.

The challenge of “engaging young people in.. debate about the deeper questions” led teachers in the Chapel Hill cluster to first appreciate that values were embedded in their work and then to be open to trying to align the schools’ espoused values with “lived values”. Some staff and parents became enthusiastic about the project and the project itself moved from what was perceived as a top-down imposition to a bottom-up push.\(^{61}\) This was only made possible by beginning the whole endeavour with a school values “audit” or scan that showed up which values predominated already in the schools of the cluster and which desirable values were missing.\(^{62}\)

The examples given above from the VEASP suggest a recognition that a common set of values actually exists across the spectrum of Australian people, regardless of age and background. This understanding of values education not as a battleground of conflicting interests, but as an enterprise capable of being pursued because there are common values we agree upon, was a result of the discussions and questions worked through in VEGPSP Stage 1. The experience of turning scepticism into active acceptance helped with Stage 2 of the VEGPSP and when it was undertaken, questions such as the one we have seen above, “whose values were to be inculcated?”, were not seen as stone-walling the effort to reach a set of common values that could be taught. Rather, they were seen as a starting point for discussions about values education.\(^{63}\)

\(^{61}\) Ibid., p 34.
\(^{62}\) Ibid., p. 36.
\(^{63}\) This was the experience of the Griffith Primary and Secondary Schools Cluster (NSW), Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), p. 57 see Key Message No. 4 and 5.
One important finding of the VEGPSP Stage 2 was that the assumption that there are values common to people of different backgrounds enhanced intercultural exchanges amongst schools.64

The years of accepting the prevailing relativism and non-judgmentalism had produced a values vacuum in education and one of the aims of the VEASP was to fill that vacuum by endorsing the positive values that, as we have seen in this chapter, many of the clusters of schools actually came to adopt. As noted above, these were values broadly associated with living well personally and within one’s community – responsibility, respect, honesty and fairness or justice.

An important objection to drawing conclusions from the VEASP about the existence of common values needs to be addressed. The objection is that it is not valid to draw from the Project some sort of evidence for the existence of common values, because the existence of these values was implicit if not explicit in the very notion of mandating values education in Australian schools. Certainly the early documents of the project do not enter into discussion about the existence of values. They simply assume that they exist. In the government brief for the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project - Stage 1 the starting point for the schools was to identify the values of the communities which the schools served and to work together in a whole school approach, to see these values actualized.65 This could be construed as settling the debate about the existence of common values before the schools began their task.

The objection I have outlined above needs to be interrogated. In a certain sense, the Project’s starting point was that common values existed. Nevertheless schools found in the process of implementing values education initiatives that the idea of common values resonated with their stakeholders. Most schools seemed to be very aware that a set of predetermined values could not be imposed on their school community.

Many schools began their values implementation by consultation with the school

64 Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), p.66.
65 Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1(2006), p. 12. This was somewhat clumsily expressed in the VEGPSP Stage 1 in the following way: “what the community [in which particular schools found themselves] values (its guiding ethos) (sic), and work[...] together (whole school approach) to see it actualized.”
community. Some schools consulted their students, others consulted students and teachers while others consulted students, teachers and parents. What emerged more often than not was a consensus between all the stakeholders that some values have to be fostered in order to make schools better places in which to live and learn.

The experience and comments of some of the teachers in the Chapel Hill Cluster of schools at the commencement of the Project, as mentioned above 66, are evidence that the conclusion that there are common, shared values can emerge despite initial scepticism. The Project encouraged schools to identify those common values which would make the school community a better community rather than those values which school community members might hold simply as individuals.

As noted above, an important characteristic of the Project which lends weight to the contention that common values exist and are not simply assumed to exist from the very start, was its ‘bottom up’ approach. 67. This ‘bottom up’ approach meant that the Project started in the schools and schools were given a relatively free hand to implement their values programs as they saw fit. The consensus reached by many schools about the most important values is even more convincing given this ‘bottom up’ approach and the lack of constraints on their initiatives. The findings of the schools then informed the conclusions to the Project. The alternative ‘top down’ approach would have seen detailed mandated values being taught didactically via mandated pedagogies. It is a genuine strength of the Australian approach that it has

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66 See footnote 55 above.
67 National Values Education Conference (2009), p. 6. The reference refers to the ‘ground up’ fashion in which the values education initiatives in the National Values Education in Schools Project developed. The Nine Values from the Framework were given to the schools or clusters of schools which were then urged to use them to respond to individual school and community needs. This bottom-up approach may go some way towards solving what Amelie Oksenberg Rorty has called the ‘bootstrap problems’ within moral education. ‘Bootstrap problems’ refer to the circularity involved in efforts to develop civic values which are, in the end, those which will perpetuate the civic space from which they arise. Civicly educated young people reproduce the type of society which spawned them. See Rorty, A O, “Morality as an Educational Institution”, in Halstead J M and McLaughlin, T H (eds), Education in Morality, Routledge, London, 1999, p. 17. A solution to the ‘bootstrap problem’ may lie in the recognition of universal and common values which are necessary for any society. See also Dr Ruth Deakin Crick. Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (2008), p.37. These were referred to in Chapter 1, p. 21.
embedded this ‘ground-up’ approach into the Project. This was recognized as valuable by a number of Forum guests from overseas.

3.3 Values Education and Moral Education

John White includes as moral education some account of moral development particularly of the kind favoured by Lawrence Kohlberg, some account of rules and principles which should inform young persons’ lives, either as taught to them or as investigated in such a way that the young people adopt these principles and thus become autonomous moral agents, and lastly as the acquisition by young people of behavioural dispositions which allow them to flourish as human beings and as citizens of a community.

It is useful to compare this multi-faceted description of moral education to the following one from David Carr.

[T]he problem of moral education is primarily that of how individual human lives might acquire meaning and purpose through the recognition and appreciation of a significant moral dimension to human experience which can serve to enhance personal life and growth. Natural feeling may well incline a young mother to love her child, and a young man may be well disposed by his social training to respect the property of others – but moral education seeks to integrate such training and sentiments with a deeper understanding of how they contribute to a positive and worthwhile way of living; it aims to

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68 Ibid., p. 43. David Brown from the Curriculum Corporation; ibid., p. 49. Dr Ruth Deakin Crick mentions the “bottom-up” approach also. See footnote below.  
69 National Values Education Forum (2007), Dr Andrew Furco, p. 26; Professor Trish Jones, Temple University, USA, p.44-45. National Values Education Forum (2008), Andrew Furco, p.29, 32; Amanda Day from the Dept of Education, Employment and Workplace Training on Australia’s becoming a model for OECD countries in Values Education, p. 41; and Dr Ruth Deakin Crick, “She [Dr Ruth Deakin Crick] thought that what was happening in Australia may be unique in the world…. There is a profound fault line in education and the top-down idea belonged to modernity……. [T]he National Framework…. is a brave and radical step to explore how knowledge creation and use is about values…. Bottom-up procedures, valuing the personal, without losing the rigour of what we expect, may well provide a more effective way of thinking about the incorporation of values.” p. 49.  
articulate what is conducive to individual and social flourishing about such qualities and to show how they might be more effectively exhibited in particular human circumstances – in short to transform feeling and discipline into virtue. The basic aim of moral education then is to assist young people to live more meaningfully and rightly in the light of a clear recognition of the greater value for positive human development of some principles and qualities over others: that a life lived according to certain dispositions of honesty, self-control, fortitude, fairness, courtesy, tolerance, and so on is worthier and more fulfilling one than one lived in the vicious grip of dishonesty, intemperance, backsliding, prejudice and spite.\(^71\)

Synthesising the aims set out by White and Carr, the aim of moral education is to educate young people so that they can eventually choose to act in such a way that they can live fulfilled lives, flourish as individuals and contribute to flourishing communities and nations.

The question of what constitutes a flourishing or fulfilled life is one which arose in discussion with school communities during the Project.\(^72\) In turn, the question of what makes a flourishing life is connected to the development of character because it is the acquisition by young people of behavioural dispositions which allow them to flourish as human beings and as citizens of a community. Is it the case then that values education as it is envisaged by the VEASP serves this purpose?

Certainly Amanda Day, Assistant Director of the Student Engagement Section of the Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations speaking on behalf of the Department in her presentation to the National Values Education Conference in 2009, stated that values education was a form of moral education and even character education. She claimed that it should be an explicit aim of schools to train students’ characters and provide moral education” and further, that “schools that are engaged in values education are explicitly providing character training and a moral


\(^72\) See footnote 86 below.
education”.73 The intervention of Ms Day seems to make it clear that the Australian Government envisaged values education as moral education and as character training. By invoking the character training aspect of values education Ms Day seems to hearken back to a much earlier era of educational intervention to improve character. Most current character education programs, as we have seen above,74 revolve more around virtues than they do around values.

The Values Education in Australian Schools Project, however, did not identify character development in particular as its goal; rather it simply identified nine values or sets of values, as noted above: 1. Care and Compassion, 2. Doing Your Best, 3. Fair Go, 4. Freedom, 5. Honesty and Trustworthiness, 6. Integrity, 7. Respect, 8. Responsibility, 9. Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion.75 It did suggest that different pedagogies be employed in order to embed these values in schools but did not prescribe any specific pedagogy. As mentioned earlier, the only legal requirement with respect to values education in schools is that the government poster containing the values be displayed somewhere in the school.

If we can isolate some values such as respect, responsibility, tolerance and honesty, which are accepted by schools and within some of the literature as universally necessary for the flourishing of individuals and communities, is it enough for teachers to teach these and encourage students to practice them in order to establish flourishing communities and nations? Could it be said that teaching these values and encouraging them to be put into practice would constitute optimal moral education? I will argue that the answer to these questions depends upon how these values are taught and put into practice. There are two important elements which must be included in an optimal moral education program. The first is a consideration of the cognitive dimension of moral education and of the way in which people use their intelligence to analyse values and think about how they are made explicit in action.

74 As noted in Chapter 1, the biggest promoters of Character Education in the USA are the “Character Education Partnership” (http://www.character.org/) and the “Character Counts” coalition, (http://character_counts). For what seems to be the standard paper which articulates the need for character education in the USA, see Lickona, T “The Return of Character Education”, Educational Leadership, Vol 51, no.3, November 1993, pp. 6-11.
75 National Framework (2005) p. 4. The poster for the Nine Values for Australian Schooling does gesture in the direction of the concept of character by including at the bottom of the poster a quote from George Elliot, “Character is destiny”.

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As MacIntyre suggests, a person who has acquired these intellectual habits is more likely to grow to moral maturity and therefore know how to confront new situations and apply her already assimilated moral understanding to those situations. The second is the understanding of the concept of a value as involving the notion of virtues and a complementary appreciation of virtues as dispositions formed by habits of acting well. The second element recognises the possibility that a person who holds a certain value may or may not be capable of acting in accordance with that value. The person must develop the disposition to do so and this disposition is born of a repetition of acts which form habits. Such an approach takes acts engendered by repetition and which form habits of acting to be a fundamental part of optimal moral education. I consider these two features to be lacking in the VEASP.

3.3.1 The role and limits of cognition in moral education.

The cognitive dimension of moral education involves the ability to engage in moral reasoning. One of the most important thinkers in the area of moral reasoning is Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg attempted to do for the moral reasoning of children what Jean Piaget had done for children’s overall intellectual development; that is, to identify the stages of moral development. His methodology was to present young people of 10, 13 and 16 years with moral dilemmas and attempt to identify the reasoning behind their responses.

Using this method Kohlberg identified six stages of development through which a child progresses from the morality of obedience and punishment, through an

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76 This is explored in depth in MacIntyre, A, “How to seem virtuous without actually being so” Halstead, J M and McLaughlin, T H (eds), Education in Morality, Routledge, London, 1999, pp. 118 – 131. In this article, MacIntyre is very critical of the type of “moral consensus” approach to virtuous action which, under the name of values, seems to inform the VEASP. He claims that a systematic exploration of these values or virtues would reveal deep contradictions. I do not dispute this may create a problem, but I refer to MacIntyre here above all as an advocate for serious cognition in moral education and also for his insight into what moral education without systematic thinking can lead to; i.e. to seeking the approval of those who advance the values or virtues in question, rather than thinking through the consequences of a commitment to those values or virtues. He presents some scenarios in pages 130-131 which illustrate his main thesis.

understanding of morality from the point of view of how one ought to act as a good member of one’s family and then as a good member of one’s own society. The 5th stage involves abstraction from particular societies. The responses to hypothetical ethical scenarios of those who have reached this stage normally consider questions such as “What makes for a good society?” Stage 6 involves defining the principles by which we achieve justice. And the principles arrived at in Stage 6, for Kohlberg, may lead to civil disobedience in the face of unjust laws. Kohlberg thought that each successive stage was superior to the one before.

Subsequent research using Kohlberg’s theory of moral development has revealed difficulties with the theory. Amongst the first was the prospect of falsification of aspects of the theory due to gender bias, noted by Carol Gilligan in 1982. But the critiques have not ended there. Another critique sees Kohlbergian moral development as ignoring the role of upbringing, parents and society in the development of a child’s sense of morality and therefore as favouring “atomic individualism”. In an attempt to redress this imbalance Kohlberg sought to become involved in the actual moral education of young people in real communities of young people. To this end he helped set up small communities called “just communities” within already operating schools. These communities were run according to principles of equality and democracy. Kohlberg even set up a distinct school along these lines himself; this may indicate that he also implicitly recognised the need to supplement intellectual inquiry and theorising within moral education with practical implementation of the ideals implicit in the notion of “just communities”.

