

Art. #1437, 11 pages, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38n3a1437>**Embedding values in the South African curriculum: by design or default?****Mncedisi Christian Maphalala**

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This article explores the way in which values education is incorporated in the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum of the Senior Phase (Grades 7–9) in South Africa. Researchers agree that in the light of the current need to regenerate morals and re-norm the nation, values are critical. From the moment they are born, children learn by observing adults; they mimic what they see, and repeat the words they utter. Parents and teachers have the greatest influence on a child's upbringing and therefore have a responsibility to teach them about the core values that help them become well-rounded citizens. Theoretically, the study on which this article is based was located in the literature on approaches to implementing values education. The study employed a qualitative perspective, with a descriptive case study design. Participants include purposively selected school principals, school governing body (SGB) members, and LO teachers. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews and analysed using inductive thematic analysis. The analysis revealed that the values in the school LO curriculum were incorporated eclectically through explicit, implicit and critical approaches. On the basis of these findings, it is recommended that the school community sustain an eclectic approach to values education that covers learners' holistic experiences.

Keywords: embedding values; Life Orientation; Senior Phase; values education**Introduction**

In South Africa, the urgent need for the school to play its part as a site for value education is being acknowledged. This necessity has been a result of the alarming asocial behaviour displayed by learners within the school system. For example, in their study localised to uMgungundlovu in KwaZulu-Natal, Khuzwayo, Taylor and Connolly (2016:1216) found that "420 (23.9%) [learners] had been bullied, 379 (21.7%) had missed school because of feeling unsafe, 468 (15.4%) had been involved in physical fights and 41 (2.4%) had carried weapons to school." Burton and Leoschut (2013:xii) meanwhile found that of the 5,939 learners, 121 principals and 239 educators they surveyed, "12.2% had been threatened with violence by someone at school, 6.3% had been assaulted, 4.7% had been sexually assaulted or raped, and 4.5% had been robbed. The type of violence that these learners experienced included physical, sexual and emotional abuse, gangsterism, cyberbullying and verbal abuse (swearing). In addition, Liang, Flisher and Lombard (2007) identified a rate of 44.5% for bullying behaviour among the 5,074 learners they sampled from government schools in Durban and Cape Town. Of the 44.5% sampled learners, 8.2% considered themselves to be bullies, while 36.3% acknowledged having engaged in some form of bullying behaviour towards their classmates. School-based violence is further exacerbated by the easy access learners have to weapons and drugs. Burton and Leoschut (2013) found that one in five learners had easy access to a knife or a firearm. The above statistics serve to illustrate that in some schools, violence has become the norm. In fact, J Prinsloo (2008) states that "apart from the serious incidents of school violence that have received wide media coverage, there is general concern regarding the increase in incidents of school violence in South Africa." From the data presented here, the school environment would seem to be nurturing a culture of violence among learners.

Besides the school violence discussed above, South Africa has in recent years seen an alarming increase in sexual harassment among learners. E Prinsloo (2007) highlights that of all enrolled schoolgirls in 1999–2004, 30% reported being sexually harassed, abused and assaulted by either a male learner or an educator. In their study of 80 girls, Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) found that 21% had been sexually harassed on the school premises. In another study, focusing on youth between the ages of 18 and 24 ($N = 3,123$) from various provinces in South Africa, Mchunu, Peltzer, Tutshana and Seutloadi (2012) found that 19.2% of the female participants ($n = 45$; 4%) had fallen pregnant between the ages of 12 and 19, and 5% ($n = 54.6%$) of males had impregnated someone between the ages of 12 and 19. For her part, Wilson (2008), in her report on Gender Based Violence in South African Schools written for the International Institute for Educational Planning, highlighted the insensitivity with which male learners and educators dealt with female learners' sexual harassment reports or unwanted pregnancies to be alarming.

The incidents of violence reported above paint a bleak picture of the teaching and learning environment of the school. It has been noted that in the face of the ongoing violence, the school will lose its role as *loco parentis* for learners (Harecker, 2012). Others argue that the responsibility for nurturing and guiding children's value systems lies with the family. However, the South African family, as either a nuclear or an extended system, has been severely compromised as a result of the apartheid system (Amoateng & Heaton, 2007). In fact, Statistics South Africa (2013) reveals that 40% of South African homes are headed by women. Moreover, the Department

of Social Development (2013b) indicates that political and social aspects of modern South African society have destroyed the concept of family-hood, which provided each member with a sense of individual and collective identity and value. The destabilisation of the family support system has left the school vulnerable to the asocial behaviour being transmitted to its system.

