Values

Values are core traits and qualities that represent an individual’s beliefs and guiding principles, which form the foundation of who we are. Values of people in society differ from one another due to the culture, upbringing, religious beliefs and many other experiences that shape each and every human being. Primarily, values are fundamentally taught at a young age, these values are predominantly learnt from family and friends, the community and through education.

Therefore, schools and teachers have the opportunity to input into children positive and worthwhile values, to help build and strengthen personal and social skills and responsibilities. (Chilana, Dewan 1998, p 65) This paper outlines key aspects about core values in education today. Values can be looked upon and read in many different ways and can interpret many different meanings to an individual. This then can be seen as a global issue towards the teaching and learning styles of each teacher.

Issues and key ideas are addressed from local, national and international examples of values framework in order to come to a conclusion as to what is a balanced way of teaching values education in schools today. Theodore Roosevelt was the 26th President of the United Sates who once said, “To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society. ”(National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools, 2005 p. 1) In believing in this statement, wouldn’t it be true to say that values should be the driving force in shaping the curriculum.

The Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia states, “In recognition that values underpin and shape the curriculum, the Curriculum Council has determined that core shared values should be explicitly articulated within the Curriculum Framework. ” (Curriculum Council of WA, 1998, P. 324) The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) supports values education and “acknowledges that education is as much about building character as it is about equipping students with specific skills. I would like to point out in the acknowledgment that MCEETYA acknowledges that education is as much about building character, ‘as much’ is then lead to believe that values, morals and character building is an essential ingredient in the developmental and educational needs of a student. The purpose then of values education in schools today is to provide students with a foundational understanding of what is right and wrong reflecting on this personally and or culturally seen throughout each learning area and therefore throughout the curriculum.

The universal problem, however, that commonly arises with vales education is the selection of what values are the correct values to be taught, reinforced or not noted as of high priority. We will begin by analysing the Australian Values now currently taught in education and discuss what differences and points of agreements can be seen with a haphazard selection of 2 values. In 2005 endorsed by MCEETYA, nine values were nominated for the Values Education in Australian Schools. These values include;

1. Care and compassion: Care for self and others

2. Doing your best: Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence

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, and ensure consistency between words and deeds

7. Respect: Treat others with consideration and regard, and 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 civic life and 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 (Lovat, Toomey 2007 p. xv), Doing your best.

This value can be viewed upon as someone trying their hardest, accomplishing something worthy and admirable and aiming to do and be better. The problem with this value however, is the basis of the word best. What is the best, how is the best measured and how does one feel about doing their best. From personal experiences, the brighter student in the class were not looked upon as people who were admirable because they scored 100% in their maths test or little Johnny in music that would sing with all his might but sounded more like a broken record.

In both situations each person was giving it their all best, but is it the best result they anticipate with results they desired? Some actions or practices are good in themselves (intrinsic good) and other things are good only because of their consequences (instrumental good). (Freakley, Gilbert, MacSporran 2008 p. 33-34) As teachers it is therefore our role to establish to students to seek to do their best intrinsically, to be self motivated and persevere in doing so whether it be at home, school or daily activities, this then coincides to help further develop students independence, worthiness and appreciation of one self. Read [learning styles essay](https://getmyessay.com/essay-on-personal-essay-learning-style/)

Secondly, let’s look at value four, regarding freedom: Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship, free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others. If we break this down and look closely at the last sentence, ‘stand up for the rights of others’. Would it not be fair to say that a student in kindergarten would not understand what their own rights are or the rights of their peers? We could also ask what rights do individuals have, are given or follow?

Under the Catholic umbrella it is forbidden to proceed in having an abortion and seen as unjust, so is it then considered morally permissible for a sixteen year old atheist to proceed with an abortion? What is considered right to one human being may be condemned in the eyes of another. ( Freakley, Gilbert, MacSporran 2008 p. 55) As teachers, it is important to teach and define the term rights according solely to the code and conduct of the school and the by the law being followed for that particular state or country. A great way of displaying or teaching rights can be done through open ended tasks.

Students can be given a scenario and as a whole class or group the students must decide what is lawfully right or wrong. This will help students determine what conclusion they should undergo if they ever resulted in that particular situation. At West Kidlington Primary School in Oxfordshire in the United Kingdom staff members developed twenty-two values promoting a value for every month on a two year cycle ( Lovat, Tooney 2007 p. 119). These values are considered to be “universally accepted principles that guide behaviour”. (Lovat, Tooney 2007 p. 119) The range of values provides students to reflect modify and adapt behaviour.

This may also be reflected upon each staff member of the school, as it provides an emphasis on a particular value for that particular month. This way of teaching not only brings about discussion with peers, but with mentors, friends and family members as it as seen as a whole school approach that can be reflected into the community. The specific values are yet again seen as broad ideas or concepts but what the underpinning theme in creating a values-based approach to teaching at West Kidlington Primary School is for teachers to explore, teach and model the correct behaviour of what is right and wrong for students to reflect upon. The West Kidlington School is a very good school with outstanding features. The underpinning of the school’s work with Values Education contributes significantly to good standards, good pupil behaviour and excellent relationships. ”(OFSTED, 1997) This school not only sets a great example of the inclusivity of values education as a whole school approach, but clearly advocates the effect upon the teaching and mentoring of values education within the curriculum. Values are determined by the beliefs we hold.

They are the ideas about what someone or a group thinks is important in life and they plays a very important part in our decision making. We express our values in the way we think and act. (Lemin, Potts, Welsford 1994) We can look upon each individual value a school or state determines to be a core educational value and pick at the meaning, significance and wellbeing of the word, however, how specific or broad the term is looked upon, students need a firm ground understanding of the importance of values whether it being personal to themselves or being educated about the values of others.

This understanding needs to be universal for all people in order for there to be a fair and understanding world. Values are words with powerful meanings that need not only to be taught but to be reflected upon in our daily lives. They need to be learnt and practices to remain as a good standard citizen of today. Each nine values promoted in the Australian Values Education in some way or another is an important trait each student coming from an Australian schooling system should obtain and practice.

References

Australian Government: Department of Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2005). Retrieved March, 25, 2011, from, http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/val\_about\_values\_education,8679.html

Chiliana, M.R. Dewan, ..L. (2007). The Human Values : A task for all . New Delhi, India: Ashok Kumar Mittal

Camberwell. (2008).Values Education in Schools: A Resource Book for Student Inquiry. Retrieved March 23, 2011, from http://search.informit.com.au.ipacez.nd.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=441539240928596;res=IELHSS>

Lovat, T. J. &, R. (2007). Values education and quality teaching: The double helix effect. Sydney: David Barlow Publishing.

National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools. (2005). Retrieved March, 23, 2011, from http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve/\_resources/Framework\_PDF\_version\_for\_the\_web.pdf