

TEACHING EDUCATORS TO TEACH VALUES

Jan Nieuwenhuis (Higher Education Quality Committee and University of Pretoria,
Manager: Accreditation and National Reviews Nieuwenhuis.j@che.ac.za)

ABSTRACT

Internationally there is renewed interest in values and morals in education. Much of the discourse centres around issues of whose values and what values to be included, yet there is general agreement that values are important concerns that education institutions will have to deal with if they are serious about issues of quality and effectiveness and also about social justice. Values and human rights are often treated as separate issues and both often suffer the fate of being approached in a programmatic manner in education: *"If it's Friday it must be respect day."* I will argue that values and human rights are intricately linked and that they cannot be treated as separate issues in education. Secondly, I will argue that many of the expectations regarding the values education are unrealistic. For the same reason, a human rights culture cannot be effectively established through legislative measures or litigation, albeit important, alone. Neither can these legal frameworks or a predefined set of values serve as a curriculum for human rights education. It is only through changing our inner-self that we can bring about a just society in which human rights and values are lived and practice in everything we do. Values must come alive in the hearts and minds of people and they must be lived. The unique challenge to educators is how to make values and human rights come alive so that learners choose to live them. Concomitantly, how can we "teach" educators to teach values?

The paper proposes that we move away from a pure programmatic approach to the teaching of values and introduces the concept of scaffolded-experiential learning as teaching and learning strategy in higher education institutions. Based on this, a few broad guidelines for creating scaffolded-experiential learning events are discussed and it is indicated how these could be used to create significant emotional events. In conclusion I will indicate how this conceptualisation was designed into a post-graduate programme that moves students from achieving merely declarative knowledge to actually implementing the principles of value driven schools in their own teaching environments.

1 INTRODUCTION

Literature would seem to suggest that higher education, among other things, is about values (Payne, 2002; Atwell, 1996; Waller, 1991; Hastings Centre, 1980). Some authors, like Kirschenbaum (1994) and the Hastings Centre (1980), suggest that the higher education concern about values had atrophied over last 100 years under the pressure from the scientific and research hegemony that saw teaching as conveying value-free theories, facts and modes of enquiry. Many academics argue, often convincingly, that values have no place in the higher education classroom, and that teaching practices must be oriented, as much as possible, towards disinterestedness, allowing students to make their own uncoerced choices (Joy, 1996) regarding how they should conduct their lives. This, I believe, is impossible as all human interactions are saturated with messages of what people value or not and we are constantly, overtly or covertly through our total behaviour, sending value messages. Moreover, a pedagogy divested of moral purpose is empty and meaningless (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Joy, 1996; Payne, 2002; Kirschenbaum, 1994).

Research, however, would seem to suggest that higher education is failing at this noble task, partly because academics often confuse the teaching of values with moralising and as brainwashing or indoctrination - something that is not intellectually acceptable (Atwell, 1996). This line of argumentation offers academics a soft opting-out alternative for not taking a moral stand and thus justifying their own immoral actions. In this regard Shoichet (2002), quotes a NAS/Zogby national poll reporting that 75% of students surveyed said: *"...professors most often taught them that 'what is right and wrong depends on differences in individual values and cultural diversity.'"* That the discourse on values in education, and also in higher education, is gaining impetus cannot be denied as academics and decision-makers struggle to address issues of moral decay, a lack of discipline, and an increase in at risk behaviour as manifested through deeds of violence, sexual promiscuity, drug abuse, etc. on campus. Even if literature agrees in principle on the need for values in higher education, the jury is still out on what values ought to be included and how they should be taught. This is illustrated by Nucci (1997) when he says that:

"Arguments surrounding the aims of values education capture the essential quandary for any pluralist democracy attempting to construct a shared civil

society without privileging the particular values of any one group. At the heart of the matter is whether we can point to a set of moral values that would form the basis of an 'overlapping consensus' that would permit approaches to moral education that appeal to more than local or particularistic values."