In addition to the breakdown in family life, the collective South African community would seem to be nurturing the child in an asocial environment, as indicated by the statistics that will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs. For example, according to Statistics South Africa (2017), in 2015/16 an estimated 670,000 households in South Africa experienced house-breaking/burglary, while about 160,000 households experienced home robberies. Although the South African Police Service (2016), in crime statistics released spanning April 1 to December 2016, paints a picture of a country winning the fight against crime; 14,333 cases of murder were reported in that time period, with a decrease of 10 in comparison to the previous trimester. In the first quarter of 2016, there was a 0.6% increase in murder compared to the previous year, and a 1.9% increase in the second quarter. This figure decreased by 2.3% in the third quarter, resulting in a 0.1% overall decrease for the nine months. Despite this decline, these figures are still high by any standard.

According to Kalunta-Crumpton (2016), drug abuse is on the increase in South Africa, with 15% of South Africa's population having a drug problem. The Department of Social Development (2013a:26) reports that "more than 6,000 people of who[m] many were children, die on our roads because of alcohol every year". The report further indicates that "the impact of alcohol and substance abuse continues to ravage families, communities and society" (2013:29), while the South African Police Service (2016) state that 60% of crimes nationally are related to substance abuse. The perpetrators of these crimes are either under the influence of substances, or trying to secure money for their next fix. On the other hand, Mamabolo (2015) observes that limited economic opportunities in South Africa have created hatred between foreign nationals and locals, sparking xenophobic attacks in 2008 and 2015. The social ills and associated statistics mentioned in the foregoing discussion paint a picture of a society whose morals and values have degenerated to their lowest point. The question that still boggles the mind is, what has gone wrong in our society? Are we failing as a society to nurture our youth to become responsible citizens? In response to this question, Turnbull (2002) proffers education as an answer, since it is an agent of socialisation. The school therefore becomes one of the main vehicles

for teaching young people how to behave and building ethical and morally conscious citizens through values education.

In response to an increasingly valueless education system, many countries have incorporated values education in the school curriculum. The literature on the topic discusses different views on what values education should entail (Jones, 2009), but reveals no universal agreement on what values education is or what constitutes it. In fact, Jones (2009:37) indicates that "values education is – and should be – a highly controversial, widely debated subject. There are many aspects of the topic that are disputed in both theory and practice, including the meaning of the term itself." Adding to this debate, Solomons and Fataar (2011:225) state that "in [...] literature [...] 'values' is a fluid concept subject to different interpretations." The debate around the understanding of values education stems from a variety of questions: for example, what and whose values are to be taught in a school curriculum, and are values "taught" explicitly, or "caught" where values are left implicit? In this study, we attempted to answer these questions.

The data presented above necessitates the search for moral compass. Following their study, Khuzwayo et al. (2016:1221) make just one recommendation, where they write, "urgent interventions are required to reduce the rates of violence among high school learners." Many researchers such as Aspin and Chapman (2007), Ferreira and Schulze (2014), as well as Nieuwenhuis (2007b) and Thornberg and Oğuz (2013), maintain that the answer lies in the effective implementation of values education in the school system. Through values education learners can become equipped with the skills, knowledge and values they require to deal with challenges we are facing in the 21st century. Values education emanates from multiple sources, including the constitution of the country, as well as philosophies, religions and cultures. Naidoo (2013) points out that religion and religious content play an important and supportive role in helping to nurture democratic values, political literacy and nation building among the youth. The values gleaned from these multiple sources and deemed acceptable by the wider society ought then to be embedded in the school curriculum. South Africa is a country characterised by diversity in terms of race, religion, language, culture and ethnicity. This diversity needs to be reflected in the curriculum as enshrined in the South African Constitution. The question that may be asked then is, whose values are to be taught in a school curriculum? For any values education curriculum to make any impact on society, it must be negotiated and be representative of the majority of populace. This is in line with the eclectic approach adopted by this study, which allows us to view

values education as emanating from multiple sources. This approach is discussed later in this paper.

