

## Values! A Hot Topic

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**ABSTRACT** This paper reports on a PhD project which explored the perceptions of teachers and élite personalities regarding the possible use of a selected religious text for values development in Life Orientation. This paper focuses specifically on the teacher participants' understanding of values, their opinions on the insertion of values into the curriculum and who takes responsibility of values development. The paper also reports on the élite personalities ideas of prescription of values. This study is located within an interpretive paradigm as it attempts to interpret the views of Life Orientation teachers and élite personalities on values. Questionnaires (with Life Orientation teachers) and focus group interviews (with élite personalities) were used to gather data. The data suggests that values development occurs most effectively through dialogue, experience and critical thinking. While some teacher participants and élite personalities favoured prescription and expressed some concern of changing time honoured values, others were in favour of engaging with the values that they would like to instill in learners.

### INTRODUCTION

Since 1994, South African society has been on a path of political, economic, and social transformation. Democracy has brought both opportunities and challenges. The needs and demands faced by the South African youth in particular offer both problems and possibilities for a successful life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The youth are confronted by many rival forces that are competing for their attention. While on the one hand they are being challenged by the forces of the technocratic age, they are also on the other hand, being confronted by the problems of HIV/AIDS, sexual and verbal abuse, gender discrimination, racial tensions, and substance abuse, which constitute a serious threat to their identity. Gysbers and Henderson (2000) have indicated that youth worldwide, are swiftly changing career and job sectors, are confronted by violence in the home, school and community, have to deal with familial disintegration and divorce, are considering and committing teenage suicide, are becoming more prone to substance abuse and are experimenting with sexual activities, a situation that is similarly affecting South African youth.

The youth in South African schools are faced with complex challenges (Zulu et al. 2004; Mhlongo 2005; Serrao 2008; Makwabe 2009). While they have to become adept at making informed decisions, they will also be expected to protect themselves from abuse. Since the youth are regarded as a precious treasure of a nation, the

education given to them should effectively mould and equip them for the tasks of tomorrow. It is extremely significant to education that The World Health Organization (1999) has argued for a programme of life skills in order to protect the youth from the demands of modern life, poor parenting, changing family structures, dysfunctional relationships, and decline of religion. Giroux (2001) also makes a call for youth to have recourse to adults who need to understand the problems of youth. According to Canay (2011), youth are increasingly more affected by violence, social problems and lack of respect for each other. In his study on the process, approaches and teacher roles in values education Canay (2011) showed that many parents and educators believe that the solution lies partially with values education. In other words children and youngsters should not only be taught things they need to know, but also become educated in being humans and living together. It is the contention of this paper that values education in Life Orientation<sup>1</sup> has the potential to address the many challenges facing the youth of South Africa.

This paper reports on the perceptions of teachers and élite personalities regarding the possible use of a selected religious text for Values Education in Life Orientation. The data suggests that values development occurs most effectively through dialogue, experience and critical thinking. While some élite personalities favoured prescription and expressed some con-

cern about changing time honoured values, others were in favour of engaging with the values that they would like to instill in learners. This indeed makes values education a hot topic in the field of education (Lickona 1991). While there may not be consensus on whose values or what values should be promoted in schools, this paper argues that schools cannot distance themselves from values education, especially in the ever increasing morally degenerate climate we find ourselves in.

In this paper, a review of the literature and current developments that inform my research are described, viz., that values and values education are contested concepts, and that while values education programmes may contribute positively to learner performance, they are confronted with challenges. The paper will further outline the methodology employed, discuss the data elicited from the elite personalities on values and value education and attempt to provide answers to the following questions: 1) what are the teacher participants' understandings of values? 2) Where should values feature in the curriculum? 3) Whose responsibility is Values Education? 4) What are elite personalities' views on prescription of values?

### Literature Review

One cannot talk of purity of cultural values, since all value systems can coexist without being regarded as contradictory. The concepts value and values education are central to this paper. In this section a review of the literature on values and values education will be presented.