In this paper I will share some ideas emanating from my research on how to prepare educators to take up this challenge by using a scaffolded-experiential learning approach as teaching and learning strategy and how it is linked to a structured participatory action research project. The following points will be addressed in the paper:

- Clarifying the quagmire of value related concepts
- Critical reflective notes on society's expectation of values in education
- Some thoughts on how to teach teachers to teach values

2 Defining "values"

Literature on values in education is commonly tied to a specific intervention programme, like *values education, character education, moral education, personal and social education, citizenship education, civic education, religious education, democratic education*, etc. (Berkowitz, 1998). This loose use of terms creates the impression that value-related concepts are interchangeable or synonymous. The terms "values", "morals", "character" and "ethics", are not the same and they are not equivalent forms, but they do share certain common elements. For this reason it is important to define what I mean by the term "values".

The origin of the word in its Latin (*valere*) and French (*valior*) contexts, reveals that the concept "*value*" first and foremost refers to that which is **worth striving or living for**. In a moment when the individual is confronted with a reality to which he/she must respond, values place an imperative on the individual to act in a manner consistent with that which he/she regards as worth striving or living for and that the individual sees as worth protecting, honouring and desiring (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). For Rokeach (1973: 5) a value is "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence." As a verb, valuing refers to caring about something, feeling that it is important. As a noun, a value entails a conviction that

something is worthwhile or not (Berkowitz, 1997). A value thus entails cognition, for a value is centrally a belief in the desirability or lack of desirability of the focus of the value, but values also include emotion and feeling as it is by its very nature affectively-laden (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Values also are spiritual¹ in nature. Newby (1996: 96) refutes the idea that spirit exclusively belongs to the realm of religion. He sees spirit or spirituality as referring to the “**inner person**”. The inner person constantly seeks self-understanding and the differentiation between the self as a product of the environment (acting in a way others want me to behave) and the creative self (being true unto yourself).

On an individual level, only the human condition can appreciate, impart meaning to and attach value to objects, the self, others, the Creator and the world (“*umwelt*”) as well as to ideas, feelings and thoughts. Being human therefore implies imparting meaning to and attaching value to phenomena and using that to judge the value of other similar or different phenomena, thus making the human being a “valuing-being”. Once values are developed, they provide an important filter for selecting input and connecting thoughts and feelings to action (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

At community level, we can often identify a core set of values operating in a community or society that acts as the main deciding factor in directing the actions and behaviour of community members to what is appropriate. Because a community attach importance to the things that they value (culture, traditions, social conventions, etc.), they derive certain principles from these values that will direct their decisions and actions and the way they will develop policies and practices. For example, if an academic institution value honesty it will be reflected in its examination and invigilation policies. Not lying or deceiving others, are the principles that inform these policies. From these principles they will derive rules, like “you may not cheat in exams,” “you must respect others”, “you may not plagiarise”, etc. The rules become the norms against which the institution measure right or wrong and thus informs the morals of the institution (i.e. normative ethics).

¹ It is important to draw a distinction between “soul” (associated with the Greek word “*psyche*” that we find in English words such as psychology) and spirit (originating from the Greek word “*pneuma*” – to breath). Traditionally the human being is viewed as body, psyche (soul) and spirit. The soul according to Hillman (1992) remains obstinately attached to the world, to things, people, etc. It entails how we think about the world. The spirit of the human being is much more difficult to pin down, but could be associated with that which inspires, motivates and gives life meaning.

Applied then to higher education institutions, values are those ideas or concepts in high regard within an institution that serves as the drivers of institutional culture, policy and academic practice.

In this paper my focus is not so much on the institutional values of a particular institution, although those values will of course inform the practice to be discussed, as it is on the question: how do you teach educators to teach values? To answer this question some critical notes is needed on society's expectation of education.

3 EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE POSSIBLE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING VALUES

As indicated earlier, there are those who would argue that education, and more specifically higher education, should be value-free. The metaphor that informs my own thinking is that values in education are like the bubbles in champagne. If values were taken out of education, the possibility of true human interaction would cease to exist. Our every action (as educators, role models and authority figures) is value-laden and sends messages of right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, just or unjust to students. Even if we were to claim that we are value neutral, it portrays an image of how we deal with values, moral issues and ethical principles (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Values are central in this invisible curriculum, which no educator explicitly teaches but which all students learn through the personal example set, reinforced through approval of acceptable student behaviour, the selection of subject matter, and the development of a scholarly environment.