In trying to explain values Raths, Harmin and Simon (1966:30) identify three processes on which values should be based on: (1) choosing; (2) prizing; and (3) acting. They call this a values clarification process or approach. These are further broken down into seven aspects:

Choosing: (1) freely; (2) from alternatives; and (3) after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative;

Prizing: (4) cherishing, being happy with the choice; (5) willing to affirm the choice publicly; and

Acting: (6) doing something with the choice (7) repeatedly, in some pattern of life (Raths et al., 1966:30).

A values clarification process results from the integration of the seven criteria identified above. In South Africa, the government seeks to inculcate, through the education system, especially primary and secondary schools, values based on upholding the social spirit of *ubuntu*.

Realising this need, the South African government, as seen in the Department of Education's ([DoE], 2000:6) *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy*, has been involved in understanding how values can be "established, reinforced, refined and confirmed in the priceless hours of school and student life." Among other social entities, the school has a duty to inculcate values in the youth (Ferreira & Schulze, 2014). A solid curriculum that embraces values education and works in partnership with schools and communities could turn the tide, and assist learners in developing strong values and morals (Prinsloo, E 2007). In South Africa, one key subject in the curriculum that has the ability to assist learners to develop strong values and morals is Life Orientation (LO).

Life Orientation Curriculum in South Africa

In the post-1994 era, the South African education system has been revamped to reflect the new political landscapes and, more pertinently, to re-norm societal values. Within the secondary school curriculum, LO is purposed to prepare the learners to respond to diversity, challenges and responsibilities as citizens of post-apartheid South Africa (Prinsloo, E 2007). The Department of Basic Education ([DBE], Republic of South Africa 2011:8) defines the subject of LO as follows: "Life Orientation guides and prepares learners for life and its possibilities and equips them for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society [...] It promotes self-motivation and teaches learners how to apply goal-setting, problem-solving and decision-making strategies." Through LO learners are guided to develop their full potential and are provided with

opportunities to make informed choices regarding personal and environmental health, study opportunities and future careers. LO helps learners to develop beneficial social interactions, such as respecting others' rights and values, and promotes lifelong participation in recreation and physical activity (Prinsloo, E 2007).

LO is concerned with the holistic growth of learners, as it attends to their intellectual, physical, emotional, personal and social development. According to E Prinsloo (2007:158), LO content captures the "multi-faceted nature of the human being, as well as issues like human rights, gender, and the environment, all forms of violence, abuse, sexuality and HIV/AIDS." In addition, LO is intended to promote social justice, human rights and inclusiveness, as well as a healthy environment (DoE, 2003:5). Simply stated, LO prepares learners to value issues that touch on their personal, environmental and community lives, in light of the call for the regeneration of moral responsibilities in South Africa (Ferreira & Schulze, 2014; Prinsloo, E 2007; Solomons & Fataar, 2011).

In the South African context, the LO curriculum is clear as to which values we should espouse as a country. These include the development of the self in society, health, social and environmental responsibility, Constitutional rights and responsibilities, the world of work, and physical education. These will be discussed in detail below. In terms of the LO curriculum, learners are expected to develop the self within society. Accordingly, teachers guide learners on topics such as self-image, peer pressure, personal diet and nutrition, self-formation and self-motivation, sexuality, relationships and friendships. In addition, learners are guided on goal-setting skills, personal lifestyle choices, sexual behaviour and sexual health, as well as dealing with challenging situations, such as depression, grief, loss, trauma, and crisis (DBE, Republic of South Africa, 2011).

Health, social and environmental responsibility is also a focus of the LO curriculum. This suggests that schools are tasked with teaching learners about substance abuse, environmental health, and common diseases (Tuberculosis [TB], Diabetes, Epilepsy, Obesity, Human Immunodeficiency Virus [HIV], Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome [AIDS] and Anorexia). In terms of this value, learners are nurtured in their decision-making about HIV and AIDS, volunteerism, and health and safety issues related to violence (DBE, Republic of South Africa, 2011).

Constitutional rights and responsibilities is one of the values included in the LO curriculum. LO teachers are expected to introduce and guide learners on human rights, as stipulated in the South African Constitution (DBE, Republic of South Africa, 2011). Issues such as fair play in a variety

of sports activities, dealing with abuse, the role of oral tradition and the scriptures of major religions, nation building, human rights violations, gender equity and cultural diversity in South Africa are all emphasised under this value. According to the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades 7–9: Life Orientation* (DBE, Republic of South Africa, 2011), issues relating to citizens' rights and responsibilities, constitutional values, the contributions of various religions in promoting peace, and sport ethics are promoted in LO classes.