However, moral stage theory is now regarded by many as an inaccurate account of moral development and one of the critiques of Kohlberg’s theory is that its explicit focus was “well nigh exclusively on the cognitive aspects of individual moral

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78 Ibid.
80 White, J, “Moral Education”, op.cit.
81 Crain, op.cit.
psychology." As such, it ignored “other important affective and motivational dimensions of moral life and much in the way of a satisfactory story about how cognitive processes informed by rational principles might come to exercise a significant impact upon the actual conduct of individual agents.”

I accept that this is an accurate critique of Kohlberg who, as some critics have noted, is too beholden to “rational prescriptivity” and to an idealist, purely intellectual ethics. Probably as a result of Kohlberg’s theory ceding ground to a more comprehensive understanding of the moral life offered by those who are described as virtue ethicists, the cognitive requirements of moral reasoning and acting have been attenuated.

This attenuation probably owes something to the inadequacy of another, more widespread, method of moral education: Values Clarification. Values Clarification began in the 1960s as a way of approaching moral issues which eschewed indoctrination and explicit instruction of young people as to what behaviour was moral and what was immoral. The whole aim of Values Clarification was not to instruct children didactically but to facilitate discussion topics so that students could come to a clarification of the values shared by society as a whole and of their own values. As we have seen in Chapter 1, Harold Kirschenbaum was one of the major figures in the Values Clarification movement. Initially he thought that children, using the Values Clarification method, would “naturally” come to the “correct” conclusions – the ones he assumed all rational young people would come to. The range of issues that Values Clarification programs aimed at opening up was broad and sometimes contentious. Political issues, questions about family and social relations, forms of love, sexual activity, drug use, family, friends, love, religious belief, the use of leisure time and personal tastes were among those topics. Such programs aimed to provide a “psychologically safe” place in which to discuss these issues. Students were then given some “values processes” or “values skills” with

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86 See Kirschenbaum, *op.cit.*, (1992), pp. 1 - 5. Kirschenbaum claims that some educators used the program to place traditional values and morals in question and promote moral relativism, which was never the aim of the program.
87 Chapter 1, footnote 33.
which to approach these issues so that they would come to an understanding of their own and of social values generally. In this way it was hoped students would adopt values which were rationally justifiable and that made sense to them and would internalize these values, rather than simply adopt them (or reject them) because they were recommended by authority figures. In other words, the anticipated outcome was that they would “understand, internalize and act upon such traditional values as respect, caring, friendship and cooperation.”

The Values Clarification movement was very popular in the 1970s, had its apogee in 1985 but then began to wane as a system of moral education and has continued to do so despite its continued use in some organizations, including schools. However, Values Clarification was top heavy with the cognitive or rational aspects of values education. The “skills and processes” involved in Values Clarification were those involved in clarifying values, not putting them into practice. Not unlike Kohlberg’s stage theory, Values Clarification did not take some of the more nuanced aspects of moral education into account. This overview of Values Clarification as a movement has been necessary to distinguish it from values clarification without capital letters i.e. values clarification in the sense of elucidation and explanation, which is a necessary part of the process of optimal moral education. Despite the movement away from the mainly intellectual understanding of values, the cognitive dimension of moral action is important. The grass roots attempts of the clusters of schools in the VEASP have confirmed this.

The introduction of values education in some schools in Stage 1 of the VEGPSP almost immediately sparked a broadening of the horizon of values education into more philosophical directions. The Chapel Hill Cluster in Queensland, once they overcame the initial scepticism of staff, mentioned above, over questions such as “whose values” would be taught, began an in-depth discussion of what values could mean. After the initial reluctance on the part of some staff, the values education team could eventually report that the teaching staff had committed itself to:

values education which goes far beyond a simplistic or superficial approach.... values education that was concerned not only with developing

90 Ibid., p.1.
91 Nevertheless, it has waned so much that it does not come up in Google search, nor even in Wikipedia in 2013, whereas it did up until 2008.
92 See note 55.
cognitive understandings of what values might look like, feel like and sound like in lived contexts, but also with educating our students, P – 12, to **think well** and to ask important questions (*emphasis in the original*).\(^{93}\)

This cluster eventually claimed in its report that the introduction of values education had prompted questions such as “What does it mean to live a fulfilled human life?”\(^{94}\) This type of questioning is the beginning of an enquiry into what makes for a flourishing life which, as we have seen at the beginning of this section, is integral to moral education. The introduction of values education provoked the teaching staff to think about what “habits of mind” they ought to be seeking to instil in their students.\(^ {95}\) The North Midlands Cluster in Tasmania also used the term “habits of mind” to help their students develop an understanding of values.\(^ {96}\) I do not know whether both clusters had the same understanding of “habits of mind” but the Tasmanian cluster did describe them as including: “accepting myself, taking risks, being independent, [recognizing] ‘I can do it’, working tough (doing things that are not easy), being tolerant of others, thinking first (in conflict situations), playing by the rules [and practising] social responsibility.”\(^ {97}\)

The connection between developing and adopting a common language or terminology of values – as the Tasmanian cluster did - and a greater understanding of values themselves was pointed out by one cluster of schools in the second stage of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project. As mentioned in Chapter 2\(^ {98}\), the University Associate of the Lanyon Cluster of Schools in the ACT, Dr Thomas Nielsen claimed that the use of a common language “had effects that go beyond communicative competence”.\(^ {99}\) Dr Nielsen noted the close connection between language and the very process of thinking and claimed that having a values

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\(^{93}\) *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006)*, p. 33.

\(^{94}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{95}\) *Ibid.*, p. 35. The same cluster of schools also reported that one of the most important consequences of their values education exploration was that “we do have an enhanced and expanded understanding of ourselves, values education and how we can best support our students to live fulfilled human lives (emphasis in the original).”, *ibid.*, p. 36.


\(^{97}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{98}\) Chapter 2, footnote 18.

\(^{99}\) *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008)*, p. 25.
“metalanguage”\textsuperscript{100} in which to express themselves allowed students to explore their own values, consolidate and build values-based knowledge. It also gave students a vocabulary which aided them in resolving day to day problems.

Thus, by weaving into the language development the realm of values and human relationships, we empower students by making them values literate – [this develops] a special kind of student autonomy I would argue, which makes anything else related to values education that much more potent.\textsuperscript{101}

These examples provide evidence that, particularly at the beginning stages of values education, the use of clearly defined values terms opens up for the students a realm of cognition which other school disciplines do not – the realm of questions about how a person should live and in what ways the answer to the question about living well might be translated into action.

As we have seen in Chapter 2 also, some teachers who recognized the need to have their students engage intellectually with values concepts used the movement referred to as “Philosophy in the Classroom”\textsuperscript{102} to do so. “Philosophy in the Classroom” encouraged students to think about and discuss values using real life or fictional contexts and to accept the need to learn about values by exploring and examining which values their schools should adhere to.

The experience of The Gold Coast North Cluster of Schools in Queensland illustrates this kind of approach. Without invoking the name of “Philosophy in the Classroom”, this cluster adopted, the “community of inquiry” approach favoured by that movement in order to explore values education. The cluster included the following point amongst their “Key Messages” when they reported their findings.

Values education and philosophy can engage students in a search for meaning and help them find ways to connect their own ideas and perspectives with

\textsuperscript{100} Dr Nielsen’s use of the term “metalanguage” here is not philosophically precise. He is pointing to the opening up of a realm of knowledge with its own vocabulary, of rules for example, or norms, attitudes and ways of behaving which contribute to the betterment of schools and those who belong to them.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid. In the context of values - laden, student - centred pedagogies, the summary of the VEGPSP – Stage 2 acknowledged the importance of moving “from cognitive understandings of values towards manifesting values in personal and pro-social behaviour.” See \textit{ibid.}, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{102} This project is now known as Philosophy in Schools which is the way it is referred to in Chapter 2. See \url{http://philosophyinschools.nsw.com.au/}
those of others so they may build a coherent understanding of the world and their experience of it.\textsuperscript{103}

Two years later, some of the schools in this cluster, regrouped and renamed as the Oxenford Cluster, continued the “Philosophy in the Classroom” approach. Amongst the Key Messages in their reporting of the second stage of the Project, they included the following claims.

1. Philosophy in the classroom can be used to develop and implement a learning framework based on ethical reasoning that is inherently rich in values education concepts.
2. Inquiry-based learning is enriched when teachers systematically develop students’ deep thinking and analytic questioning skills.\textsuperscript{104}

Another cluster of Schools in Stage 2 of the Project, even though they did not commence their values education with “Philosophy in the Classroom”, mentioned the development of higher order thinking and critical thinking as some of the skills that had to be taught to the students if they are to have meaningful discussions of values.\textsuperscript{105} A different cluster of schools reported the necessity of exploring “values propositions” as a starting point for learning and a “scaffold for developing a discourse and vocabulary to support student cognitive development.”\textsuperscript{106} Yet another cluster of schools adopted Socratic Circles\textsuperscript{107} as their way of encouraging “deeper engagement with and understanding of values concepts in middle secondary school.”\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{103} Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p 120. The SA Alliance of Schools Cluster in South Australia
\textsuperscript{104} Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), p. 83. See the treatment of Philosophy in Schools as a pedagogy which enhances student behaviour in Chapter 2, p. 58 footnotes 113-114.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 90 (Sustainable Values Townsville Cluster, Qld). See also the mention of the development of “higher order thinking skills” in the values discussions of The SA Alliance of Schools Cluster in South Australia, Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p. 136
\textsuperscript{107} “Socratic Circles” is a way of teaching and exploring issues based on the Socratic method which can be used for groups of students in the classroom. The standard text on it is Copeland, M, Socratic Circles: Fostering Critical and Creative Thinking in Middle and High School, Stenhouse Publishers, 2005. From an Australian perspective, see Cam, P, Thinking Together: Philosophical Inquiry for the Classroom, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1995.
\textsuperscript{108} VEGPSP – Stage 2, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 119 (Melbourne Interfaith Intercultural Cluster, Vic)
The benefits of “Philosophy in the Classroom” were also mentioned by The Cross Borders Values Community in the Values in Action Schools Project in 2010. In their Project report they posed for themselves the question of whether “philosophy [could be] a mechanism to explore ethical frameworks that underpin the behaviours we identify as values based”. Some successes with this approach were reported even to the point where students became mentors of their parents in the discussion of values related topics.

An additional impetus for a “Philosophy in the Classroom” approach to the exploration of values is that the practice involved in this program and in the Socratic circles and the communities of inquiry brings with it a development of certain values such as tolerance of difference and respect for the rights of others. This is developed in the very process of the Philosophy in the Classroom methodology because the procedural protocols of these programs involve, amongst other skills, attentive listening to what others say, building on the ideas of others, disagreeing respectfully and waiting one’s turn to contribute.

These examples from the VEASP show that on the one hand investigating an effective methodology for undertaking values education naturally calls forth an intellectual exploration of the values that are likely to be adopted. On the other hand these examples show that the exploration of these values in their cognitive element stimulates deeper thinking in students and this in turn, in some cases at least, is likely to be allied to a greater commitment to values education since students who engage both intellectually and practically via procedural protocols with values are more likely to identify with them. As the work of Matthew Lipman, the international pioneer of Philosophy for Children would lead us to expect, students who engage in communities of inquiry, do improve their abilities to evaluate arguments and can become more convinced of the worth or tenuousness of the values they hold. It is

109 Final Report VASP (October, 2010), p. 86
110 “By having [the children] think together with others, in a co-operative, self-correcting and contextually sensitive fashion, we help children to think more judiciously for themselves and nurture intellectual resilience. … What I insist upon, rather, is that philosophy is good for children, good for education and good for that strengthening of democracy that we are only beginning to investigate.” Anonymous, “An interview with Matthew Lipman”, Cogito, Vol. 13, No. 3, November, 1999, p. 162. Lipman’s central motivations in advancing Philosophy for Children by means of the communities of inquiry seems to have been twofold: firstly, assisting children to develop logical thinking and secondly helping them develop habits of philosophical inquiry and philosophical deliberation which he saw as going hand in hand, ibid., p. 160. On Lipman’s admission, John Dewey was a major...
clear that values education which does not involve some sort of cognitive understanding and exploration of values is impoverished since without such exploration, it can be criticized as a form of indoctrination. When accompanied by procedures that emphasise the virtues of civilized dialogue, a context is provided within which students are encouraged to participate and to take account of the contributions of their peers.

We have seen in this Chapter some of the wider reasons behind the introduction of the VEASP. The VEASP did its work assuming that value neutrality cannot exist in values education and that there exist values which are common to all people. These have been contested areas in the Philosophy of Education and the VEASP has been able to provide support for the notion of common or shared values within Australian communities. The chapter also contrasted values education with moral education and as a first approach to untangling the two introduced the notion of character and virtue and discussed the role and limits of cognition in moral education with special attention on the Philosophy in Schools pedagogy. The latter combines intellectual exploration of values with behavioural requirements for participants within discussions that are consistent with the values of respect, tolerance and co-operation.