*Values are a hot topic! In fact, values have been such a hot topic that for years schools and educators have refused to touch them (Galletti 1999: 1)*

While Galletti is correct that for an inordinate length of time, schools and teachers have refused to touch values and values education, this remains one of the hottest topics in educational circles (Lickona 1999). There is a renewed interest in values and values education which has been triggered by the concern to discover new ways of dealing with issues such as racism, drug abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, AIDS and new forms of terrorism (Lovat and Clement 2008). After the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, values and values education became a "hot topic". The Manifesto on Values,

Education and Democracy was introduced by the government of South Africa in 2001. This document suggests sixteen approaches to seed the values of the SA Constitution<sup>22</sup> in young South Africans.

While there may be a renewed interest in values and values education, the literature reviewed indicates that the definition of values has been confusing and conflicting. Historically the definition of values has changed. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) used values as meaning to value or to esteem something (cited in Heenan 2000). Nietzsche's use of the word *values* was a revolution against the use of virtues (Heenan 2000). The sociologist, Max Weber, introduced the word values into the vocabulary of modern society. Thus, values came to signify subjectivity and relativity. In other words, values became whatever the individual subjectively considered to be right or important at a particular time and circumstance.

The Department of Education (2000) has defined *values* to include the desirable qualities of honesty, integrity, diligence, responsibility, compassion, altruism, justice and respect. Values, according to Nieuwenhuis (2007) is a fundamental concept in the fields of philosophy, education, psychology and the social sciences. The word *value* has its roots in the Latin *valere* – meaning "that for which it is worth striving". Nieuwenhuis (2007: 9) explained this further:

*In a moment when the individual is confronted with a reality to which he or she must respond, values place an imperative on the individual to act in a manner consistent with that which he or she regards as worth striving or living for and that the individual sees as worth protecting, honouring and desiring.*

Similar views were expressed in India's national newspaper, *The Hindu* (2002) which stated, that values refer to objects and ideas that we cherish and consider desirable. Hill (1991) agrees that values refer to beliefs to which individuals attach special priority or worth. Wringle (1998: 281) concurs when he states: "...in positive terms, our values are our judgments of approval, our pro attitudes towards the abilities, qualities and behaviours we think worthy of admiration, praise or emulation or with which we wish to identify ourselves".

However, values are more than belief. It also incorporates the worthiness of a norm or a principle embedded in a person, a group, a religion

or a belief system (van Niekerk 1999). This view is supported by Carr (1993: 33), who maintains that values are “principled preferences” and not merely expression of arbitrary liking or approval. Similarly, Halstead (1996) defines values as principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances, which act as general guides to behaviour or as reference points in decision-making or the evaluation of beliefs or actions. According to Muller (2004), values are conceptions of the desirable that guide behaviour over the long term. It can be seen that values have a heuristic nature: they enable individuals to find things out for themselves. It may thus be gleaned from the literature that several researchers concur that values are desirable traits that guide behavior a concept that underpins the discussion of values education in the next section.

Values education has come to be considered a moral initiative undertaken by schools. It is evident from the literature however, that there exists conflicting value systems for formal education. Van Niekerk (1999: 4) has identified a range of conflicting value systems, which make the task of education difficult. They are official and non-official values, conflicting value systems of adults and children, different backgrounds and different value preferences, traditional and contemporary value systems and modern and postmodern value systems. The review of the literature also shows that there are at least sixteen separate values education approaches or discourses<sup>3</sup>. Based on these discourses, the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools differentiated these 16 Values Education discourses in terms of their orientation to education. The education orientations are: conservative, liberal, critical, and postmodern Values Education discourses (Hoepper et al. 1996; Gilbert 2004).

According to the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools (NFVEAS in Jones 2009), Values Education is a school-based activity intended to promote understanding and knowledge of values. Others such as Kirschenbaum (1977), Robb (1994) and Aspin (2002) have defined Values Education as a subgroup of moral education approaches promoting valuing skills or processes. Values Education is also used interchangeably with moral and character education (Metcalf 1971; Hill 1991; Halsted and Taylor 2000; Wilson 2000). This study has defined Values Education in its broad-

est sense as an umbrella term that includes all categories of values in education (Nucci 1982; Beck 1998; Mikulics 1998; Taylor 2000; Curriculum Corporation 2003).