In LO classes, learners as members of the community are also guided with regard to the world of work. This means learners are assisted to understand the importance of reading and studying, the value and importance of work in fulfilling personal needs and potential, different learning styles, decision-making processes, time-management skills, and reading and writing for different purposes (DBE, Republic of South Africa, 2011). In discussing values related to the world of work, teachers are expected to guide learners on the options available to them after completing their schooling. This means that knowledge of the world of work, careers and subject choices, study and career funding providers, and plans for their own lifelong learning are taught in LO classes (DBE, Republic of South Africa, 2011).

The curriculum for LO also makes provision for physical education (DBE, Republic of South Africa, 2011). Under this topic, the teachers create opportunities to encourage learners to participate in fitness programmes, engage with safety issues, participate in physical activities that promote components of fitness to improve own physical wellness levels, and execute a game plan for an individual or team sport. The learner is expected to refine their own as well as peer performance in movement activities using an outdoor recreational activity and paying attention to safety issues for physical wellbeing.

The four key areas identified in the LO Senior Phase cover a lot of ground in the values that learner ought to embrace for holistic citizenship in South Africa. In summary, these values seek to guide learners so as to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential. Moreover, the LO curriculum aims to develop learners' skills to respond to challenges, and play an active and responsible role in the economy and in society. During LO classes, teachers guide learners to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to respect the rights of others. Learners are also nurtured to make informed and responsible decisions about their health, the environment, subject choices, further studies and careers. Lastly, LO aims to provide opportunities for learners to demonstrate an understanding of and participate in activities that promote movement and physical development.

Values education in the context of this study refers to all aspects of the process by which teachers and other adults transmit values to learners both formally and informally in the various contexts in which they come into contact with the learners. As a paradigm shift from using a specific teaching strategy, we are advocating for the adoption of the eclectic approach to teaching values, whereby teachers use a range of strategies depending on the aim and the context of the lesson.

Values education goes beyond teaching learners respect, morals and religious values to refer to other aspects of how we as a people should contribute to the social, economic, and political development of our society. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to describe how values education is incorporated in the Senior Phase (Grades 7–9) LO curriculum in South Africa.

Theoretical Approach

A *tour d'horizon* of the literature on values education indicates three approaches that are preferred when exploring the implementation of values in the school curriculum. These are the traditional, progressive/constructivist and critical approaches (Thornberg & Oğuz, 2013). A traditional approach to values education may be identified in the work of Durkheim (1961), and advocates for the direct instruction of values to learners by an adult. The purpose of a traditional approach to values education is the deliberate and explicit transmission of values in an attempt to assist learners to conform to societal norms and rules (Jones, 2009). The rigid approach of the traditional perspective to values education stands in contrast to a progressive/constructivist stance in values education. Thornberg and Oğuz (2013) note that a progressive/constructivist approach is used when the school community teaches values implicitly. In terms of this approach, learners are guided to reasoning, personal judgement, discussion and interaction so as to make decisions that are fair and just for others (Ferreira & Schulze, 2014; Kohlberg, 1981). A critical approach to values education, on the other hand, somehow creates a compromise between the explicit and implicit implementation of values in the school curriculum. According to Thornberg and Oğuz (2013), a critical approach to values education motivates for learners' involvement in political and social issues. The focus of a critical approach is to allow learners to engage meaningfully with events that take place in their environment.

Having elucidated the three approaches to values education, in this study we chose an eclectic approach to frame our argument. We motivated for explicit (traditional), implicit (progressive/constructivist) and social engagement (critical approach) in values education (Aspin & Chapman, 2007). We accordingly aligned ourselves with the

eclectic approach, as it allows us to view values education to emanate from multiple sources and exist in explicit, implicit and transformative spaces within the school curriculum. We hold that the school provides an environment where values are articulated explicitly through policies and vision and mission statements (Aspin & Chapman, 2007). Through written documentation, school and the community values are espoused and transmitted explicitly from the written word and interpreted for the learner by the teacher (an adult). However, the progressive/constructivist approach to values education affords the learner an active role in the construction of values from direct instructions (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b). From their personal and contextual preferences, the learners will implicitly construct values that assist them to be part of the school and society (Ferreira & Schulze, 2014). A critical approach is important in understanding values as transformative and motivating for social engagement (Schwartz, 2007). To this end, the study had the following aims: to (a) describe teachers', the administration's and parents' perceptions of values education; (b) explore the ways in which values education is being implemented; and (c) to recommend ways in which values education can be fully integrated into the school curriculum.