This brings us to a second group of academics who often express their opposition to values in education. Closer scrutiny reveals that these academics are often

- opposed to the teaching of values other than their own; or
- to the way that values are taught.

In essence, these people are not always against the teaching of the social moral values of society as such, but they are against the teaching of specific religious, cultural, or social conventions of a specific group within the larger community. They are often quite willing to agree that we need to instil the value of "respect", but will be against morning devotions as a social convention aimed at paying respect to God.

Or they may support patriotism, but would disagree that the paramilitary type of training at school level is the way to achieve it. These two examples illustrate the crux of the values in education debate.

For many decision-makers, politicians and parents what is wrong in modern educational institutions is the absence or lack of a strong enough focus on the crucial role that education should play in promoting "acceptable" societal values. The global moral degeneration with its elements of teenage pregnancy, violence, family disintegration, drug abuse, etc., is seen as a "call to action" (DoE, 2002) for education to "fix the kids" and address these problems by reinstating good solid traditional values (Heenan, 2001; Kirschenbaum, 1992; Titus, 1997; Berkowitz, 1998). The call is therefore that we should return to "*good old, solid traditional values*". Such a call implies that there was a "golden era" where people were angels and rulers, semi-gods that lived according to high moral standards of ethics and morality. Such a golden era never existed and the whole idea of the moral regeneration of society is seriously flawed if people approach it by saying: "*when we were young...*" Even if we were to agree that it is an important function of education to "teach" traditional values, we must admit that it is not a simple process of passing on one set of values to the next generation.

Teaching learners "traditional values" without addressing larger social ills maybe as good as telling a hungry man to go in peace, but not giving him something to eat. Trying to "fix the kids" ignores the accumulated evidence from the field of social psychology demonstrating that much of how we act and who we are reflects the social realities in which we find ourselves. Furthermore, it could be argued that the assumption that kids need fixing is based on a sinister view of children and what it means to be human. In a certain sense such an idea could be traced to the old child depravity theory that holds that children are sinful beings who are naturally inclined to do evil. Evidence from several disciplines converges to cast doubt on this sour view of human beings and, instead, supports the idea that it is as natural for children to help others as it is to hurt them (Kohn 1997). The fact is that it may not be the kids that need fixing, but society at large. More over, to simply operate from an assumption that all kids are inclined to do wrong, is to reduce being human and human nature to a prejudiced, reductionistic view that does not consider actions in a broader context.

Although it may be possible to point to a set of values and principles that ties one generation to the next, the context within which the value must be lived changes and with the change comes the need to reinvent and redefine the value and associated principles. It is only if the generations can successfully mediate this process, that the young will be able to integrate the enduring values into their own unique circumstances (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

Education, by its very nature follows societal trends as it draws its content from the society in which it is carried out. It cannot teach what is not already there and it is therefore a fallacy to think that education can lead transformation. True to its nature education hallows antiquity (Beeby, 1966) and projects society's image in the mirror that it holds up to the upcoming generation (Berstein, 1996), but it cannot define the image. Whether the image reflected in the mirror is appropriate or well chosen is a question in public moral philosophy (Hollis in Carr and Harnett, 1996) and of socio-political debate. Moreover, the degree to which the upcoming generation would be able and willing to identify with the image cannot be achieved by decree, but must be opened for debate with the upcoming generation (DoE, 2002, Nieuwenhuis, 2005).

Although education cannot lead transformation, it does support it through the teaching of the formal and the hidden curriculum. Policy makers and politicians often respond to social pressures about moral degeneration by assigning tasks to education that it cannot effectively fulfil, either because it is assigned in a piecemeal manner or because it is based on unrealistic expectations. Policy makers often seem to have a myopic vision that education should be able to solve all the societal ills (Brezinka, 1981). This is an unrealistic and narrow view placing responsibilities on the education system that education cannot meet.