The Curriculum Corporation (2003) in Australia reported that in the past decade Values Education policies have become increasingly prominent in western countries. According to Taylor (2000), Values Education is now a legislative requirement in England. In the USA, the character education programmes (similar to Values Education) is supported by federal government grants and policies (De Roche and Williams 1998; Smagorinsky and Taxel 2004). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Baha'i community have also developed many values and character education programmes (Curriculum Corporation, 2003).

Powney et al. (1995) have asserted that values do not involve beliefs only, but also understanding, feelings and behaviour. In a broad sense, Values Education involves all aspects of the process by which teachers transmit values to learners. Values Education encompasses all the formal and informal means by which values may be transmitted in schools. Values Education needs to focus not only on the cognitive domain, but also on the social and emotional, which also encompasses the character of a person. Mahatma Gandhi regarded character building as the proper foundation for the education of the young and had no doubt in his mind that if the foundation was firmly laid, children could learn all the other things by themselves (cited in Bourai 1993). Former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, expressed similar views when he stated: “One of the most powerful ways of children and young adults acquiring values is to see individuals they admire and respect exemplify those values in their own being and conduct” (Mandela 2001: 2). This argument is supported by Ryan and Bohlin (1999) who said that building character requires the addressing of the cognitive, the emotional and the behavioural – the head, the heart and the hand.

The literature on values education encompasses several studies that have shown the positive effect of values education on learners. Lovat et al. (2010) conducted a study on faith based schools. They concluded that the values agenda played an important role in the learner's well-

being and academic success. According to Hattie (2004) highly skilled teachers have the quality of showing respect to their learners. In studies conducted by Scanlon (2004) and Carr (2005) care and trust were qualities of the teacher which learners found to contribute positively to their achievement. Similarly, Manchishi (2000) conducted a study of the impact of the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) Programme in Zambia in 1998. This study concluded that the SSEHV Programme had a positive impact on learners, teachers and parents. In 2002, Baijnath conducted a study of the impact of SSEHV Programmes on primary school learners in Durban, South Africa. The study showed that the SSEHV Programme was effective in bringing about character development in the learners.

Hence, while it is seen that the teacher's relationship with learners improves performance, it should be noted that the implementation of a values education programme in schools also has its challenges. The question that arises is: what values should be included in schools and what values programme should be adopted.

It is therefore understood from the literature: that although values and values education was for a prolonged period regarded with suspicion, it is now becoming a "hot topic" both nationally and internationally, namely, that values and values education can be looked at from different perspectives, and that while there may be conflicting values for teachers to contend with, values education has had a positive effect on the character of students and has also enhanced learner performance.

## METHODOLOGY

The PhD project from which this paper derives, explores the perceptions of the teachers of Life Orientation and elite personalities on values and Values Education in Life Orientation in South African schools. The study was conducted with teachers of Life Orientation in the Chatsworth District of the Umlazi Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. In addition, selected elite personalities who are experts on values and Values Education, were invited to a seminar, in which the focus group interviews took place.

A mixed methods approach was used to gather data. According to Mason (2006: 13), "... research strategies should be driven by the research questions we seek to answer and part of this

must involve choosing methods that are appropriate to the questions being addressed". Creswell and Clark (2007) define mixed methods research as a method that focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. This definition coheres with the views of Bergman (2008), who defines mixed method research as that which combines at least one quantitative and at least one qualitative component in a single project. This project on Values Education corresponds to this definition as it employed a questionnaire survey and focus group discussions to elicit the views of teacher participants and elite personalities respectively.