Research Approach

The study was qualitative in nature as we sought to gain in-depth and rich descriptions of the participants' experiences of values education in the South African school curriculum. In addition, we elected to use a descriptive case study as the research design, since the study aimed at describing the implementation of values in the South African curriculum.

The study used a purposive sampling technique, the purpose of which was not to ensure representativeness in statistical terms, but to ensure that data was collected on the perceptions and experiences of those who are directly involved in a phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 2009). The strength of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases related to the central issues for in-depth analysis (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a). The sample for the study included four school principals, four school governing body (SGB) members, and four Life Orientation teachers drawn from four different schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The principals were selected to participate on the basis that they are the administration leaders of any secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. In each principal's school, the LO teacher for the Senior Phase was also requested to be part of the study. In addition, an SGB member from each of the schools who had a child or ward in a Senior Phase class was also included as a participant in the study.

Data Collection

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with the four school principals, the four SGB members, and the four LO teachers from the four different schools. A semi-structured interview is paradigmatically anchored in interpretivism, which gives prominence to the participants' meaning of their lived experiences (Mertens, 2014). In line with Merriam (2009), we used interview schedules as guides during the interviews. In addition, to obtain rich and thick descriptions of the participants' experiences, we allowed the participants time to describe, explain and think about their responses while we listened and prompted them to deeper reflection (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a).

We used pseudonyms to refer to the schools that formed part of the study to protect the participants' identities, and maintain their anonymity. All the interviews were conducted at the school at a venue chosen by the respective participant. For example, in Schools A, C and D the interviews with the principals and teachers were conducted in their offices. The SGB members' interviews were carried out at a venue assigned for the researchers' use at each school. For example, at Schools A and C the venue was the library and at School D the canteen was used, while at School B, the researchers were offered an office to interview all the participants. The interviews took between 23 and 45 minutes. Two interviews were conducted with each participant with an interval of two weeks intervening. Follow-up interviews were carried out with the SGB member at School D and the principal of School A for further exploration of the issues they had raised during the two prior interviews. Ethical measures were consciously respected in this study. To account for ethical practices in this study, we explained the purpose of the inquiry and reiterated voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity for all participants.

In keeping with the qualitative approach employed in this study, inductive thematic analysis was used to explore raw data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussion. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), inductive thematic analysis is used when researchers have no predetermined theory for data analysis. but rather allow the themes to emerge from the participants' own words. Creswell's (2009) steps for data analysis were used in this study. This means that the data were organised from the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews. We then read the data transcripts to obtain a general idea of the raw data. Next we coded the sections to highlight similarities and the coded sections were organised into categories, sub-themes and themes. The data was then interpreted, indicating confirmatory, contradictory, and novel

findings derived by comparison with extant literature.

Ethical Considerations

Voluntary participation and informed consent were adhered to, as per Creswell (2013). The participants in this study were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, which we maintained by using pseudonyms. To attend to informed consent, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants before they signed the informed letters of consent. In addition, participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Ensuring Rigour

We recognise that ensuring rigour in our study means paying attention to the quality of the study so that it may be believable and trustworthy (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). We ensured rigour in our study by following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) quality measures, namely: transferability, credibility, and dependability. In order to achieve the transferability aspect of our study, we provided extensive descriptions of methodology and context. Using prolonged field engagement, member checking and crystallisation, we attended to credibility. Further, an audit trail of the audio recordings, field notes and transcriptions helped us to achieve dependability.

Findings

The following themes resulted from the analysis.

Theme 1: Shared Values within the School

In the sampled schools there was considerable consensus among the principals, SGB members and teachers with regard to the values they were trying to inculcate in their learners. In line with the promoters of the traditional approach to values education such as Durkheim (1961) and Jones (2009), the teachers in this study indicated that they taught values such as respect for self, others and property, through direct instruction. In terms of the critical approach to values education, the parents in this study were concerned that although learners were explicitly instructed on values, it becomes difficult to teach them implicitly, as some teachers fail to be role models of good behaviour. The parents' concern is in line with Powell's (2010) observation that the best models of values in the education system are the teachers themselves. Most of the parents indicated that some teachers are known to drink, share cigarettes and, worse still, engage in sexual relations with learners. However, the teachers, as Tonga (2016) notes, maintained that learners engage in smoking, drinking and premarital sex because certain values are not inculcated at home. The teachers felt that the ultimate responsibility for developing values in learners lies with the parents and not the school.