In many education systems, curriculum development is an expert driven activity. Such systems depart from the idea that these "educational experts" (be they academics, educational planners, decision-makers, consultants, politicians, etc.) know what content is essential to inculcate in schools so that the image wanted could be developed. From international best practices these experts are able to bring into education that which will ensure that, content wise, the image in the

mirror will be achieved. Hidden in this type of approach to curriculum development is a hegemony of silencing the voices of those who we are supposed to serve. Excluding students from the curriculum development process effectively nullify claims that a curriculum is serving learner needs and such curricula may even lose their credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of those it is supposed to serve. For many years the voices of black people in the South Africa were silenced. Christian National Education was introduced in 1969 and forced onto all schools as the type of value system to be promoted in schools. Of course it did not succeed, but became one of the contentious issues that surfaced time and time again during the years of resistance and the liberation struggle.

In higher education institutions we are not dealing with susceptible children that will gobble up everything that the lecturer sells as truths. At post-graduate level we are dealing with mature adults that are often set in their ways. I must admit that being in teacher education and dealing with teachers who enrols for post-graduate studies, I sometimes get the feeling that teaching immoral educators to teach values is like sending your ducks to Eagle School. Jim Rohn (2002) reminds us that the first rule of management is that "If you want to fly with eagles, don't send your ducks to Eagle School". But I do believe that people have the potential within to change, but you can't change them. Unless they experience some significant emotional event that will make them to stop and reflect, they may not decide to change.

I am convinced that if we are serious about education supporting the type of transformation needed to address moral degeneration, then we have to break with our classical conceptions of what teaching and learning in higher education entails and adopt a more comprehensive approach will involve all the participants in the process.

TOWARDS VALUES IN EDUCATION

Nucci (1997) claims that moral development and values education are not limited to discrete academic subject areas, but that the social moral values should infuse every aspect of school and may I add, university life. The enthusiastic celebration of certain holidays (e.g. Freedom Day) by a school teaches values and expectations such as appreciation for our liberty and freedom, to protect our democracy and

constitution, to respect others, etc. If we want to instil the value of “respect” then the whole school climate should be one characterized by mutual respect for all persons. We need to realise that imbued in typical academic programs are many elements of values, especially in literature, social science, and life sciences classes. Schools should realise that values permeates everything that they involve themselves with and highlights the opportunities available to schools to teach components which will encourage students to practice values such as initiative, diligence, loyalty, tact, generosity, altruism, and courage (Wynne, 1989). To succeed in this, schools need to adopt a more constructivist approach to teaching and learning.

Within the constructivist approach two approaches are worth noting: *values clarification* and Kohlberg's *moral dilemma discussions*. Values clarification asserts that we should not impose values on learners, but rather help them to choose their values freely but in an informed manner. We should therefore discuss and clarify values so that learners can make an informed decision regarding the most appropriate values to choose. Nucci (1997), for example, claims that moral discussion and moral problem solving foster moral development. Moral reasoning develops when students recognise inconsistencies and inadequacies in their moral positions. Knowledge of conflict resolution, and social problem solving allows students greater ability to engage in non-confrontational peer interactions which allow for dialogue and construction of moral orientations toward others (Berkowitz, 1998).

Kohlberg developed the values clarification approach further by introducing the idea of moral dilemma discussions. This is based on the notion that we should develop students' powers of moral reasoning so that they can judge which values are better than others. It is not simply a question of choosing values as from a fast food menu, but rather moral judgement and decision-making.

Although both of these approaches have merit, each has its own unique problems. Values clarification, though rich in methodology, failed to distinguish between personal preferences, over emphasising individualism and pretending that values are truly a matter of free choice, while neglecting the importance of social moral values and the obligation that is imbedded in them. Kohlberg, on the other hand, focused more on moral reasoning, which is necessary but not sufficient for good character,

and underestimated the school's role as a moral socialising agent (Lickona, 1997). Both of these methods have a rightful place but need to be supplemented and enhanced. What is missing is a focus on the development of the whole person: a focus on the synergism of mind, emotions, body, and spirit.