Since this study focused on the meaning the participants held about values and Values Education, which Creswell (2007) calls *participants' meaning*, the study is also regarded as a qualitative, interpretive inquiry. This type of inquiry involves the researcher making an interpretation of what he saw, heard and understood (Creswell 2007). Therefore this study is located within an interpretive paradigm as it attempts to interpret the views of Life Orientation teachers and elite personalities on values and Values Education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### What are the Teacher Participants' Understandings of Values?

In this section, a discussion of the data relating to teacher participants' understanding of the concepts values is presented. According to the report of the Department of Education (2000: 2), "By values, we mean desirable qualities of character such as honesty, integrity, tolerance, diligence, responsibility, compassion, altruism, justice and respect". One teacher participant said: "Values are all that is sacred". According to Nieuwenhuis (2007: 9), value is a fundamental concept in philosophy, education, psychology, and the social sciences generally. In the words of another teacher participant, "values form the very core of our existence". Huitt (2003: 1) states that "Values are defined in literature as everything from eternal ideas to behavioural actions." One of the teacher participants expressed similar views by saying that "values are inherent in all of us, we are born with them".

Two teacher participants wrote the following in explaining the concept *values*:

R36: It (values) should enable people to live the way God has meant for us to live.

R51: Values are those emotions, feelings inherent in each individual, which needs to be nurtured: truth, love, peace, right conduct, and non-violence.

One of the respondents above refers to values as enabling people to live their lives in accordance to the ways prescribed by God. Oguz (2012) concurs when he describes values as true behavior standards. While the second respondent above talks of “feelings inherent in individuals” in describing values, Oguz (2012) refers to values as attributes that determine the significance of the events and objects in terms of a society, a class or a person.

### **Where Should Values Feature in the Curriculum?**

This section discusses the importance of focusing on values in education and whether values education should be independently taught. An overwhelming 97.1% of the teacher participants indicated that it is very important to focus on values in education at schools. This is indeed a significant result. However, where would this values education feature in the school curriculum?

Teacher participants were asked: *Should values education be compartmentalised to one subject?* A small percentage of 15.7% felt that it should be independently taught and 74.3% indicated that it should not. The general view of teacher participants was that values are all-pervasive and cannot be compartmentalised. Expressions such as “values permeate life”, “values are inherent in all aspects of life” were common in several responses. In particular, some of the teacher participants suggested that:

R3: One can experience a value system in ethics as a lawyer or a value system at the knees of a parent in the growing up years of the child – values thus cannot be compartmentalised into one subject.

R4: The educator has to be able to bring out the values in the different learning areas.

R36: Values should be spread across all learning areas so that it can be continuously reinforced.

According to Rhodes and Roux (2004: 26), it is important for the school curriculum to focus on knowledge, skills and values. More specifically, the teachers need to facilitate different val-

ues and belief systems into all learning areas. However, they also aver that special attention needs to be given to the facilitation of value and belief systems in the learning area of Life Orientation. Veugelers (2000: 37) also maintains that value education seeks to strengthen the transfer of values in education and that this should occur by means of the curriculum and the moral climate in the school. Sinclair (2004) suggests a variety of approaches for curricula dealing with values. One of these is the “teaching-values-across-the discipline” approach. Canay (2011: 247) states:

*When values are included in the curriculum, activities such as group work, role play, drama and open ended class discussions are mostly preferred so that a high level of student participation can be achieved. Successful programs are supported by interactive discussions enabling the expression of individual and group opinions, which helps the internalization of values and valued behavior patterns.*

According to Ryan and Bohlin (1999: 93), character education fits in everywhere into the curriculum and education seeks to help students develop as persons. Therefore character development is part and parcel of the whole enterprise.

The results presented above related to the role of the teacher, school and curriculum in values development, but what about the role of parents in this regard?

### **Whose Responsibility is Values Education?**

The teacher participants in the survey were asked to indicate how important the role of parents was in developing values in learners?