In Chapter 4 I develop the argument that optimal moral education must include the notion of virtue. I will further argue that the findings of the VEASP are consistent with, if not dependent upon, an understanding of virtues in moral education and that the Project would have been enriched by including virtues in its understanding of values education.

Chapter 4

4. Optimal Moral Education

The first Section of this Chapter argues that the concept of virtue is the missing element in values education in so far as it purports to be an optimal moral education. It looks at some of the objections to the inclusion of virtue and argues that these conceptions misconstrue what it means to be virtuous. It argues too that an understanding of virtue is necessary for a complete moral education and that many of the findings of the VEASP have unwittingly included virtue, without explicitly recognising its inclusion.

Section 4.2 discusses some of the findings of the VEASP in the light of the argument presented in Section 4.1.

4.1 Virtues: the missing element in the VEASP

Chapter 3 examined the value of cognition in values education. However, my argument deliberately steered away from implying that values education can occur simply on the basis of the transmission of a body of knowledge about values. In Chapter 4 I now wish to address in detail what might be considered the other side of the coin and that is to address what is required beyond cognitive inquiry and values clarification if values education is to be optimal.

One of the most glaring lacunae in the VEASP is the absence of a serious treatment of the concept of virtues.

Virtues are defined as dispositions that a person has to act in desirable ways. Such dispositions are objective characteristics that people possess and they are acquired by
habituation. Habituation into certain ways of acting, which then constitute dispositions within a person are usually best acquired in youth although they can be acquired later in life as well. White alludes to the necessity of action not just knowledge in moral life when he states that “children need to become good, not merely to know about the good. Hence the vital importance of cultivating desirable dispositions in them” (my italics).

At this point, it is important to understand that what I am claiming is missing from the VEASP is not the adoption of one particular framework of virtue ethics, of which there are a number. Indeed, as Martha Nussbaum has pointed out, the idea that virtue ethics is a form of ethics distinct from the deontological ethics of Immanuel Kant or from utilitarian ethics is hard to sustain. She recognizes that the idea of virtue as dependent upon habituation and disposition appears also in Kant and utilitarian thinkers. Bernard Williams agrees with Nussbaum. He too grasps the very practical aspects of virtues well. As Nussbaum and Williams suggest, emphasis on virtue as an aspect of ethical competence does not constitute another theory of ethics, like deontology or utilitarianism. In a certain sense the whole point of a focus on virtues is that they escape classification into one of the neat theoretical categories:


3 Nussbaum, M, “Virtue Ethics: A Misleading Category”, The Journal of Ethics, 3: 1999, pp. 163 – 201. Nussbaum points to different moral philosophers whose philosophy is categorized as deontological or utilitarian, for example, yet who also refer to virtues. Kant, while insisting on his ethics of duty, speaks often of virtues as does the utilitarian, John Stuart Mill. Likewise Nussbaum has shown that modern “virtue ethicists” borrow elements from deontology, utilitarianism and consequentialism. There is a discussion of the aretaic aspects of deontological and utilitarian ethics also in Jan Steutal and David Carr, “Virtue Ethics and The Virtue approach to Moral Education” in Carr and Steutal (eds), op.cit., pp. 13 -14, which explains that the virtues that Nussbaum talks about in her article are in fact traits of character along the lines of virtues, but that ultimately, the ethical element of actions, what ‘bears ethical value’, still falls on good states of affairs for the utilitarian, and right action for the Kantian. Christine Swanton has also argued that Nietzsche can be seen as a virtue ethicist (See “Can Nietzsche be both an existentialist and a Virtue Ethicist?” in Timothy Chappell (ed), Values and Virtues: Aristotelianism in Contemporary Ethics, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, pp 171-188).
….. ethical theories are standardly presented as falling into three basic types, centering respectively on consequences, rights and virtues. One way of understanding this division into three is in terms of what each theory sees, at the most basic level, as bearing ethical value. For the first type of theory it is *good states of affairs*; for the second, it is *right action*; while virtue theory puts most emphasis on the idea of a *good person*, someone who could be described also as an ethically admirable person. The last is an important emphasis, and the notion of virtue is important in ethics; but its importance cannot be caught in this way, as the focus of a theory which is supposedly parallel to these other types of theory. Consequentialist and rights theories aim to systematize our principles or rules of action in ways that will, supposedly, help us to see what to do or to recommend in particular cases. A theory of the virtues cannot claim to do this: the theory itself says that what one needs in order to do and recommend the right things are virtues not a theory about virtues. Moreover, the thoughts of a virtuous person do not consist entirely or even mainly of thoughts about virtues or about paradigms of virtuous people. Indeed, they will sometimes be thoughts about rights or good consequences and this makes it clear that thoughts about the good person will have to use some such concepts. Virtue theory cannot be on the same level as the other types of ‘theory’.

The inclusion of virtues in the Project would not then be a matter of getting children to understand virtue theories and much less become ethicists, but of helping them to acquire virtues and to gradually understand the role of those virtues in facilitating good states of affairs or right action.

We shall see below how the concept of virtue fits neatly with many of the findings of the VEASP.

### 4.1.1 Virtue’s bad name

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4 Williams B “Virtues and Vices”, *op.cit.*, Section 2.
Given this neat fit the question arises of why the idea or even the term is effectively ignored, if not assiduously avoided, in the documents outlining or associated with the Project.

The first reason seems to be because virtue has a bad name. The reasons for this are various. Himmelfarb has summed up the evolution of the word very well and explained why it is out of favour:

The shift from “virtue” to “values” has had other unfortunate consequences. Having displaced virtue from the central position it once occupied as a defining attribute of the good life and of the good society, we have relegated it to the bedroom and the boudoir. When we now speak of virtue, we no longer think of the classical virtues of wisdom, justice, temperance and courage… Virtue is now understood in its sexual connotations of chastity and marital fidelity. One of the great mysteries of Western thought, the philosopher Leo Strauss has said, is how a word which used to mean the manliness of man has come to mean the chastity of women.

This mutation of the word “virtue” has the effect of narrowing the meaning of the word, reducing it to a matter of sexuality; and then of belittling and disparaging the sexual virtues themselves.\(^5\)

A quote from a populist philosophy column in an Australian broadsheet newspaper supports Himmelfarb’s analysis:

There are some words that have limited appeal outside the company of moral philosophers. Virtue is one example. In these more liberated times, the word can evoke a bygone era of Victorian priggishness, a world of celibacy and chastity belts. Or worse, it can lead us to entertain notions of Robespierrian terror.\(^6\)

The imperative that the language used in the Project be accessible and easily understood probably accounts in some way for the absence of the term “virtue”. The

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5 Himmelfarb, *op.cit.*, p. 15.
emergence of the philosophically respectable area of virtue ethics since 1958 has not yet issued in a popular and untainted understanding of the term.

Another reason for avoiding the term “virtue” in the Project may have been that the word seems to have religious connotations. One reason for this would almost certainly be the centrality of virtues in the development of Thomas Aquinas’s thirteenth century analysis of the moral life within the Catholic Tradition. In Aquinas’s understanding a human person, simply because s/he is human can develop virtues by dint of effort and habituation. These virtues are then natural dispositions towards good behaviour. These can be developed via our natural capacity for reason without recourse to the grace of God. What is more, salvation or the grace of God, when it does intervene, “does not destroy nature but perfects it”. For Aquinas, grace and what reason enables us to recognise as the best of human nature are not antagonistic.

The notion of virtue became even more identified with religious thinking when the major protagonists of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther and John Calvin, confronted Aquinas’s notion of virtue. Luther and Calvin were critical of Aquinas’s insistence on the notion of human virtues as being purely human. To the reformers this idea of virtue did not acknowledge the extent of the corruption of human nature. Emphasis on human virtues smacked of what is termed “works righteousness”, a

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8 Williams, op.cit. Williams points to Aquinas’s development and modification of Aristotle’s virtues. This notion of the virtues persists in the Catholic Church up to the present. See The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd Edition St Paul’s Publications, (1994) 2000, 1803 – 1809. For the theological virtues see ibid., 1812 – 1813.

9 Summa Theologica, I. q.1. Art 8 ad 2.

10 Ahearn and Gathje argue that Luther’s emphasis on free unmerited grace was owed to “his believing that the focus in human effort would lead to works righteousness.” (Ahearn, D O and Gathje, F R, Doing Right and Being Good: Catholic and Protestant Readings in Christian Ethics, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 2005, p. 2). It has also been argued that “it follows from this that no one obtains anything from God by his own virtue or the worthiness of prayer but only by reason of the boundless mercy of God...” (Bayer, O, “Luther as an Interpreter of Holy Scripture”, in McKim, D K, (ed) The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (UK), 2003, p. 78). Ashish Varma sums up the Calvinist doctrine on works thus, “... union with Christ becomes the necessary means by which people can develop and attain virtue because they are incapable by themselves” (“Sin, Grace and Virtue in Calvin: A Matrix for Dogmatic Consideration”, The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology, Vol 28, no. 2, Autumn, 2010, p. 190). Some Protestant writers are more sympathetic to Aquinas’s understanding of virtue; see Porter, J, “Recent Studies in Aquinas’s Virtue Ethic: A Review Essay”, Journal of Religious Ethics, (26) 1, Spring, 1998, pp. 191 – 215; Hauerwas, S, “On Doctrine and Ethics”, in Gunton, C E (ed), Cambridge
term used in Protestant Christianity for the theological position that a person is justified or made righteous in the sight of God by works and not by faith alone. The insistence in the Protestant Tradition that it is the grace of God which brings salvation, makes one righteous and therefore good does not leave the same space for the development of human virtues as Aquinas’s position does.

It is understandable that this waning of the importance of human virtues would cause an increase in interest in the only virtues that the Reformed leaders and their churches thought supremely important: those that were strictly religious, that is, the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. These theological virtues, according to most Christian denominations accompany God’s free gift of grace, and place the person who has them in a “state” of righteousness or justification. From this perspective, being virtuous is seen as a “state” of being rather than a process of acquiring dispositions towards certain behaviours developed through habituation. A brief survey of some online dictionary entries reflects this view that virtues are now not defined as habits and dispositions towards certain behaviours but as the possession of “righteousness” or “moral excellence”. Amongst these definitions of virtue the closest approximation to the definition of a virtue as a habit or disposition seems to be the notion of a particular moral excellence. The outcome of this approach to virtues has been to diminish their importance and to limit the notion of virtues in the minds of many to religious contexts that are often foreign to modern notions of the moral life.

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Even without religious connotations, the very idea of a ‘bestowed state’ of moral excellence implies notions of self-righteousness and moral superiority which seem to bring with them an attendant judgmentalism. This in turn sits poorly with contemporary sensibilities, let alone those of a purportedly values-diverse education sector within Australian society.

4.1.2 “Mindless habituation effected by indoctrination”

A more philosophically grounded objection to the term virtue is the very idea of “habit” which is central to a thorough Aristotelian understanding of virtue. Kohlberg was not only dismissive of the ‘bag of virtues’ approach to moral education, which he disparagingly referred to as “Boy Scout morality” 14, he was very wary of what he considered moral education to consist of under this ‘bag of virtues’ approach: “mindless habituation effected by indoctrination.”15

I would like to address Kohlberg’s criticism that endeavouring to develop virtues in young people amounts to “mindless habituation effected by indoctrination”. Firstly I would like to deal with the “mindless habituation” claim.

Virtues are acquired by repeating good actions and then reflecting on them in much the same way that a craftsman who comes to value his craft acquires knowledge of that craft: by being guided in carrying it out, then reflecting upon it and making improvements as judged to be necessary.16 The knowledge acquired is not identified with the detached reason of scientific objectivity17, but it is a real form of knowledge gleaned from experience.18 What is more, the development of dispositions to act that are relevant to a craft is a necessary condition for any craft related skills to be

15 The quote is from Crittenden, not Kohlberg, but I think it captures Kohlberg’s objections. See ibid., p. 174.
16 This is the classic analogy of phronesis (the practical wisdom connected to the virtues and ultimately with living well) with techne, the virtue associated with making things. See Dunne, J, “Virtue, Phronesis and Learning”, in Carr and Steutal, op.cit., p. 49.
17 Carr, D, “Virtue, Akrasia and Moral Weakness”, in Carr and Steutal, op.cit., p. 145
18 Dunne, op.cit., p.52. Dunne describes phronesis as “logos-bearing” with respect to other virtues and yet, at the same time, phronesis is a virtue itself. He writes that “[i]t too is a disposition.”
acquired. The same process applies to the development of virtue in general. Even if a person has a cognitive appreciation of the values that contribute to a good life, such as care, fairness, responsibility and respect, if s/he has not developed the knowledge gleaned from experience as to how to act in accordance with those values in particular contexts, then s/he will not - on the basis of that kind of knowledge alone - be able to enact those values.\(^\text{19}\)

Recently commentators have adopted the Aristotelian view that there is a certain kind of knowledge acquired only by engaging in action and developing dispositions to act; and further, this kind of knowledge has come to be seen as the only way to ensure the implementation of values education. This view has been revived by Julia Annas who has been able to translate Aristotle’s view into terms that modern readers can appreciate.