We have a lot on our plates already, we work according to tight schedules to cover the curriculum and finalise a certain number of assessment activities. Parents are abdicating their responsibilities. As teachers we shouldn't be teaching learners about morals, values and behaviour. Whose values or morals should we teach learners? Learners come from different backgrounds with their own sets of values and I have my own values and moral code. Parents cannot shirk this obligation to us. (Teacher C)

The parents, on the other hand, accepted responsibility for this, although they felt that since teachers spent more time with their children they should also share in the responsibility. Tonga (2016) also notes that the responsibility for guiding children to the accepted values in their society should not be assigned to one section of the community but should be a partnership. In support of this assertion, Parent D said:

Children spend most of their time at school with the teachers, therefore teachers need to assume some responsibility for inculcating positive values on them. Teachers are role model to our children; they tend to believe everything teachers say. I can advise my child to stop doing certain without success, but if the same advice is given by the teacher children tend to heed the advice.

This partnership is also seen as important by Solomons and Fataar (2011), who point out that, in teaching children values, teachers and parents have a shared critical role to play. They explain that teachers and parents ought to have a symbiotic relationship, aimed at developing the children's value system. Similarly, Nieuwenhuis (2007b) notes the need for scaffolded experiential learning in values education that involves a partnership between the home and the school.

In line with Kohlberg (1981), the teachers in this study taught learners decision-making skills aimed at nurturing self-regulated moral behaviour. This suggests that the teachers critically engaged with the learners to help them develop such a self-regulatory system to govern their moral behaviour. In addition, Nieuwenhuis (2007b) comments that when one is confronted with reality, the inner self ought to be developed to act in a way that protects and preserves societal values. In their classrooms, the LO teachers in this study fostered intra/inter-value qualities that were integrated with the learners' decision-making abilities. According to Teacher A, she teaches her learners "*respect, honesty, caring, consideration and respect for others; getting along with others; patience; kindness; good manners; self-esteem; cooperation; self-discipline; patience; sharing; tolerance; HIV and AIDS awareness; issues on the use of substances; human rights and responsibilities; decision making and time management.*" Teacher A's LO classes thus integrates cognitive-emotional qualities, such as self-esteem, patience and suchlike with practical aspects such as abstaining from

harmful behaviours. This finding is in line with Nieuwenhuis (2007b), who notes the importance of cognitive, emotional and practical intelligences when inculcating values education in the school system.

Theme 2: Fostering Values in Schools

The participants identified various ways of fostering values. Following the critical approach to values education, the teachers in this study engaged the learners in classroom activities and responsibilities meant to develop their sense of accountability and duty. Similar to Thornberg and Oğuz (2013), some participants also indicated an explicit approach to values, as these were embedded in the school policy. These values were discussed during assembly; during specific activities such as health days, campaigns against substance abuse and career days; by inviting guests/motivational speakers to talk to learners and teachers; and modelling acceptable values, both in and outside the school. It is evident that fostering values in the school occurs both formally and informally. The teachers are convinced that learners are generally aware of the values the school is attempting to foster. These values are fostered explicitly, as is the case in Teacher B's school, which promotes

... certain values in children through morning motivational talks, school policy and incorporating them in various subjects we teach, especially in Life Orientation subject, because that is where such issues are dealt with in details. The School Management Team insists on teachers to be exemplary in the way they conduct themselves in and outside the school premises. In our school, smoking is not even allowed for teachers, and even members of the public.

In another school the entire culture was intertwined with values. Such schools, according to Nieuwenhuis (2007b), have a school climate which fosters values that are beneficial to the learners' social and academic lives. Schools that use an implicit model understand that values should permeate every space in the school system. This suggests that the entire school community becomes the model that they desire and aspire to in terms of values (Veugelers, 2013). In Teacher D's school, values were fostered through an implicit model. He stated:

In the school, we reward good behaviour and values. At the end of the year, each class awards learners who remained true to the values of the school and demonstrated exemplary behaviour. Therefore, right from the beginning of the year, learners work towards attaining the award in the form of the certificates and a trophy. This then helps to direct learners to the acceptable values, both in the school and the community at large.