An overwhelming 97.1% indicated that values education should not be the responsibility of parents only. Teacher participants felt that values are inculcated and not taught. Armani (2013) in a study with university students in Jordan too concluded that values education are caught and not taught. Teachers also emphasised that educators had an important role to play as role models and that society as a whole has a responsibility in values development. Traditionally, homes were primarily the places where character was built. However, according to Ryan and Bohlin (1999), this does not seem to be happening recently. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) further suggest that formerly, character building was just

as important as imparting intellectual knowledge. For various reasons, formal character education has been absent from public schools for several decades now. Developing character is a social act. Since character needs to be nurtured, the humans we share relationships with play a key part in our learning to become flourishing people of character. The child's family has the primary responsibility for character education. According to Glendon (1995: 2), "character and competence have conditions residing in nurture and education". Character education is a central mission of our schools. Ryan and Bohlin (1999: 141) list "six Es": Example, Explanation, Ethos, Experience, Exhortation, and Expectations of Excellence. These serve as a reminder to teachers on how to promote values development within each child, in the classroom and in the entire school environment. One of these Es is the EXAMPLE set by the teacher. On this aspect, one respondent said:

R33: Many learners see teachers as role models. As an educator one should always display good values in addition, your attitude will be important. Educators can thus also help develop good values in learners.

This concurs with another study on Values Education (Baijnath 2008), in which the teacher participants also emphasised the importance of proper conduct and behaviour of teachers. Moloi (2007) has also argued that teachers who do not practise punctuality are likely to have a negative impact on the attitudes and discipline of learners. However, while teachers are a natural part of values education and their role in the process undoubtedly includes influencing the students, there are conflicting findings about students considering teachers as models and respecting them (Canay 2011). In a study conducted in the United States, only 9% of students reported that their teachers made a difference in their lives (Halstead and Taylor 2000). In another study conducted in Australia by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 78% of the adults who participated reported that teachers are ideal models for young people (Canay 2011).

The data supports the claims that values development should not be restricted to parents only, as other respondents said:

R11: Some values are gained, not taught. These values can be obtained from different sources, that is, educators, religious leaders, sports coaches, mentors and role models.

R41: The child is influenced not only by educators but also by peers as well as adults, gurus and media. Therefore the duty of society as a whole is to be responsible for development of the child.

Veugelers (2000: 40) contends that the values teachers find important are expressed in the content of their instruction and in the way they guide the learning process. Furthermore, teachers stimulate values through subject matter, chosen examples and reactions to their students.

It seems that values education or building character in learners is the responsibility of parents and schools. However, the media reports give the impression that teachers are failing to lead by example. It seems that teachers themselves are in need of values education or character building. Example of teacher's lack of values abound: Broughton (2008) describes how a school principal in the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa) has been accused of defrauding parents of about R400 000 in school fees; another report (Ndlovu and Mboto 2009) describes how in May 2009, five Durban teachers were suspended for allegedly copulating with pupils. These are but a few of the scenarios that appear in the media regularly. One can deduce from these media reports that not all teachers may be bearers of morality. Therefore this begs the question: how will teachers in the education system stimulate values in learners? One is therefore inclined to conclude that the Values Education provided at school needs to be re-enforced at the home and *vice versa*.

### **What Are Élite Personalities' Views on Prescription of Values?**

The elite personalities were presented with the following quotation:

*Research has shown that values are not changed by prescription, but through dialogue, experience, new knowledge and critical thinking*".

Given their experience, the intention was to present a provocative statement to elicit a more informed response from the elite personalities. This quotation, taken from the Ministry of Education's Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy document, favours the participation of individuals in developing their values. The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy document is a post-apartheid (post-1994) policy

document framed around the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). According to OBE, the learner must be fully involved in the learning act, and not be a passive recipient of knowledge, values and skills. Hence, the Manifesto on Values, Democracy and Education supports a dialogic, experiential and critical approach to values development.

One of the participants was concerned at the focus on changing values:

*The question is focusing on changing values - why should that come to the purpose of the focus? Because values are time-honoured. Is there something sacred about changing time-honoured values?*

It seems then that there is not always agreement on how values should be developed.

While a few elite personalities were of the view that values develop through prescription, others favoured more experiential approaches to values development.