Although educators and learners may hold distinctly different views on moral issues, it is important that the ethical dilemmas are brought into discussion. As adults we are often tempted to force our own opinion onto our children and expect them to make personal sacrifices for the sake of what we perceive to be an orderly school and society. This tends to become a confrontational route, and it may be more prudent to rather teach our children how to make ethically sound decisions. Opening the debate on ethics and morality affords educators the opportunity to encourage learners to critically reflect on ethical conduct by asking questions such as:

- "According to whose standards will our actions be regarded as right or wrong?" (Here they need to reflect on the rights and duties of people).
- "What character traits are regarded as necessary in my community to live a truly human life?" (Here aspects like honesty, compassion, fairness should be considered).
- "Whose concerns or which groups of people do we usually marginalize or ignore in my community and why?" (Here social moral values and issues need to be reflected on).

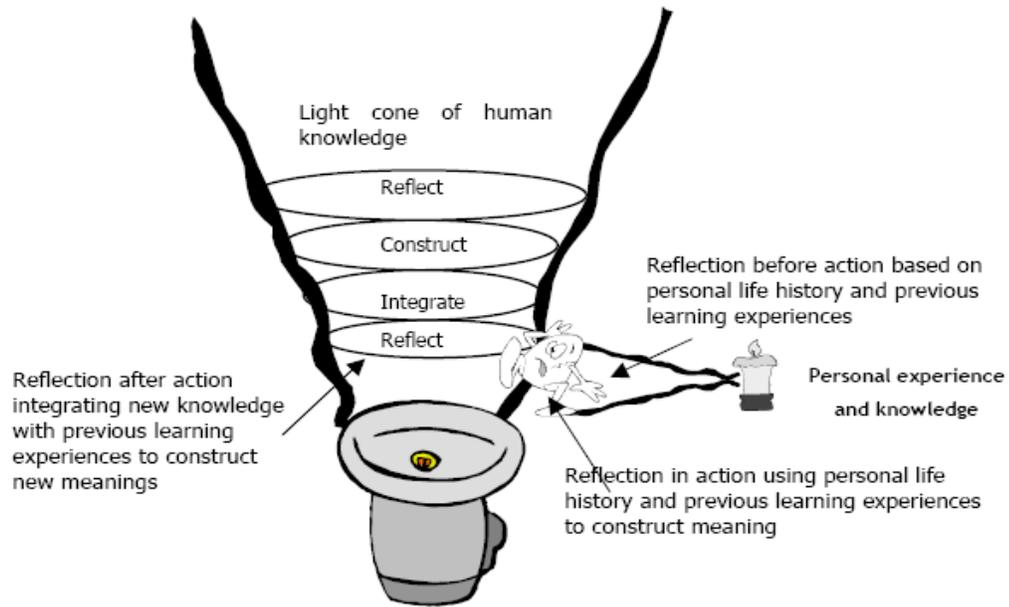
My approach to teaching educators to teach values is build on this rationale and involves a process that I would like to call ***scaffolded-experiential learning***. It is based on the following premises (Nieuwenhuis and Potvin 2005):

- You learn best when you learn as a total human being (acting, thinking, feeling and reflecting)
- Adults learn faster than children do, if the new material is based on their past experience.
- Adults may have problems unlearning some learnt behaviour and reconstructing some acquired values, but with supportive learning opportunities they are able of doing so.
- Adults work better in co-operative, non-competitive, non-evaluative settings. They have a great deal of training and experience to offer and a lot of adult dignity to lose if they feel they are failing.

- Many adults come to post-graduate sessions with a good deal of insecurity and anxiety about their ability to succeed in a new learning situation.
- Active involvement in learning is essential - most adults remember 20% of what they hear, 40% of what they see, and 80% of what they discover for themselves. Activities and practical hands-on experiences are effective learning tools - we learn 10% of what we read, 15% of what we hear, but 80% of what we do.
- Learning is more effective when there is an element of fun/enjoyment attached to it.