While researchers such as Aspin and Chapman (2007), Ferreira and Schulze (2014), Jones (2009) and Thornberg and Oğuz (2013), emphasise implicit and explicit value education teaching, in this study it was found that the instruction of values can

also be reactionary, as may be deduced from Teacher D. This is because, at times, values are emphasised once there has been an incident that disrupts school functioning. This happens when schools take a reactive approach to fostering values rather than a proactive approach. Reactional situations create situations where the school community reaffirms existing values or introduces new ones. Such situations thus create a platform for a critical approach to values education, where debate and discussion form part of values education. Such discussion focuses on the rationale for values (e.g. why we should be kind?), rather than on a consideration of what the value of being kind holds. For example, as one SGB member said:

Back in the days, teachers administered corporal punishment to deter bad behaviour, and instil values amongst learners; but now the law of the country has abolished the use of corporal punishment in schools. We now have to use alternatives to corporal punishment and constantly motivate learners towards adopting the acceptable values and good behaviour. In a way corporal punishment was a reactive way of inculcating values in learners. The best way is to ensure that learners see value in behaving in an acceptable way. (SGB Member C)

Teachers and SGB members are of the view that most values are taught formally in their schools in the LO curriculum and informally in various school activities. In judging the success of values education, the only yardstick teachers use is a change for the better in learners' behaviour and attitudes.

Theme 3: Values of Ubuntu in Values Education

Values of ubuntu are also being taught in the LO classes as a way of rebuilding moral fibre in the light of moral degeneration in our communities and the country as a whole. Ubuntu is based on the principle expressed in isiZulu as "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*," which means that people are people through other people, or "I am because you are." It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being. In accordance with Ferreira and Schulze (2014), the spirit of ubuntu was used by the sampled school to help learners construct socially acceptable actions. In line with the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (DoE, 2000), the sampled schools integrated the principles of ubuntu in the school system for moral regeneration. The teachers and parents in this study indicated that some of the values of ubuntu have been incorporated in the teaching. They understand that ubuntu is embodied by generosity, hospitality, respect, friendliness, honesty, caring, compassion, harmony, forgiveness and neighbourliness. It encourages individuals to find fulfilment in the service of humanity without expecting any rewards in return.

- *Ubuntu defines who we are as African people. We try by all means to ensure that the values of ubuntu form*

the bedrock of all our activities in the school. During the morning assembly session we take turns as teachers to talk to the learners about various aspects and elements of ubuntu as a way of life. Individual teachers would talk about forgiveness, humility, generosity and other values espoused by ubuntu (Teacher C).

- *If learners can live by the values of ubuntu half of the challenges that we experience in our schools today would be solved (SGB Member A).*
- *Ubuntu is part of who we are, unfortunately most people have lost its values and we need to bring them by teaching them to the learners while they are still young, with the hope that it will make a difference to their lives in the long run (Teacher A).*

Theme 4: School Community Perceptions of Values Education

Another question addressed in this study was asked in order to ascertain the school community's perceptions of the values education embedded in the LO curriculum. In line with the findings of De Klerk and Rens (2003), the participants in this study understood that values education was a collaborative endeavour rather than a school project. The statements below are those of school community members who described their perceptions of values education:

- *Without values and respect, children have no sense of purpose and clarity (Parent A).*
- *... the learners develop a secure sense of self (Teacher B).*
- *Help learners to understand and appreciate the dangers and the long lasting implications of abuse of alcohol and drugs (Teacher A).*
- *For girls it helps them to avoid unwanted teenage pregnancies which are common in our communities these days (SGB Member B).*
- *When we teach values we want learners to grow up to be responsible and law abiding citizens who will be able to establish and maintain healthy relationships in the society (Teacher C).*

It appears from these responses that members of the school community held values education in high regard. Parents described a community-oriented benefit attached to values education as it assisted children to acculturate into their community's norms, practices, values and beliefs. Teachers, on the other hand, saw values education as a strategy for building learners' self-efficacy, worth and respect. In addition, the SGB members and teachers specified the lifelong virtues of values education. In line with Nieuwenhuis's (2007b) findings, all the participants of the current study highlighted that through values education, learners are mentored to realise the dangers of social ills such as alcohol, drug and sexual abuse.