The elite personality, whose concern about focusing on changing of values was alluded to above, continued to argue that there are some things which must be "prescriptive". He explained how he has experienced a kind of liberalised education in the last thirty to forty years, which has taken over what people have considered to be time-honoured values. This elite personality was quite strong in his view that people are now questioning some of the time-honoured values given in spiritual texts such as the Bhagavad Gita in order to satisfy their own weaknesses or inabilities to be able to uphold those values. He warned:

*One has to be very careful in this context because when there is an erosion of values as a result of trying to view very liberal sentiments of it then one is actually guilty of desecrating something that is cherished.*

Another elite personality spoke about one becoming the change one wants to see in society, a very popular quote often used by Mahatma Gandhi. He was of the view that prescription is required. However, at the same time, dialogue, experience and new knowledge and critical thinking will come from people who are in that field. In other words, only one well-versed in the content of a field of knowledge will be able to critically engage with that knowledge. In clarifying this view, the elite personality referred to time, place and circumstance:

*I might want to present this teaching but not the way it was spoken five thousand years ago in the Bhagavad Gita. There's a different audience I'm dealing with, so I'm going to teach them differently according to time, place and circumstance. In that sense religion may be different but spirituality is the same.*

Ryan and Bohlin (1999: 105) support the idea of dialogue:

*Thoughtful dialogue is not only a powerful way to investigate a topic but also a wonderful way to foster friendships within a classroom. By engaging students in moral discourse, they learn to take moral themes seriously and to take others seriously, listening to and considering thoughtfully what each of them says.*

The views of this second elite personality coheres with Ryan and Bohlin (1999) suggestions about dialogue and critical engagement. Ryan and Bohlin's suggestion of "engaging students in moral discourse" finds synchrony with the views of a third elite personality who alluded to the issue of values clarification in her response.

*Many students either don't have values or they have got values and they do something because their great grandmother did it. They have never taken ownership of it for themselves and they don't know what the implications are of those values. So often they need to clarify values and then it's through a process of value clarification whereby as an educator you would give alternatives to get them to see it from different angles and perspectives. And if they still take ownership of the same values at the end of it they are more likely to put that into practice but often in that process of values clarification they start to understand that maybe those values need to be adjusted or changed or interrogated more critically and then when they take ownership of it they can publicly and repeatedly put it into action. So the whole pedagogical process of values clarification, I think, is very useful.*

According to Haydon (1997), many educators have favoured an approach where learners are encouraged to think about their values. *Values clarification* (referred to by the third elite personality in the focus group discussion), Haydon argues, was popularized in the United States of America and in such an approach individuals are encouraged to identify and reflect on their

own values. Values clarification, which made significant contributions to character education efforts in the 1990s, became more popular than the cognitive moral reasoning approach, reasons for which DeRoche and Williams (2001: 10) outline here below: The strategies could be used in the school curriculum.

- ♦ Teachers felt more comfortable with it (it was less theoretical).
- ♦ It had applicability to the issues of the school and the community (values could be clarified using issues of the day).

However, the popularity of values clarification was short-lived. The reasons suggested for this was that values clarification was unable to deepen theory, expand research, develop the curriculum, and improve teacher training (DeRoche and Williams 2001). According to Rhodes and Roux (2004), Kirschenbaum preferred the values articulation approach to the values clarification approach. The values articulation approach allows for affirmation of values so that they become meaningful to people and means that learners will first have to understand values before they are explained to others. Another criticism of the values clarification approach has been its promotion of relativism. Vincent, (quoted in DeRoche and Williams 2001: 11) asserts that values clarification promotes relativism in the following ways:

- ♦ Sends a message to students that individuals determine what is right for them.
- ♦ It emphasizes conformity rather than development.
- ♦ The approach assumes students have the ability to discuss and decide without reference to criteria for making judgments.