Every living second we spend in this world is part of a never-ending learning process. We may not always be consciously aware that we are learning, but the possibility exists that we may learn from every single interaction with others and objects. As such our own learning history goes back to a time even before we were born. As a result, we never enter a new learning situation without being influenced by our past learning experiences or lived-experiences. In fact we actually try and anticipate what we may or may not learn in the learning situation. We may call this "*reflection before the actual event*". This is often an important event since we may form certain assumptions about the training that could either act as a barrier to effective learning or as excellent motivator for learning.

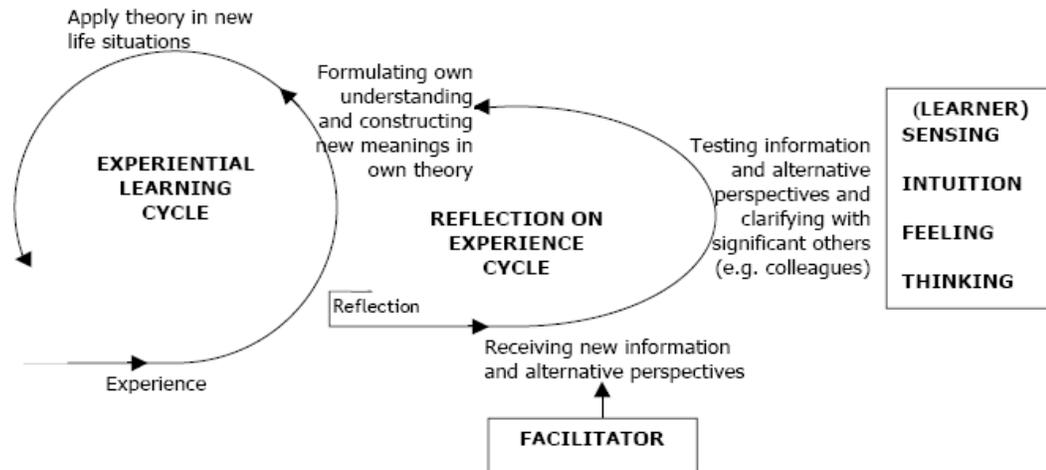
As we participate in the learning event we are constantly called upon to think and reflect as part of the learning event. This "*reflection in action*" requires that we use previous learning experiences and knowledge to solve the new problems and overcome the learning challenges introduced. Although this is a crucial part of learning it is not sufficient for effective learning (i.e. learning that will be experienced as life changing) to occur. It is only through "*reflection after the event*" that we move beyond the superficial and immediate to the long term and enduring (see diagram below). This is when we begin to challenge and question our own assumptions, beliefs and values. It is reflection after the learning event that changes an ordinary learning experience into a ***significant emotional event*** where new meanings are constructed. This is precisely what is needed when we deal with values in a higher education context: you need to create significant emotional events where adult learners will be willing to challenge and reconsider their assumptions values and beliefs.



From Nieuwenhuis & Potvin, 2005.

At the heart of the learning approach used is my conviction that we do not learn from experience; we learn from our reflection on experience. Reflection in and after action should include a scaffolded approach to teaching and learning. This is schematically presented in the diagram on the next page. Giving learners or participants in a learning event a wonderful experience may be great fun, but will make little or no contribution to effective learning unless the reflection in and after the event is structured and scaffolded so as to provide participants with the tools to reflect with. Reflection skills must be taught by exposing students to opportunities where, through guided debriefing, they are introduced into the art of reflection.

DIAGRAM: THE REFLECTIVE LEARNING PROCESS



At a concrete level, it may be useful to give an example. Very often students in education management ask how they can change their dysfunctional school into a winning school. Of course there is no recipe, but there are certainly good principles and case studies, but you need to change these theoretical ideas into significant emotional events. I have found the use of media to simulate the problem a useful strategy to use in applying scaffolded-experiential learning. In the example chosen of the dysfunctional school, I would look for a film (based on a true story) that would illustrate the problem and would offer a possible solution. I have found the film *Lean on me* with Morgan Freeman in the lead role useful as it offers role models with whom my students can identify. I would normally start the session by telling them about Eastside High and then play the introduction part of the film displaying a dysfunctional school. They are then allowed to talk about it and draw comparisons to their own school situation. We then look at the whole film and pause at strategic moments where decisions had to be taken. At these points my task is to clarify with the students whether they understand the choice at hand and then allow students to reflect on how they would have handled the situation. At the conclusion of the film we allow ample time for discussion, critique before we move to the question: So what have you learnt that you could use in your own school situation? Each contact session with students are planned in similar way employing a range of activities, simulations and video or slideshows aimed at moving beyond the superficial to the heart of the value debate.