Instead of using the ancient analogy of the craftsman as Aristotle did to explain the practical development of moral virtues, Annas uses the more accessible analogies of a tennis player or a pianist. She makes a good case that no one can become a master tennis player or pianist without repeated practice of the basics of one’s craft. This repeated action makes for almost unconscious performance of the fundamental actions involved in the craft. However, Annas claims that this does not necessarily mean that the tennis player and pianist fall into “mindless routine”\(^\text{20}\). Very few people watching an expert pianist or tennis player at their craft would say that they were doing something mindlessly or unthinkingly. It is precisely the dominion over the most basic aspects of the athletic or musical skill that frees persons performing those actions to use their intelligence to become better tennis players or pianists than they were before. In the case of both the tennis player and pianist we might even be able to speak of the freedom to be creative.

Annas applies these observations to the development of virtue mainly to counter the contention that because virtue is acquired by habituation it produces only mechanical

\(^{19}\) *Ibid.*, p. 53. Dunne makes it clear Aristotle’s view was that “knowledge is inextricably linked to virtuous action”.

performance or a type of routine which no longer employs thinking.21 Virtue is not unthinking or mere routine. On the contrary, Annas explains it in the following way.

Because a virtue is a disposition it requires time, experience and habituation to develop it, but the result is not routine but the kind of actively and intelligently engaged practical mastery that we find in practical experts such as pianists and athletes.22

The fact that virtues are developed over time also bespeaks some sort of growth and refinement of these virtues that sits awkwardly with the notion of mindless habituation. The development of virtues is a life-time exercise which cannot easily be said to have succeeded or failed without a view of the whole of a life.23

4.1.3 “Mindless habituation effected by indoctrination”

I have dealt with the issue of indoctrination earlier in this work (See Chapter 2, section 3 pp. 5-8). There we saw that one of the key findings in the Project was that for values education to be effective, the values have to be taught explicitly. Kohlberg’s accusation of indoctrination can be challenged by the argument that was presented earlier in this thesis, which was that many commentators now accept that in the absence of explicitly taught or adopted values a so called “values vacuum” in schools will naturally be filled by values of some sort, values that might well be negative.

21 Ibid., p. 16, particularly note 7: “Many of Kant’s problems with virtue spring from suspicion that habituation will produce mere routine, virtuous actions being performed mechanically and thus without the proper participation of the will.”
23 Annas, op.cit., p. 38: “What has emerged from examining the acquiring of virtue is that virtue itself is an essentially developmental notion. We do not go suddenly or in a simple move from being pre-virtuous to being virtuous (pre-brave to being brave for example), being then able to stop, as though we had acquired a static condition. Virtue is not a once for all achievement but a disposition of our character that is constantly developing as it meets new challenges and enlarges the understanding it involves (thus leading to self-direction and improvement)”. This view is shared by Sachs, J, “Aristotle: Ethics”, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/print) Retrieved 19/10/2013. Sachs claims that the idea that the “good life” in Aristotle is one of “mindless routine” has resulted from the Latin translation of the Greek word hexis as habitus. Sachs claims that the word habitus is a perfectly good Latin translation of hexis but when habitus is translated to the English word “habit”, hexis is emptied of that aspect of its meaning which describes possession of a disposition not as passive but as active; a “having and holding that is… always at work right now.” p. 1.
The same argumentation can be used in an analogous way in the case of the formation of habits in children. If children are not explicitly or consciously habituated to some types of behaviour, then it is likely they will become unconsciously habituated to behaviours of some other type. If certain dispositions are not fostered in children from an early age, it is possible that they may never adequately develop these dispositions. An example of this is a child’s disposition to pick up her toys and put them away after playing with them rather than leaving this task for parents to do. This may seem a trivial case but the child’s disposition to tidy up after herself can be encouraged via appeals related to being just and generous, not taking others for granted and empathizing with those with whom she lives. A climate of firm and affectionate encouragement from parents that provides both motivation and reinforcement is a commonly accepted way of fostering such dispositions and the absence of these dispositions can stunt the development of a mature person.

Michael Slote identifies other virtues that it is vital to develop in children: the virtues of perseverance, sagacity, moderation, discretion, carefulness, far-sightedness, tough-mindedness, tact and circumspection. These qualities of character or virtues do not simply become instantiated in children as they grow. As suggested above they need to be fostered if we are to avoid the unappealing possibility that children may become habituated to vicious habits such as giving up easily in the face of obstacles, over-indulgence in pleasures (however trivial these might be), thoughtlessness, carelessness, attachment to immediate gratification and whimsicalness (to improvise with Slote’s list). Aristotle’s assertion in the Nichomachean Ethics that: “... it makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference”.

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24 One of the most trenchant critics of ‘indoctrination’ in popular education writing (although his critique is directed exclusively at faith-based based schools and principally in Britain) is Stephen Law. The critique is set out in his book, The War for Children’s Minds. His objection to ‘indoctrination’ is perfectly compatible in his own mind with acceptance that children need to develop habits so that they know the difference between acting rightly and wrongly. See Law, S, The War for Children’s Minds, Routledge, Abingdon (Oxford), 2006, pp. 24 -31.


encourages all those involved in the education of children to monitor and assist in the
development of positive habits in early childhood.

Before exploring further the issue of training and habituation in early moral
upbringing, it is worthwhile to digress slightly to a personal account of the change in
one person’s views of early upbringing and moral development. In Chapter 3, I
referred to the history of the values clarification movement (see Chapter 3, p. 17,
footnote 18) and the key role Harold Kirschenbaum and his work had played in the
movement. In 2000 Kirschenbaum wrote an article that was not a volte face on
values clarification but certainly contained some interesting critiques of it. In his
article he admitted that values clarification alone was not enough to help children
grow into respectful, responsible, trustworthy, caring and fair-minded adults.27 The
part of this article that is of interest to my argument at the moment is that in which he
speaks of one of quite a number of experiences which drew him to the conclusion
that values clarification was not the panacea to concerns about moral development in
children. This experience involved the education of his own daughter. Values
clarification was designed as a method of prompting children to reflect on their
values and to adopt them as their own or reject them and thus become autonomous
individuals. As was mentioned above, to this end, values clarification teachers were
not to impose their views on children in values clarification classes or sessions.
Kirschenbaum found that in educating his daughter, Kimara, he broke all the rules.
This is how he describes it:

But at the same time as I was encouraging her autonomy I noticed that I was
inculcating my values all over the place! For years I had been teaching
people not to do that – perish the thought that we should stifle their
independence by imposing our own values on them. Now here I was trying to
instill my own values at every turn. “Kimara, I am so proud of you for
sharing your toy with baby Adam. I really like it when you share.” Now,
before becoming a parent I would have disclaimed this as not imposing one’s
values; this is merely “sharing your honest feelings,” which of course had the
seal of approval from the human potential movement I was part of. But now I
had to be honest with myself. Yes, I was sharing my own feelings and I was

27Kirschenbaum, op.cit., p. 9 of 13.
doing it consciously and frequently to reinforce her sharing behavior every chance I had. It was the most elementary application of behavioral psychology, rewarding the desired behavior with appreciation to increase the likelihood that the behavior would be repeated. Call it inculcation or honestly sharing my feelings; either way I was consciously manipulating the outcome.²⁸

This is an honest account of an academic who championed a certain way of educating children in values and who changed his mind after reflecting on what he actually did in raising his own child. This helps to put aside the theory to attend to the natural and active steps parents take in trying to develop habits in their children. Perhaps it was observations of the development of children whose parents did or did not inculcate certain habits in their children that led Aristotle to place so much emphasis on the pre-rational development of habits in children. According to Aristotle, it was from their very infancy that children first developed their “feeling delight or pain rightly or wrongly”²⁹ which is the very basis for the development of virtues and vices.

4.1.4. Development of habits in children. Relationships and role-models in the family

This section of the chapter argues that parents need to be involved in any virtues rich moral education which takes place at school. This should already be clear from what we have seen above and the examples used by many of the philosophers referred to. An understanding of relationships and role-modelling within the family as regards the development of habits provides a foundation for understanding relationships and role-modelling within the school context. In fact, one of the first responses of some teachers in schools which attempted to implement values education in the VEASP was that values education was really the province of parents. Most people accept this because they accept the common sense contention that parents are the people most

²⁸Ibid., p. 6 of 13
involved in the early habituation so vital for moral development\textsuperscript{30} or because they see the moral education of children as part of a parent’s duty.\textsuperscript{31} Many schools in the Project pointed out the importance of parental involvement for the success of their values education initiatives.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., Book II, 1, 103b25, p. 29 and Kirschenbaum, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 4-10. The Australian Federal Government’s Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority recognizes that “families are children’s first and most influential teachers.” See National Quality Framework: http://aceequa.gov.au/Uploads/files/National%20Quality%20Framework%20Resources%20Kit/3-%20-%20Guide%20to%20the%20National%20Quality%20Standard%20FINAL-3.pdf.\textsuperscript{31} The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians makes it clear that “parents, carers and families are the first and most important influence in a child’s life, instilling the attitudes and values that will support young people to participate in schooling...” Melbourne Declaration (2008), p. 11. From a virtue theorist perspective, Rosalind Hursthouse, in defending virtue ethics against those who claim that it offers no rules of action, recognizes the necessity for parents to give their children, particularly toddlers, rules of behaviour in terms of “Do this” and “Don’t do that” imperatives, or as Hursthouse calls them “v-rules” or “mother’s knee rules”. See Hursthouse, R, \textit{Virtue Ethics}, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{32} A number of the schools involved in the VEGPSP Stages 1 and 2 highlighted the importance of including the parents in their values education initiatives. See \textit{Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1} (2006), p. 51 (Airds-Bradbury Cluster NSW); p. 179 (Northern Territory Catholic Cluster, NT). The Fremantle Cluster in Western Australia found that aspects of their values initiatives were “more effective when schools reach out through their newsletters to get parents involved and suggest things they can do at home to support the school’s values approach” p. 193 (Fremantle Cluster, WA). The Unity in Diversity Cluster in south west Sydney had this to say about the parents’ role: “Parents play a vital role in legitimising and supporting values education approaches across cultures” \textit{Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2} (2008), p. 66. The Sea and Values Cluster (SA) pointed to the common language of values as a unifying factor between parents and school in implementing their initiative, p. 103. As a parent at one of the schools in the Values Newcastle (NSW) Cluster stated, “I have found that values education has given us a common language. So we can talk about good and bad behaviour in terms of values. Previously I was not sure how to relate these to the kids or communicate to them about it”. Some schools went to considerable lengths to involve parents. Cabramatta High School, a highly multicultural school in the west of Sydney conducted an audit of its parents, hosting evenings in first language groups to ascertain what values the parents held in terms of academic expectations, the importance of education and the aspirations they held for their children in terms of ethical behavior and becoming “responsible citizens”. The values of the parents were more homogeneous than expected. National \textit{Values Education Forum Report} (2004), p. 22. During the National Values Education Forum in 2006 the principal of Mawson Primary School in the ACT explained how simply talking about values was not enough. In interviews with parents she found that the path to discussion of values was “talking about what kind of child you want your child to be when they leave this school” (see National \textit{Values Forum Report}, 2006, p. 33). Not all schools found it easy to engage parents. Many parents seemed to appreciate the efforts of the schools but when it came to attending evening sessions about values not many parents came. The Fremantle Cluster suggested that low attendance should not be taken as lack of interest or disapproval. Nevertheless it seems fairly clear that although schools recognized the importance of parents in shaping the values of their children and therefore saw them as valuable allies in values education, it was hard to engage them in what the school was doing. This lack of engagement on the part of parents was the subject of a question in one of the plenaries during the National Values Education Forum in 2008. Andrew Blair from the Australian Secondary Schools Principals’ asked Nazreen Dasoo from South Africa “How do we get coherence between the home and the school to overcome the disjunction in values that often exists between the two?” Dasoo freely
Spiiker explores the process of habituation and training in early moral upbringing and I think correctly analyses these processes, not in terms of parents’ intentions to set out to create paragons of virtue but rather in terms of parents wanting their children to be friendly, caring, just and trustworthy persons “capable of friendship and loving interpersonal relationships”.\(^{33}\) It appears to be simply a fact of life that parents do often train their children to develop those traits of character, habits and dispositions we refer to as virtues.\(^{34}\)

Spiiker has further interesting insights with respect to early moral upbringing. He makes a forceful claim for example, that “it is within the interpersonal parent-child relationship that feelings of love and care, loyalty, connectedness, attachments, security and unselfishness assume a central place”\(^{35}\); he also claims that these lay the ground for the child’s own inchoate understanding of the virtues associated with care and loyalty to others. As Spiiker puts it, these qualities of the parent-child relationship “help the infant get a foothold on the moral and social world”.\(^{36}\)

Moreover, Spiiker says that early child relationships are often characterized by parents talking to children ‘as if’ the children had adult conceptions of intention, purpose, sincerity or deceit. And this is significant because it would suggest that early habituation to certain actions in the context of the relationships of parents to children is regarded as in some way preparing the ground for the time the children begin to reach the stage of rationality.\(^{37}\)

This in turn implies that the development of a child’s capacity to reason is complex and that it occurs on a continuum. Parents’ communication with their children

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\(^{33}\) Spieker, B, “Habituation and Training in Early Moral Upbringing”, in Carr and Steutal, op.cit., p. 211.