From the aforementioned, it seems that some scholars are opposed to the values clarification approach being suggested by the third elite personality. Leming's (2006) study on the curriculum effectiveness of values clarification as an approach to values education indicated that little or no confidence is warranted regarding its potential curricular effectiveness. DeRoche and Williams (2001) are of the view that character education is a more holistic approach. Anderson (2000) regards character education as efforts to develop a new generation gain core humanistic values raise awareness towards values and turn them into behaviors through implicit or explicit programmes. According to Lickona (1991), character education is about knowing good, loving

the good and doing good. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) also favour character education as it requires knowledge, effort, and practice along with support, example and encouragement. From the views of the authors mentioned in this paragraph, it would seem that there is a link between values in education and character education. According to one of the elite personalities, "The accumulation of habits builds character and as a result of that character you are going to inculcate certain values". He gave the example of Swami Prabhupada (founding Acharya of ISKCON), who through his example of chanting was able to positively influence hippies, politicians and professionals in New York into accepting Krishna Consciousness.

*It was purely because of the example. So in other words what I'm saying is with values, you got to become the change you want to see in society.*

Ryan and Bohlin (1999) agree that the example people set is important in building character as people are not born with either good or bad habits. Instead they pick up good or bad habits. Developing character is a social act and since character needs to be nurtured the humans we share relationships with play a key part in our learning to become flourishing people of character (Ryan and Bohlin 1999).

The general consensus to the question of developing values is that this happens most effectively through dialogue, experience and critical thinking. While one elite personality favours prescription and expresses some concern about changing time-honoured values, another is in favour of engaging with the values that we would like to instill in learners. The suggestion of values clarification, though not as popular as it used to be, does involve some degree of dialogue and critical thinking.

## CONCLUSION

The literature reviewed in this paper, the data from the questionnaires and the focus group interview and the discussion of the findings point to the positive impact of values education. Yet it also indicates that values education comes with challenges. The data indicates that there is not always agreement on how values should be developed. The teacher participants though, are in agreement that values should permeate all parts of the schools' curriculum and that values are caught and not taught.

However divergent the views of the different scholars, teacher participants and élite personalities might be on values education, they concur that values education has the potential to remedy the rampant crime, violence and delinquency prevalent in South African schools. With the diminishing role that parents are playing in the lives of the learners, the school and hence teachers, may have to take over the traditional role that parents once played in the inculcating of values and morals in their children. The importance and benefit of values education as a medium for values development becomes even more crucial when one considers the number of single parent homes and parentless homes from which learners come.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is a recommendation of this paper that the government of South Africa commission a values education programme similar to the Values Education Good Practice Schools Projects (VEGPS) introduced by the Australian government in 2004. One of the suggestions made in the VEGPS report is that values education requires the full support of all stakeholders. While this paper acknowledges that the inculcation of values start with the family and religious institutions, schools and teachers play a paramount role. Several schools in VEGPS study realised that values education should start with the values inherent in the school culture. In order for values education to succeed it cannot be imposed, since ownership and autonomy is crucial. Any values education programme must take as its starting point the values of the school, staff, students and parents. This paper further recommends that teachers (both practicing and those in training) must gain knowledge about values first to be able to be a model for their future students. These virtues may be gained through social-cultural activities, enjoyment of real life stories, assignments and projects.

### NOTES

- i. Life Orientation is an interdisciplinary subject that draws on and integrates knowledge, values, skills, and processes embedded in various disciplines. According to Rooth (2005), the new learning area of Life Orientation was taught in apartheid South Africa as separate subjects such as guidance and career education, life skills, health education, environmen-

tal education, physical education, citizenship education and religious instruction. The scope of the new learning area of Life Orientation includes a focus on health promotion, personal and social development, physical development, movement, and orientation to the world of work.

- <sup>1</sup> Religious monopolism, values inculcation, character education, citizenship civics education, confluent education, *laissez faire*, moral development, values clarification, caring community, cultural heritage, peace education, social action, discursive school, ethical inquiry, values analysis and values stimulation.
2. democracy, social justice, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, ubuntu (human dignity), an open society, accountability, the rule of law, respect and reconciliation.

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