The focus is never on the memorisation of facts or figures or definitions. I accept that since 1994 South Africa has created exquisite legal frameworks and policies that could ensure that values, human rights and democracy become the pillars of our society. Knowing these frameworks is important, but not sufficient for ensuring a society that will be free of coercion, discrimination and moral decay. Values, human rights and democracy must be in the hearts and minds of every citizen. They must be learnt and they must be lived and they must be managed within educational institutions. They do not happen by themselves.

The focus of my approach is therefore on "*understanding*" that will lead to the ability to implement. As students work through the learning material they discover that, when we deal with something like values, human rights and democracy we are not dealing with fixed facts or absolute truths and that there are no final answers. The best way to make sense of values, human rights and democracy is to understand the discourses (debates) that underpin the wide array of opinions and views held on values, morals, ethics and human rights and to mirror these against their own deeply held assumptions, values and beliefs. Assessment corresponds with this rationale. Students do not write tests or examinations in my modules – they do an action research project aimed at establishing a nurturing and value-driven learning environment in their schools. This project builds up into a portfolio.

Students start their research by analysing their own school in terms of the prevailing value and human rights culture in the school. We normally choose five broad themes within which they can undertake their research (e.g. school discipline, school safety, gender discrimination, HIV/AIDS, etc.). To start their research they will read as widely as possible on the theme focusing on the values and human rights that underpin the theme. They will use this information as a guide to assess their own school environment and identify those areas in which they may be failing or under-performing. They will then formulate their project within this niche. This serves as a first assignment.

Students must then prepare a presentation on the topic identified for the school management or school governing body. The focus here is to convince the decision-makers of the need to act and to secure their cooperation to do something about the problem identified. As a team they should then design a possible intervention

strategy to address the problem identified. This serves as the second assignment. It should be stressed at this point that a high premium is placed on proper research administration and ethical conduct and that elements, such as approval to conduct the project in the school, informed consent, minutes of meetings, etc., are included as key elements of all assignments to be submitted. In addition students must maintain a reflective journal for the duration of the project that forms part of the portfolio to be submitted at the end.

After they have done their presentation and have secured the cooperation of the school, they will implement the strategy aimed at addressing the problem identified and, in the end assess the outcome of their intervention. A final research report is then submitted on the work done.

The contact sessions and project are not seen as two separate entities. Although the contact sessions are focused on students' understanding of values and human rights in education, it also provides them with the skills needed to apply the same approach in the execution of their project.

CONCLUSION

Teaching is part of the moral message transmitted by a teacher to a child. That moral message may be strong and clear if the teacher is dedicated to the task of teaching, or distorted if the teacher has largely given up on the task (Berkowitz, 1998). The message contained in the act of teaching is only part of the values teachers and schools transmit, but cannot be left to the realm of the hidden curriculum alone. Values in education are too important to be left to chance. Values must be discussed, redefined and reinvented in schools through a process of active deliberation of values and ethical issues. Actions flowing from value-based discussions should be directed at enabling learners to impart meaning to the values and to learn how to act consistently in terms of their values. Moral reasoning develops when students recognise inconsistencies and inadequacies in their moral positions. Knowledge of conflict resolution, and social problem solving allows students greater ability to engage in non-confrontational peer interactions, which allow for dialogue and construction of moral orientations toward others. To achieve this, educators must be equipped for their task.

There is no reason that individuals will derive a sense of self-esteem from acting morally unless becoming a moral person is an important feature of their self-definition. *"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. Parents and educators or politicians or priests who say one thing and do another send mixed messages to those in their charge who then learn not to trust them. The question of leadership generally, and in the educational sphere particularly, is therefore of vital importance"* (Nelson Mandela, Saamtrek Conference, 2001: 55).

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