\(^{34}\) Ibid. p. 212.


\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 212.

recognizes this and provides a scaffold for the process. This challenges the Kohlbergian position that moral development only really begins with reason and that moral development is primarily a matter of the development of reason (interpreted narrowly as ‘pure cognition’). In Speik’s view and in that of others, it seems fairly clear that moral development and the development of the virtues do not occur in a detached rational vacuum but rather, the process is a complex one, occurring in the context of affectivity and sociability. The virtues themselves are not simply developments of a rational capacity of some kind but are enmeshed with emotions, affections and attachments. Indeed Aristotle’s view is precisely that it is not until the emotions have been engaged in the service of training - so that one derives pleasure from a virtue and pain from its opposing vice - that the virtue is on the road to being fully developed. Thus Aristotle concludes:

We must take as a sign of states of character the pleasure or pain that supervenes upon acts; for the man who abstains from bodily pleasure and delights in this very fact is temperate, while the man who is annoyed at it is self-indulgent and he who stands his ground against things that are terrible and delights in this or at least is not pained is brave, while the man who is pained is a coward. For moral excellence is concerned with pleasures and pains; it is on account of the pleasure that we do bad things and on account of the pain that we abstain from noble ones. Hence we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from our very youth, as Plato says, so as both to delight in and be pained by the things that we ought; this is the right education.”

Now the pleasure and pain derived from acting in certain ways in the early years of a child’s life is mainly derived not from the habituated act itself but from the approval and admiration of the parents, which reinforces good actions. This understanding of virtues as being founded on relationships in the early or pre-school years and then being successfully developed in the school years fits neatly with experiential evidence in the VEASP that modelling of values is important and is only possible

39 Aristotle, op.cit., Book II. 3 1104b4 – 1104b26, (p. 32). This is a description of virtue in its ideal state and therefore may seem unattainable, but the aim of quoting the passage is to underline Aristotle’s understanding that virtue is not just about detached reason.
when the groundwork has been done for this modelling in establishing positive relationships.\textsuperscript{40}

Sherman indicates what could well lie at the root of this ‘discovery’ in the Project. Dealing with emotions in moral development she argues that:

\begin{quote}
[t]he role of emotions will have crucial importance in moral development, and in learning in general. We learn best from those with whom we can identify and from those whom we value positively. This underlies Aristotle’s view that friendship (\textit{philia}) is the central arena in which character development takes place.\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

The identification of what Sherman translates with the word ‘friendship’ as key in the development of virtues not only has implications for the crucial role of parents in moral development but has implications also for teachers. Not unexpectedly, it would seem that an admired and respected teacher or at least, one who is not antagonistic to his or her pupils, would be a better educator, not only of academic subject matter, but of values. It is difficult for school age children or young people to learn from someone they perceive does not like or respect them.

\textbf{4.1.5 \textit{Relationships and role-models in schools: Teachers as role models}}

The finding of the VEASP that values must be modelled by teachers is more easily understood from a virtues perspective. It is well known that Aristotle places importance on the example of those who are in close contact with the subject in whom the virtues are to be developed. The way in which the person who is to develop the virtues knows what it is to behave virtuously is in part by observing what virtuous people do. Sherman describes Aristotle’s thinking on this topic by explaining that Aristotle calls virtues those actions which the \textit{phronimos}, the person of practical wisdom, would choose; and that person is one and the same with the person of good character, who in turn is the person who has a full complement of

\textsuperscript{40}Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p. 6, (see also p. 216). The importance of relationships to values education is treated in Chapter 2, pp. 19 – 27.

\textsuperscript{41}Sherman, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 41 (my emphasis).
virtues or excellent states of character. What Aristotle seems to be recognising here is that people of practical wisdom and good character do exist who give us real examples of what it means to exercise virtue. As Sherman makes clear, Aristotle’s argument points squarely at the importance of role models.

But as Joseph Dunne has pointed out, this idea of the phronimos, the fully formed virtuous person from whom children learn to be virtuous can seem alien to both parents and teachers who are required to model the behaviour they want to see in their children. It can seem impossible to be the person Aristotle seems to have in mind as the ideal role model. Teachers and parents are more likely to possess a mixture of good and bad qualities or traits than possess only good ones.

The concept of the ideal phronimos however, may not necessarily be what Aristotle was talking about in the definition of virtue. It is true that modelling virtues means that those who model them have to be similar to a virtuous person who would “characteristically act in a certain way in certain circumstances”; but the individual traits that are to provide the model of what it is to be a virtuous person may not and do not have to be contained in one person alone. The more that persons who possess some of these virtues surround and interact with a young person, the more likely the young person will be able to discern what a virtuous person would characteristically do in a certain circumstance.

What is more, while the concept of the perfect or quasi-perfect phronimos as Dunne describes it, can strike parents and teachers alike as impossible to imitate, it ignores the fact that virtuous persons, whether parents or teachers of whatever age, are in a constant state of development themselves. We have touched on this above in discussing the development of virtues throughout a life. As mentioned above, Julia Annas states that “virtue is essentially a developmental idea” and elsewhere explains that “virtue is essentially dynamic, not a static condition of the person but an aspect of him or her that is always developing for the better or the worse.” Role models for children in developing virtues may possess some of the virtues

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43 Ibid. The importance of role models is a consequence of another Aristotelian understanding; that we are “relational beings”, ibid., p. 37.
44 Dunne, op.cit., p. 56.
45 Annas, op. cit. p. 38.
46 Ibid., p. 163.
themselves and not others. The important thing may be not so much whether they have this or that particular virtue but whether they are generally trying to become better people or not. For in the end, this is also what is expected of children and young people. They are expected to acquire virtue over time, not - to borrow an allusion from Rosalind Hursthouse - to have sprung “fully formed from their father’s brow”. 47

Annas is also clear that acquiring virtue from role models does not simply involve watching a virtuous person and doing what they do. Virtue is never only mimetic. Imitating a virtuous person may be necessary for the development of virtue, but as children grow and mature, imitation cannot be regarded as sufficient; as Annas also explains, the ‘drive to aspire’ 48 in the one who is learning to be virtuous is also necessary. If young people have no interest in acquiring virtue, they may rote-learn certain external actions but they will not acquire the virtue. A ‘drive to aspire’ indicates that the learner recognises the worth of virtue and wants to acquire virtue for themselves so that s/he is prepared to put actions into place and alter his/her behaviour if necessary in order to do so.

4.1.6 Is virtue self-centred?

One criticism sometimes levelled at a moral education based on virtues is that the virtues are primarily focussed on the person who wishes to acquire them therefore they can lead the subject who is endeavouring to develop them to be self-centred. Since the virtues can to some extent be seen as ends in themselves we might be tempted to think that all virtuous action is done in order to make the person who does them more virtuous and that therefore virtuous persons are simply interested in themselves and their own perfection. 49

The type of division of virtues that Michael Slote makes; into those virtues which are “self-regarding” and those which are “other-regarding” may have leant weight to the criticism that an education based on the inculcation of virtue leads to an inordinate

48 Annas, _op.cit._, p. 17.
focus on the self. The response to this criticism is that such an interpretation of virtues is only possible when the starting point of the understanding of virtues is the perfection of the individual as autonomous with respect to others in society. But this seems to be a way of looking at virtue which does not take into account that the very notion of virtue is posited on the assumption that humans are social beings who cannot perfect themselves without the interactions with other people which living in society brings with it. The following explanation of virtues by Athanassoulis will further elucidate the point.

The virtues are other regarding. Kindness for example, is about how we respond to the needs of others. The virtuous agent’s concern is with developing the right sort of character that will respond to the needs of others in an appropriate way. The virtue of kindness is about being able to perceive situations where one is required to be kind, have the dispositions to respond kindly in a reliable and stable manner, and be able to express one’s kind character in accordance with one’s kind desires. The eudaemonist account of virtue ethics claims that the good of the agent and the good of others are not two separate aims. Both rather result from the exercise of virtue. Rather than being too self-centred, virtue ethics unifies what is required by morality and what is required by self-interest.

Alasdair MacIntyre has argued in his work *Dependent Rational Animals* that it is not possible to divide the virtues into self-centred and other centred virtues. The virtues of independent rational agency, that is, those most associated with enhancing the autonomy of the individual, need, for their adequate exercise, to be accompanied by the virtues of acknowledged dependence. Further on in this work, MacIntyre points out one of the important functions of education and at the same time responds to Slote’s distinction of other regarding and self-regarding virtues.

The task of education is to transform and integrate [egoistic and altruistic impulses and desires] into an inclination toward both the common good and

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50 Slote, op. cit., pp. 95-105.
51 Recall Sherman’s description of humans as “relational beings”, op. cit., p. 37.
52 Athanassoulis, op. cit., No. 4, p. 4 of 7. See also the extended discussion of egoism in Annas, op. cit., pp.152-156.
54 Ibid., p. 8.
our individual goods, so that we become neither self-rather-than-other-regarding nor other-rather-than-self-regarding, neither egoists nor altruists, but those whose passions and inclinations are directed to what is both our good and the good of others.\textsuperscript{55}

MacIntyre’s understanding of the integration of the virtues is implicit in what the reports of most schools involved in the VEASP suggested they wanted of their students. These reports recognise the importance of the possession of virtuous character traits both for the contribution these traits make to the good of the individual student and to the school community as a whole.

For example, the capacity of other-regarding virtues like generosity to influence personal well-being was commented upon by those adults involved in the Australian Juvenile Detention Centre Cluster discussed above. The Cluster’s emphasis on generosity and “giving oneself” had, according to those involved with the Cluster, a transformational effect on some of the children involved.\textsuperscript{56} This claim is anecdotal, given that it is reliant on the testimony of those involved in the Cluster, but is corroborated by comments made in other Cluster reports: the same sort of positive effects were noted in students of a similar background who were involved in the Matthew Holt School run by YOTS.\textsuperscript{57} The effect on young people of giving to others is revisited below.\textsuperscript{58}

Clearly a defensible understanding of virtue does not fall into the dichotomy of regarding virtues as either good for oneself and one’s well-being or advantageous to the community but sees that the development of virtues benefits both oneself and the community.\textsuperscript{59} In discussing the virtue of generosity, Annas illustrates this point well, arguing that growth in generosity requires the interplay of self and other-regarding attitudes. It is not just a willingness to give to others but requires,

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 160.
\textsuperscript{56} See footnotes 164 - 166 above. Final Report VASP (October, 2010), pp. 126, 50, 53.
\textsuperscript{57} See footnotes 81 and 82 below.
\textsuperscript{58} See footnotes 99 and following below.
\textsuperscript{59} This touches on the theme of the unity of the virtues which, though still controversial, is ably dealt with by Kent, B, “Moral Growth and the Unity of the Virtues” in Carr and Steutal, \textit{op.cit.}, pp 109 - 124. A more immediate reference with respect to the well-being of the individual being enhanced by developing the virtues was dealt with by Martin Seligman in the National Values Education Forum in 2008 see \textit{National Values Education Forum Report} (2008), pp. 8 -9. For a broader treatment of the subject which links virtue with \textit{eudaimonia} from a psychological perspective see Seligman, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 3 - 16
.... at the least, benevolence, a real interest in other people, their needs and their wants. To get it right in giving, how to give, when and to whom, not to mention how much, you have to have an interest in the welfare of others beyond their roles as your beneficiaries; otherwise you risk your giving becoming selfish showing off.\footnote{Annas, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 84 – 85.}

4.1.7. **Virtues are responsive to principles of good practice unearthed by VEASP.**

In Chapter 2 we identified the principles of good practice in values education as they were gleaned from the VEASP. These were summarised in six steps, stipulating that successful values education ought to be introduced across the whole school, needs to be taught explicitly, requires the use of a common language, must emphasise behavioural change, needs to be modelled and needs to take into account the importance of relationships.

Sections 4.1.4 and 4.1.5 above dealing with the importance of relationships and role modelling show how an emphasis on virtues helps to explain why positive relationships and role modelling are so important. A virtues-rich values education therefore not only responds to these two principles of good practice unearthed in the VEASP, it can also help explain why they are essential.

As regards the principle of good practice which insists on values education having behavioural consequences, virtues are focused primarily on behavioural change. What is more, virtues explain the mechanisms as it were, of how moral behaviours are acquired and how they can be changed – by habitual action which leads to the formation of good dispositions. And, as we have seen above, behaviours acquired by habituation are not necessarily mindless, nor are they inculcated simply by indoctrination.

The good practice principle of introducing values education across the whole school would apply equally to a virtues-rich values program in schools. The requirements
for a common language to be used and for values education to be explicitly taught in
order to be effective would also apply to moral education which included virtues.
There is a language which has grown up around virtues which can be very useful in
helping children understand why they are able or unable to attain their values goals.
The physiognomy of virtue can be taught explicitly. It is not enough to didactically
teach this physiognomy or mechanics of virtue, because virtues are not virtues unless
they are acted upon, but as was implied in Chapter 2 in the discussion on the
necessity of using a common values language, it can help students gain a foothold in
the world of moral action.

As noted above, in the VEASP, virtues are implied rather than made explicit; but as
will be seen, there is good evidence emerging from the practical attempts to
introduce values education in schools that attention to values, dispositions and
actions which in fact fit the definition of virtues is necessary for effective values
education. However, as also noted above, the Project appears to assiduously avoid
the use of the term ‘virtues’. We have already discussed a number of possible
reasons for this. My contention is that in avoiding the term ‘virtues’ the Project lost
an opportunity to lay hold of a term and a concept which, when understood correctly
can not only enrich any attempt at implementing a comprehensive values education
program, but which is indispensable to any optimal and integral moral education.

Having made the case for including virtue in the implementation of values education
in schools, I now wish to focus specifically on findings in the documentation of the
Project that support this contention. It will become clear that the Forums’ and
Clusters’ practical implementation, implicitly requires recognising what the notion of
virtue can bring to values education and that comprehensive values education
demands a focus on virtue.

4.2 “Unwitting” virtue in the VEASP: Evidence from the Values Education
Forums 2004 - 2009

The following survey of different parts of the VEASP seeks to unearth observations
and discoveries in the various phases of the Project that show that the notion of
virtues is implied within the Project. However, as noted above, when this implication is apparent in the Project, it is usually expressed without making reference to the term ‘virtue’. The question that emerges consequent on this survey is that of why the notion of virtues is not used in the Project when it seems to explain so much of the Project’s intent.

In this survey I wish first to highlight some of the contributions to the Values Education Forums between 2004 and 2009 in which the concept of virtue and different aspects of virtues are implied. The aim of this is to indicate that the various contributors to these Forums were in fact, if not in name, advocating that values education is incomplete without virtues.

4.2.1. The Values Education Forum 2004

Brian Hill in the National Values Education Forum in 2004 certainly hinted at the role of virtues in what he refers to as values education.

The Final Report of the Values Education Study elected fairly summarily to adopt a definition by Halstead and Taylor which spoke of values as “principles and standards that guide behaviour” (Values Education Study: Final Report (2003); 2). This carries a cognitive weighting which potentially obscures the motivational aspect. How and why should propositions of thought be supposed to have any real bearing on conduct? I sense that we’re still grappling with the problem of moving the student from ‘knowing the good to be desirable’ to ‘desiring to do the good’. Hill acknowledges the importance of cognition in values education but his point about motivation and “desiring” is crucial. He thinks that values education which does not transfer the motivations and desires latent in it into action is incomplete. He recognizes that it is not enough for students to be encouraged to think about values and be taught didactically about them. Attention needs to be given as to why people

would want to put values recommended didactically into action. Later in his contribution he stated: “a value is a ‘disposition’ to act in certain ways given the opportunity.” Hill uses the language of actions and dispositions for good reason; to avoid that the initiative to insert values into Australian schools be bereft of elements which are vital to living according to one’s values. He could have used the term virtue to describe what he meant by an integral model of values education since there is a clear connection between the notion of virtue and Hill’s definition of a value. While avoiding the explicit use of the term virtue, Hill clearly sees the need for a model of values education that explicitly addresses virtue and its relationship to value if we are aiming to develop an optimal and integral moral education.

One of the findings of the Values in Australian Schools Project, as we have seen, is the importance of values being translated into action. The evidence of the Project reports suggests that staff in schools who were implementing values education spontaneously started to look for student actions which would demonstrate that the students had assimilated the values they had been taught within their everyday lives.

This focus on student action is and should be construed as evidence of the need for an understanding of the place of the virtues as habits and dispositions in values education. In other words, the requirement of student action as proof of the assimilation of values makes the need for an understanding of virtues explicit.

### 4.2.2. The Values Education Forum 2005

An example of the requirement for action which reinforces the claim that the inculcation of virtue is crucial to ensuring the goals of moral education was evident in the 2005 Forum. Cherbourg State High School in Queensland reported on its attempt to implement values education in their school by adopting the Human Values in Education Program from Sathya Sai Schools. This led the values’ co-ordinators to insist with their students that “if they want to be ‘Strong and Smart’ (the goal of

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62 The Sathya Sai Schools’ Human Values can be seen at [www.sathyasai.org](http://www.sathyasai.org). The pedagogies are contained at [http://www.sathyasaischoolaust.org/pedagogy.php](http://www.sathyasaischoolaust.org/pedagogy.php)
their values education based on the Sathya Sai model) they have to act smart and strong (my emphasis).”

In the same Forum, Terence McLaughlin, Professor of the Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education at the University of London seemed to acknowledge the interaction between values and virtues in the British values education project. His comment that “some of the values being promoted are virtues and some are ethical principles and some are a mix of the two” reinforces the point I am making about the confusion and need for refinement in understandings of the relationship between the terms ‘value’ and ‘virtue’.

In the same year as the 2005 Forum, the Project published some Professional Learning Resources. Before moving to the later Forums, I would like to look at these Professional Learning Resources and point out what light they have to shed on how the concept of virtue is implied in the Project’s published materials.

The Professional Learning Resources produced to accompany the National Framework contain a number of activities designed to explore the meaning of values. One of these is instructive in the context of my argument in this section as it asks teachers in a professional development context to examine the nine values and then to respond to the following questions:

- Why are they [the values] described in terms of actions?
- Could any of these values be defined without reference to a form of action?
- How well do these values fit the definitions of values already given [in this professional resources kit]?

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63 Ibid., p. 43.
66 Values for Australian Schooling Professional Learning Resources – Secondary (2005), p. 6. The definitions referred to here are those of Halstead and Taylor and Hill mentioned above. The explanation of these values in the “Professional Learning Resources” document includes the following statement: “Values as ‘principles and fundamental convictions’ are abstractions until they are applied in the contexts of daily life. Values are made real or ‘realised’ when their meaning is expressed through choices made and behaviours acted out (emphasis added)” (p.5). The practical, behavioural content of the values is uppermost in the minds of the redactors of the Professional Learning Resources. If they were trying to explain virtues to their audience they would be making a reasonable attempt, with the caveat that they have not placed sufficient emphasis on the notion of habits leading to dispositions.
These questions are directed at the action component of the Nine Values for Australian Schooling. The *Professional Learning Resources* are aimed at securing in the minds of teachers that action, in other words, behaviour congruent with values, is the goal of values education as envisaged by the VEASP. This is instructive since it implies that behaviour which indicates commitment to values is the goal of values education. Behavioural change therefore is seen as evidence that the values have been learned. Given that the inculcation of virtues is a matter of being disposed to certain types of behaviour, the emphasis on the behavioural aspects of values can easily be connected to a discourse on virtues if only the term “virtues” was explicitly included in the discourse.

The Professional Learning Resources also recalled the description of Values Education given in the National Framework. Referring to this description the *Professional Learning Resources* document emphasised the need to “internalize and practice certain values” and recalled the notion that values learning is “not just about knowing and understanding values but also about the disposition and the enacting of values.”

4.2.3. **The Values Education Forum 2007**

In the discussions in 2007 during a workshop that was part of that year’s National Values Education Forum, a teacher from a school participating in the second stage of the VEGPSP expressed a concern that values could become “static”. The teacher’s school was badly affected by drought and in their community the quality of perseverance in overcoming difficulties associated with the drought was very much to the fore in discussions with parents at the school. This teacher seems to have been expressing reservations about any understanding of values that sees them as applied only in one context. Rather, they should be seen as preferred attitudes which once acquired, are then applied generally in appropriate contexts.

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69 *National Values Education Forum Report (2007)*, p. 17. The term ‘becoming static’ was used by the teacher who made the observation.
The value this teacher and her community wanted to privilege, perseverance, is a value like courage which seems to be able to serve different ends or might be regarded as a “meta” or “service” value. Indeed it could be said that without perseverance none of the nine values of the National Framework would be able to be instantiated as shared values, as they all may require a constant disposition to persist, to overcome obstacles or stand firm in the face of difficulties. There is a recognition that habitual dispositions to persevere are needed along with values if these values are not to be undermined or be revised when substantial difficulties in adhering to them arise in particular situations. These habitual dispositions are virtues.

Each of the values of the Framework urges action or a plurality of actions that are required if we are to implement any particular value.\textsuperscript{70} It is difficult to find fault with these exhortations to action to protect and promote the values named, but the idea of pursing these goals in times in which it is particularly difficult to do so, that is, to persevere in them, is not envisaged within the documentation. Also, the competencies and confidence to uphold the values identified in the Project, such as freedom, honesty or care would involve certain ways of behaving which would normally need to be learnt over time. The development of these competencies may then result in a certain confidence in teachers and students alike in relation to persisting with the values. The development of the requisite competencies and confidence however, may involve quite painful experiences which have to be confronted over time until they become habits. The teacher mentioned immediately above who took part in the 2007 Forum may have been seeking to emphasise this kind of process, which she appears rightly to have recognised is not made explicit in the Project’s documentation.

In the same Forum in 2007, Andrew Furco also drew attention to a phenomenon which is importantly related to acting on one’s values or to what we might call virtuous action. He argued that values education involves not just “what a value looks and feels like, but also when it is appropriate to exercise it.”\textsuperscript{71} Furco made it

\textsuperscript{70} National Framework (2005). It is clear in the action stipulated for the value of “Freedom” for example, that the National Framework recognizes that one can only expect to enjoy the rights of freedom if one is prepared to defend the rights of others to that freedom. Freedom is a value we have in common but does require some action if it is going to be enjoyed.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 25.
clear that the appropriateness of a particular action is part and parcel of what it means to learn how to exercise values or what Aristotle would call virtues. This is precisely what Aristotle explains in the *Nichomachean Ethics* as characteristic of virtues; that they are exercised “at the right time, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people and, with the right motive and in the right way.”

Thus it is not only perseverance and courage which might be viewed as “meta” or “service” values, but equally, practical wisdom (*phronesis*) is a type of “meta” or “service value” which is necessary to enact values appropriately.

### 4.2.4 The Values Education Forum 2008

In the discussion in Chapter 3 on the existence of common values we looked at some of the conclusions of Nazreen Dasoo from the Department of Education Studies at the University of Johannesburg in her presentation at the National Values Education Forum in 2008. Dasoo also had some insightful observations in her presentation about the transition from values to action which bear upon this discussion of virtues. In a section of her presentation entitled the ‘how to’ of values education, she described three ‘types’ of knowing:

- “**knowing that**”, which referred to knowledge of facts about values. I interpret this type of knowledge to consist in having and understanding a vocabulary which includes values and perhaps a list such as the Values for Australian Schooling poster incorporates. Dasoo contended that acquiring this knowledge is no more difficult than in any other branch of knowledge.

- “**knowing how**”, which referred to the procedural knowledge of how to do something.

Knowing how to be honest for example would include the knowledge that a found wallet should be given to someone who could make sure that it is returned to its owner with its contents intact. This type of knowledge is necessary in values

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72 Aristotle, *op.cit.*, Book II. 6 1106b9 – 1106b36 (p. 38).
education but it cannot be assumed that even when children know how to be honest, kind or decent that they will be.

- “knowing to”, which is the type of knowledge that leads to acceptable moral and ethical behaviour.

A person who ‘knows to’ can be counted upon, Dasoo explained, to do particular things in specific circumstances; for example “[i]f for instance, an individual ‘knows to’ be honest, they will not cheat, even if they can get away with it.”

Dasoo went on to explain that a surprising number of values education programs “seem to assume that children who ‘know that’ and ‘know how’ will automatically ‘know to’ though this is not necessarily the case.” Interestingly, she claimed that youngsters develop ‘know to’ knowledge about values only when the important people in their lives live consistently according to values. “Children learn what they live”, she concluded in this part of her presentation; “[s]o if we want children to act more morally, adults must act more ethically themselves.”

4.2.5 The Values Education Conference 2009

Dr Ruth Deakin Crick in her intervention in the National Values Education Conference in 2009 also made reference to the difference between values and virtues. She talked of the fruitfulness of getting students to explore truthfulness with her model of strategic awareness and curiosity as a pathway to learning as opposed

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74 Ibid., p. 46
75 Ibid., pp. 46-47. See also Muller, A W, “Teaching Virtue”, paper given at Somerville College 18th – 19th March 2011 to celebrate Philippa Foot’s life, Oxford Philosophy, Summer 2011 (http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/20312/mueller.pdf). Retrieved 12/7/2012. “The relevance of the upbringer’s example seems obvious. If we blame you because your child has not learned to treat other people with consideration and respect, you may try to defend yourself by saying ‘I did bring the child up to be considerate and respectful: I often told him how to treat other people; I even punished him for inconsiderate behaviour’. This however, is no rebuttal of the charge if, in the child’s experience, your own conduct was lacking in consideration and respect. It seems to follow that influence by example is an integral part of upbringing, since lack of virtue in the upbringer is likely to issue in lack of virtue in the child and that, for these reasons the practice of virtue is as such constitutive of good upbringing.”
76 The name was changed from Forum to Conference, but this seems to have involved nothing more than a re-badging of the Forums.
to didactically presenting students with an analysis of the value of “honesty”.
“Values” for her was a “slippery and variously defined term”. Deakin Crick’s view seems to want to emphasise the dynamism of optimal values education since she is stating that she is in favour of an explored value of honesty which must be put into practice in different types of situations rather than a narrower, more didactic or static approach to inculcating the value of honesty. In this intervention, Deakin Crick seems to be pointing to something which she regards as missing in values education and the missing element seems to be an exploration of values along the line of how these are put into effect in real situations. In the example she gives of honesty she would prefer a nuanced value of honesty which, like the virtue of honesty, involves the exercise of honesty at the right time, in the right place with the right people.

4.3 **“Unwitting” virtue in the VEASP: Evidence from the Clusters**

The next section of this work will explore the same theme we have dealt with above, which argues that virtues are implicit in much of the discussion of so-called values in the VEASP. It does so by looking in detail at the reports of the different projects involving schools or clusters of schools, to capture not what experts were saying in the Forums, but what was happening at the coalface of the implementation of the Project.

4.3.1 **Values Education in Action Project 2004**

Often in the clusters of schools and in individual schools values education was conceived of as not being truly learnt until it was put into practice. St Monica’s school in Victoria made this very clear in their contribution to the Values Education in Action Project in 2004. Community service is compulsory at St Monica’s and

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students are required to be involved in one social justice program each year. The rationale for this is as follows.

When students engage in social service, they learn lifelong lessons about human dignity and social responsibility. No matter how much theory students are presented with, it is not until the jump from thought to action is made that the lesson is truly learnt, and the values truly taught.78

Similarly the Matthew Hogan School which is operated by “Youth Off the Streets” adopted a virtues related approach to values education that was based on what the school termed ‘six pillars of character’:

- Responsibility and self-control
- Cooperation and teamwork
- Respect and appreciation of diversity
- Trustworthiness
- Fairness and justice and
- Caring 79

The ‘six pillars of character’ at the Matthew Hogan School involved six two-week units taught over twelve weeks with each of the traits studied for one of the two-week blocks. This might be construed as an exercise in the intellectual understanding of these traits, except that the study of the trait was organized as a structured workshop and was combined with a thoughtfully designed service experience, which allowed the students attending to put into practice the six pillars of character they were studying.80 The Matthew Hogan School experience is unique both from the point of view of the students who attend the school and the service opportunities given them. The students are young people who would be living on the streets if not for the School. The service projects offered to the students were comprehensive and adventuresome. One of the service projects, for example, involved visiting orphans or street children in Timor and another involved being the companion (or one of two companions) of a disabled child for a number of days. This last experience involved supporting the child for 24 hours a day.

80 Values Education in Action: 12 Case Studies (2004), pp. 79 – 86.
In a special way therefore, the Matthew Holt School experience is instructive. According to those who reported on the experience, the program was able to give a sense of worth and agency to students who in their former educational experience, had failed at classroom learning, had learnt to be dependent and would often ‘act out’ because of those two factors.\textsuperscript{81} The emphasis placed on service demonstrates that the program at Matthew Holt School was already offering growth through the active exercise of positive character traits or virtues even before the School joined the Values Education in Action Study.

4.3.2 Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006)

One cluster of schools in NSW engaged in their own community consultation before embarking on their values education initiative and this consultation led them to conclude that their community goals “consistently corresponded to the ancient Greek idea of the four main virtues of ‘Wisdom’, ‘Justice’, ‘Fortitude’ and ‘Self-Control’ (respectively, know yourself, respect all life, be strong and control yourself), more so than to the stated elements of the National Framework.”\textsuperscript{82} This invocation of the virtues may have had little to do with a thoroughgoing commitment to teach virtues in any comprehensive or sophisticated way to the students in the cluster. Nevertheless the translation of the four cardinal virtues by the authors of the report into the ‘community language’ of ‘know yourself’, ‘respect all life’, ‘be strong’ and ‘control yourself’, albeit somewhat technically inaccurate, demonstrates how practical the community within this cluster wanted to be. Their values education goals were behaviours that the parents, teachers and students regarded as optimal. In addition, the parents, teachers and students felt that the focus on these virtues or behaviours addressed the needs of their community more incisively than the Nine Values for Australian Schooling.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), pp 47-48 (Airds-Bradbury Cluster, NSW). The term “Self-Control” was used instead of the more classical “Temperance”.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 49.
4.3.3 **Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008)**

The Sustainable Values Townsville Cluster took part in the VEGPSP - Stage 2. At the early stages of the attempt to implement values education in the schools of this cluster, teachers asked themselves: “how do we educate the whole child with the values, dispositions and skills to allow them to participate as effective local, national and global citizens?” In the framing of this question there is an implicit understanding that moral education is not just about values that students are taught. The reference to ‘dispositions and skills’ seems to clearly indicate that the teachers thought of the moral education of the children in the cluster as including action or proclivity towards action.

The VEGPSP – Stage 2 made recommendations for future work in values education. One of these recommendations was that schools use values-rich pedagogies in implanting values education in schools. These pedagogies, according to the VEGPSP – Stage 2 report, involved children moving from cognitive understandings of values to manifesting values in personal and social life. The pedagogies recommended were those which motivated students to “live and practice the values rather than simply knowing about them”.

The VEGPSP – Stage 2 also recognized that “in many of the Stage 2 projects students can be seen to move in stages from growing in knowledge and understanding of the values, to an increasing clarity and commitment to certain values and then concerted action in living those values in their personal and community lives.” One of the things that the cluster projects in Stage 2 seemed to take for granted therefore, was that there was no effective learning about values without opportunities for “student agency”. This assumes that in order to learn certain values, students have to act on the basis of those values. At a practical level, ensuring the translation of cognitive understanding into action was the goal of all the schools in the Values Newcastle Cluster. Their report makes this clear.

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84 *Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008)*, p. 23.
[A]ll schools involved in the project set about making a commitment to affect (sic) positive change within their school communities beyond ‘word speak’, that is, they wanted to transfer knowledge about values into action or lived values. Their common purpose was to ‘see and feel’ change from within the schools in terms of students doing more than ‘talking the talk’; they wanted students to actually ‘walk the talk’.  

4.3.4 Values in Action Schools Project 2010

In the Values in Action Schools Project in 2010, the theme of the necessity of action for values to have any meaning was actually incorporated into the Project title.

The Far North Queensland Cluster of schools involved in the VASP started their values education initiative with a list of core values and sub-values suggested by their QUT ‘critical friend’. The cluster aimed to recognize the classical four cardinal virtues identified by Plato (fortitude, temperance, wisdom and justice) and included them under the names of courage, self-discipline, truthfulness and reflection and justice. One of the key outcomes they reported was a gradual development and ownership of the core values that was “transferred into changed classroom and playground behaviours.”

As we have seen in Chapter 2, one of the strategies that many schools were urged to adopt in their implementation of values education was a simple action research cycle. Each action research cycle consisted of a four step process of: 1. reflection, 2. planning, 3. action and 4. observation. Step number 4, “observation” feeds into a new reflection phase. This ensured that the values education schools underwent a

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88Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (2008), p. 70.
89Each cluster of schools involved in the stages of the implementation of the Project counted on the help and advice of a ‘critical friend’ drawn from a network of university based education advisers called the University Associates Network. See Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1 (2006), p. 23.
92Ibid., p. 90.
93See Chapter 2, p. 49, n. 76.
94Final Report VASP (October, 2010), pp 9,16.
continuous revision of their practices and monitoring of the goals of their values education projects. The adoption of this method in the Project is evidence of its action based goals. The underlying assumption behind the use of this method is that action guides the process of any values education initiative.

The “Most Significant Change” methodology\textsuperscript{95} which was discussed in Chapter 2 and required documentation of the results of the Values in Action Schools Project, meant that the reporting in this particular document would privilege accounts of transformation of behaviours. Some of these accounts are very instructive.

One of the stories highlighted in the Values in Action Project relates the experience of one of the boys at a particular school who had the opportunity to spend an afternoon with some Burmese students in a workshop. The aim of the workshop was to improve the understanding that Australian students had of the Burmese students who were being hosted by Australian students. The story highlights a) how the simple presence of one of the boys at this workshop on his own admission helped him to “stick up” for a Burmese student once he was back amongst his peers and b) how his willingness to stick up for one of these Burmese students influenced his peer group not to dismiss this (Burmese) student when he tried to engage in conversation with them the next day.\textsuperscript{96} The (admittedly subjective) experience of the boy who stood up for the Burmese student suggests the impact which the workshop the previous day had on him. This example serves as a subjective acknowledgement on the part of the student involved of the importance of understanding and action being united in the process of internalizing the values education being promoted by his school.

Another story offered by one teacher highlights what the teacher saw as the practical implications of discussions about respect. It involved a number of young boys who spoke up urging another student to remove his toys from a sandbox rather than just leave them there. The boys themselves framed their request in terms of the respect owed to others who might wish to use the sandpit after the boy who was about to leave his own things behind. This is a small incident but it indicates how the Values in Action Schools Project in one school was able to provide students with the

\textsuperscript{95} See Chapter 2, p. 50, n. 79.


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vocabulary and understanding with which to frame a behavioural recommendation to one of their schoolmates.\textsuperscript{97}

One of the most significant findings in the VASP reports was the importance of giving to others. The practice of giving goods and particularly time to others implies the virtue of generosity. Generosity is not a value highlighted amongst the Nine Values for Australian Schooling, even though it is perhaps implicit in the values of Care and Compassion. The values education experience of many of the students in the VASP was allied to ‘giving of themselves’ as the examples which follow illustrate.

The Australian Juvenile Detention Centre Cluster had as their values goal: ‘to engage the disengaged’. This goal was associated in the cluster’s view to well-being and resilience.\textsuperscript{98} The way the teachers tried to engage the students was through activities that required them to ‘give to others’. To this end the students in the different schools of the cluster engaged in a variety of projects, including artistic performance, community projects (such as creating an artwork for a women’s refuge) and building and construction.\textsuperscript{99} The cluster reported that the activities that required students to ‘give to others’ were the most successful in getting the students to think about values or as their final report maintained, “to interrogate the nature of values for themselves”.\textsuperscript{100}

Dr Thomas Nielsen, the cluster advisor, maintained that the students who took up the opportunities to help others had learnt about values education. He justifies this on the basis of surveys conducted before, during and after the projects using two measurement indexes: a Personal Wellbeing Index which sought answers for the question “How happy are you?” for seven domains. The other index was developed by the cluster itself and asked participants to rate the importance of each of the Nine Values for Australian Schooling.\textsuperscript{101} Nielsen noted how the experiences in the projects appeared to be transforming for the students, many of whom had a history of

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 78.
wrong-doing. He claimed that this transformation was connected to the simple act of “doing something right... something good again.”

Nielsen’s observations were supported by one of the teachers in the Australian Juvenile Detention Centre Cluster:

I think as a whole group my students were able to see that they could give something and show care and compassion which was (sic) the values we were looking at, and not give something materialistic but give something of themselves. And they weren’t actually expecting anything in return, but the feeling of well-being that they got afterwards was really powerful for them.

The following comments from one of the ‘impact stories’, written by a student from the cluster also supports Nielsen’s observations and shows how the initiative in the Detention Centres helped at least some students to reflect upon values.

The most important value for me at the moment is respect. Because you get some of these values, like a fair go and freedom, if you show respect in the first place. Because some of these things don’t just come, you have to be good to others, and then good things will happen. So yeah... respect is the most important one for me... But I suppose that the VASP project has... helped in a way... for me to see things in a different point of view, and just start giving back to the community instead of taking from them (sic).

This cluster started off with a focus on engagement and what they regarded as the associated values of well-being and resilience that they wished to foster, but, as noted above, this cluster like many others, regardless of the focus they began with, found that one of the great impacts of values education was related to the question of ‘agency’. ‘Agency’ was taken to refer to the idea that young people’s taking responsibility for putting values into action can spur them into activity.

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102 Ibid., p. 50.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid., p.78
105 Ibid., pp. 49 – 59. In these pages the relationships between two of the five major “Impacts of Values Education” identified by the VASP, “Wellbeing” (Impact 2) and “Agency” (Impact 3) are made explicit.
As a product of Dr Nielsen’s work with this Cluster he ran a workshop at the National Values Education Conference in 2009 entitled “Toward a Curriculum of Giving: Transforming education from within”\(^{106}\) which delved deeper into the effects of ‘self-giving’ on student well-being. The underlying theory of this approach is that when students have opportunities to give to someone or some cause beyond themselves and display altruistic behaviours, it increases their mental, emotional and even physical health, which in turn has implications for academic diligence and learning in general.\(^{107}\) Nielsen based his theory on work by Stephen Post\(^{108}\) and Martin Seligman who argue that the development of other-centred behaviours enhances flourishing of the individual.\(^{109}\)

The experiences of the Australian Juvenile Detention Centre Cluster and others clusters we have seen, point to Service Learning as a pathway or pedagogy of values education, given its focus on agency. The “Greater Brisbane Schools – Values Education through Service Learning Cluster” reported a number of positive benefits from their focus on service learning.\(^{110}\) The Lanyon Cluster of Schools in the ACT sought to deepen their students’ understanding of values through the creation of a ‘culture of giving’ and involvement in outreach programs for the local community. A wiki-posting on her experience with some of the students from the cluster made by one of the teachers indicates the teacher’s confidence in this form of service as an avenue for values education.

On Friday, I was fortunate to be part of the group of Year 4-5 students and teachers from Gordon [Primary School] who visited Goodwin Village on the Outreach Program. The unit of work “Singing Together, Giving Together” was made meaningful for the students when they participated in their first


\(^{109}\) Seligman, op.cit.. See also, Seligman’s updated thoughts on flourishing in Seligman, M E P, Flourish, Free Press, New York, 2011, pp. 5 – 29. In this context, Annas has also speculated about the well-being effects of virtuous activity. “Many empirical indications have been found that people tend to be healthier and to feel better when doing good than when engaged in selfish activities...” Annas, op.cit., p. 175 and footnote 16 on this page. She thinks that more empirical studies should be done in this area.

\(^{110}\) Final Report VASP (October, 2010), p. 54-55
outreach. Talking with and singing with a 102-year-old resident was a unique learning experience for the children. The student investigators asked questions of the residents and their classmates, as well as taking photos. I followed up today asking the question ‘How do you think singing at outreach is giving - for you and for the residents?’ Responses were varied and thoughtful, and the data gathering showed how much more significant ‘values education’ is when placed in the context of giving.111

While I do not endorse the whole of the following quote, its value resides in the understanding gained by one teacher of the importance of service projects:

.... through involvement in real-life projects, values learning occurs through purposeful projects that occur as a result of a genuine need or issue, not by learning values out of a book.112

4.3.5 Service Learning: a privileged “locus” for values education

As mentioned immediately above, the VASP placed great importance on Service Learning because Service Learning seemed to bring together many of the important findings of values education and ensure the impacts of values education were durable.

Andrew Furco, whose work has been mentioned in Chapter 2113 has noted that Service Learning seems to make a difference to the retention of values that have been fostered in values education programs. He refers to this as children retaining their ‘values assets’. Furco claims that as children grow out of primary school, their sense of what their values are and what they mean decreases. This is probably correlated to the waning in young people of the desire to please their parents and teachers as they grow older and reach adolescence. Be that as it may, Furco has found in his research that the ‘values assets’ of young people who had been involved in the program that he pioneered, called ‘H3 (Head, Heart and Hands)’ already

111 Ibid., p. 54
112 Ibid., p. 70
113 See Chapter 2, pp. 33 and 35 above.
mentioned above, decreased less than those of young people who were not involved in his program. The H3 program involves many of the aspects of values education that we have discussed above, combining a focus on values and virtues in which cognitive understanding, social/emotional understanding and service learning are all elements.\(^{114}\) In addition, the more Service Learning activities in which students engaged, the less their ‘values assets’ seemed to wane.\(^{115}\) Service Learning appears to make the effects of values education more durable. This may be due not only to the active involvement of students helping others but also the reflective component that is an integral part of Service Learning programs; students are encouraged to reflect on the impact of their service on others, on themselves and on situational contexts.

The importance of these findings concerning the worth of Service Learning were echoed by Terence Lovat in the National Values Education Conference in 2009. Lovat was involved in the VEASP from its inception. From at least 2007 he contended that values education and quality teaching formed what he called “the double helix” of good education.\(^{116}\) In the 2009 Conference he made the case that another element had to be added to the two aspects of this “double helix”. This element was Service Learning. The research was demonstrating what positive effects Service Learning had in education:

> The strongest, most robust and most consistent finding across Service Learning experiences are positive impacts on students’ engagement, motivation, self-esteem, empowerment and pro-social behaviours....\(^{117}\)

In summary, the VEASP found that enhancing student action and agency and providing opportunities for Service Learning have been amongst the most successful strategies in making values relevant for young people. This demonstrates something very important about values education itself: however laudable the values might

\(^{114}\) National Values Education Forum (2007), pp. 24-31

\(^{115}\) National Values Education Forum (2008), p. 36. At times Furco calls them ‘character assets.


\(^{117}\) National Values Education Conference (2009), p. 21. Lovat was to expand these ideas in a publication in the same year. See Lovat T, Twoomey R, Clement N, Crotty R, Nielsen T, *Values Education, Quality Teaching and service learning: a troika for effective teaching and teacher education*, David Barlow Publishing, Terrigal (NSW, Australia), 2009. Lovat had been convinced by the work of Andrew Furco (mentioned above) that service learning had to be added to his “double helix” approach to education.
appear and however unanimously acceptable they might be, they have little effect if they are not practiced and acted upon in day-to-day life situations.

The finding that Service Learning facilitates the retention of ‘values assets’ reinforces the main argument of this thesis; that virtues, which are dispositions formed by repetition of good actions, are necessary for values education to become optimal moral education. Service Learning provides opportunities to start or continue to develop those good habits which are involved in serving others, for example, generosity and perseverance. These habits are developed in situations in which students engage in generous behaviours that are repeated.

It would seem that Service Learning provides a unique opportunity for the development of virtuous character traits and in doing so that these programs help bridge the gap between ‘knowing that’, ‘knowing how’ and ‘knowing to’.

4.4 What the Forums and Clusters tell us

This survey of the National Values Education Forums and particularly of the work of the clusters of schools in the practical phases of the VEASP shows that there was clear recognition that values are only really effective if they result in action or in changes of behaviour. This recognition supports the view that what values education lacks if it is to become optimal moral education is an understanding of the concept of virtues. This became increasingly clear as the different phases of the practical values initiatives were implemented.

Furthermore, the finding that service learning is somehow a privileged locus of values education, reinforces the claim that virtues are missing from the VEASP.
Conclusion

For most of the 20th century before 1960 Australia was dominated by an Anglo-Celtic monoculture which was largely Christian in its understanding of morals and character development. One British commentator whose insights can be easily translated to the Australian context has pointed out that moral character during this time was held to the standards of an uneasy combination of Biblical teaching and utilitarianism. This moral framework formed the basis of moral education in pre-1960s Australia, whether that moral education was imparted in faith-based schools or in the State school system.

With the social revolution of the 1960s the very concept of moral education was called into question in England, Australia and the United States. Between 1960 and approximately the middle of the 1990s there was a prevailing view that explicit moral education was not necessary or could even be counter-productive to character development. Many faith-based schools changed their pedagogies to adapt to the backlash against what was regarded as the imposition of morals or particular ways of thinking and often retreated to putting their trust in the school’s general ethos to transmit the values of the faiths which inspired these schools.

During these 40 years, a number of alternatives to explicit moral education sprang up. One of the best known was the Values Clarification movement. Lawrence Kohlberg and his attempts to map the stages of moral growth in young people also captured the attention of many educators. However, by the 1990s concerns about behaviours and attitudes of young people were emerging in these same Anglophone countries. One of the most important concerns was a perceived lack of adherence on the part of many young people to any but narrowly personal values. The cause of this was variously attributed to widespread relativism in young people’s attitudes to values or a purported increase in individualism amongst young people that sapped them of a sense of participation in community and society. There was also rising concern about the increasing rates of anti-social and risky behaviour amongst young people and a correlative decline in their well-being. This led to the view amongst

1 See Chapter 3, footnotes 4 and 5 which make reference to Himmelfarb, op. cit., particularly p. 241.
influential political figures and educators that values needed to be transmitted explicitly to young people and that schools were the appropriate place for this to occur. Britain introduced values education in the 1990s and this seems to have been the stimulus for Australia to do likewise, beginning in 1998.\(^2\) I have called this Australian values education initiative the Values Education in Australian Schools Project (VEASP).

The aims of values education in both Britain and Australia were similar: to teach students a common core of values necessary for living with other people in society; to teach students about the importance of democracy and to equip them to participate fruitfully in it; and through these values, to enhance the well-being of students. Amongst these goals there were tentative references to moral and character development but throughout the VEASP, there is no sustained attempt to unravel the goals of this project or to explore what might be implied as underlying values education that involves education for citizenship for democratic participation, for student well-being and for moral and character development. This led to a grab-bag approach in which values education was expected to cover all the goals mentioned above via the one umbrella strategy, under the name “values education”. Thus without making a specific claim that it was doing so, values education also appropriated the mantle of moral education.

Despite this lack of a clear definition of the goals of values education, the schools involved in the trial implementations of values education were able to agree on clear principles of best practice in values education. This came about despite the different approaches adopted by the schools in the project. The principles of best practice were: the adoption of a whole school approach to values education; the need for a common values language to enable stakeholders within each school to understand the meaning of values when they were invoked; the need to explicitly teach the values identified by the school community as important for the school and to explain what these values meant; the recognition that values education is not just about a cognitive understanding of values but requires changes in behaviour; and the necessity of modelling values, particularly on the part of teachers. Lastly, it was

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\(^2\) Because of the different characteristics of the schooling system in the USA, the model for Australia’s values education initiatives was the United Kingdom. Neither country, however, is immune from the influence of educational ideas which emanate from the USA.
agreed that best practice recognises that values education is only effective when accompanied by attempts to improve relationships, especially between students and teachers.

In addition, the VEASP took for granted two philosophical principles that challenged assumptions that had been common within the philosophy of education even prior to the 1960s. Firstly, the VEASP held that there is no such thing as value neutrality in education and secondly that there are core values which are common to all Australians and that these should be taught in schools. Furthermore, the VEASP accepted that the common core of values such as respect, responsibility, honesty and solidarity are shared by many other cultures, to the point where some values were accepted as universal. The clear enunciation of these two principles in the VEASP, supported as they were by some philosophical writings and evidence from values educators in countries other than Australia is one of the most important contributions of the VEASP to the discourse on values education.

Nevertheless, despite the enunciation of these underlying principles, the VEASP suffered from a lack of clarity in identifying its specific goals and hence the previously mentioned grab-bag approach to the purposes of the project predominated. So while the VEASP was often regarded as providing an improved form of moral education, the values education programs that it helped initiate cannot be regarded as optimal forms of moral education. This thesis has attempted to address the question of whether the moral or character education which was part, although not a well-articulated part, of the initial goals of the Values Education in Australian Schools Project constitutes optimal moral education. Certainly values education in the context of the project is a form of moral education in that it tries to inculcate in students certain values and encourages them to act upon these values. However, this thesis has argued that what values education is lacking in order to be regarded as constituting optimal moral education, is an understanding of virtues as stable dispositions towards good behaviour, dispositions that are established by a repetition of acts, such that these acts become habitual. Clearly this understanding of virtues must be accompanied by a cognitive understanding of virtuous behaviour and values and, as we have seen, cognitive approaches such as values clarification initiatives have traditionally been the central feature of values education programs. However, an understanding of the way in which virtues are acquired is equally central to moral
education. Moral education must be practical and it is the inclusion of initiatives aimed at assisting students to acquire virtues or stable character traits by means of action-based projects and initiatives that stimulate behavioural change that helps to provide this practical dimension. An understanding of virtue also helps explain why the development of moral character requires that the student who is acquiring a virtue should be in the presence of people who demonstrate that virtue, since the latter can serve as models. Thus, an education which focuses on virtue can better explain why an awareness of their duties to model values is important for both parents and teachers, as well as why the fostering of good relationships is also important in moral education since it is in the context of interaction between those with whom we have affective bonds that virtuous behaviour can first become attractive. In addition, it is crucial that those who are regarded as models of virtues (teachers, in the school context), not hinder the growth of the virtues in their students because of antipathies that the teacher might cause. When these understandings are scrutinised with reference to the principles of best practice that the VEASP unearthed, a virtues perspective seems tailor-made for optimal implementation of moral education in the way that the VEASP aspirationally conceived of it.

Chapter 4 of the thesis explored the understanding of virtue outlined above, as practically oriented, dependent on positive role modelling, on opportunities for repetitive activity and on the development of good relationships between students and teachers. To show that the VEASP often “unwittingly” or implicitly refers to virtues rather than values, a survey of the Forums and Cluster projects of the VEASP was undertaken and these unwitting references were uncovered and highlighted. This reinforced the claim of this thesis that in fact, a successful values education program cannot avoid a focus on action and that in discussing values-based action, practitioners depend on the concept of virtue despite avoiding the explicit use of the term.

Thus the argument of this thesis is that often when the VEASP referred to and advocated the development of particular values, it was in reality referring to and advocating the development of virtues. What is more, the notion of virtues is tailor-made for clarifying many of the principles, outcomes and best practices of values education within the VEASP. Perhaps because of the “pious if not faintly ridiculous
aura"\textsuperscript{3} surrounding the term virtue, many of the teachers and educators involved in the VEASP avoided using it. That is understandable as few people relish being perceived as pious or ridiculous; but by shying away from the term, these same teachers and educators cut themselves off from the rich possibilities for theorising about and implementing moral education programs, as well as for affecting moral behaviour, that a focus on the concept of virtues brings with it.

This thesis argues that the VEASP would have been a superior project if it had explicitly acknowledged the rich vein of understanding and practice that surrounds the notion of virtues. Furthermore it could have provided for an optimal moral education rather than presenting an emasculated view of moral education, which focussing on values alone provides.

\textsuperscript{3} Coope, C M, “Modern Virtue Ethics” in Timothy Chappell, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 21.
Appendix

Values for Australian Schooling Poster
VALUES FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING

Care and Compassion
Care for self and others

Doing Your Best
Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence

Fair Go
Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society

Freedom
Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others

Honesty and Trustworthiness
Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

Integrity
Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct; ensure consistency between words and deeds

Respect
Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person’s point of view

Responsibility
Be accountable for one’s own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment

Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion
Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

CHARACTER IS DESTINY
— George Eliot
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