Theme 5: Preferred Teaching Strategies for Values Education

One way of understanding values education implementation in the school curriculum is by exploring the teaching strategies used in LO

classes. Researchers such as De Klerk and Rens (2003) and Nieuwenhuis (2007b) note a positive relationship between values and the strategies used to teach them. Nieuwenhuis (2007b) makes a case for a scaffolded, experiential learning approach that assists learners to construct values knowledge and nurture socially acceptable behaviours. In line with Naidoo (2013), the teachers in this study used diverse strategies to teach values, favouring strategies such as case studies, role plays and discussion.

Roleplay is a teaching method that promotes enquiry-based learning, in which learners are presented with a situation or a problem to which they have to respond by assuming a particular role. In the process, they are able to construct their own knowledge through exploration and problem solving.

With roleplays, learners learn different skills such as communication, critical thinking and analysis (Teacher C).

Roleplay helps learners to express their feelings without a fear of being judged as they are assumed to be role-playing and not expressing their actual views (Teacher A).

Learners get to learn about other people's cultures and adopt positive values from them [...] The role plays allow learners to dramatise a discussion, by playing assigned roles in a situation, this allows them to explore values that are held by themselves and others (Teacher B).

Learners are afforded an opportunity to express and display certain values, attitudes and emotions. They think critically about the situation they have to role play, and share ideas with fellow learners to make it real and meaningful. This also assists them to develop communication skills, as well as interpersonal skills.

Case studies require learners to come up with solutions to a particular problem or a scenario. The teacher may give learners scenarios or open-ended questions to answer or require them to develop multiple solutions to the case. According to Teacher C:

A case study makes it easy to teach controversial issues pertaining to morals and values. A sensitive issue like abortion can be made a case study, and learners can be required to comment on the issues raised; and then make a determination of what is right or wrong; and then come up with ways of handling the issue better.

Case study is a crucial learner-centred teaching strategy which seeks to equip learners with critical thinking and communication and interpersonal skills, as learners are required to work through challenging, complex, real-world problems and scenarios.

Discussion as a teaching strategy encourages active participation by the learner and reinforces learning through interaction and the sharing of ideas. Teacher A made a case for discussion as a strategy for teaching values:

Discussion strategy allows an opportunity to clarify and analyse certain value positions that the learners might hold. In discussions, learners get a chance to talk with each other, listen to each other, and without any interruption. As a teacher, my role is to create an environment for them to share their ideas and experiences on the topic under discussion.

The quotation above suggests that discussion among the learners creates an opportunity for them to practise various skills, including communication skills; the ability to articulate one's ideas and defend them; and interpersonal skills, including the ability to respect a different point of view. When learners participate in a discussion, their interest is aroused, as they try to make a meaningful contribution to the topic under discussion.

Theme 6: Assessment of Values Education

In the literature, there is a general objection to the assessment of values. An example of such an objection comes from Veugelers and Vedder (2003), who note that assessing values burdens the learners. However, in this study, most of the teachers did assess values. The most preferred strategies for doing so were student self-assessments, and teacher observation of the values evident in student behaviours. According to Teacher C:

Values cannot be easily assessed in a formal way; values held by an individual can be demonstrable. Learners can be assessed through observations or through self-reflection by the learner. Subjecting learners to tests or written assessment may not provide reliable information about the learners.

This suggests that teachers have identified a need to establish common understandings of values with students, and a common language to interpret such understandings. The personal values or beliefs that teachers hold may affect their commitment to values implementation in their school.

Discussion

It would seem that although the school community intends to incorporate values that are traditional, progressive and critical, the implementation of such an endeavour was problematic and was compounded by much blaming. We found that values education in South Africa is firmly entrenched in the LO curriculum, as they were generally traditionally taught, in line with the insights of Durkheim (1961) and Jones (2009). However, teachers have different ways of implementing, teaching and inculcating these values. In other subjects, the teaching of values happens by default; teachers do not plan to teach their learners values. Whatever the case, and irrespective of the subjects they teach, if teachers work together, a culture in which effective teaching and support for values education in schools will be nurtured. Teachers regard the fostering of values as part of their job, and an integral part of their teaching.

Effective values education depends on consistency between the values espoused by the school and the values it enacts. Consequently, when schools are clear about the values that guide the actions they take, there is a cascade effect on the school community as a whole.

Recommendations

From the findings and the conclusion we recommend the following:

Teaching of values

Values education is sustained over time only through a whole school approach that engages all stakeholders in the school community (parents, teachers, learners, cleaners, security guards). It is critical to student learning that there is consistency and congruence between the values espoused and the values modelled. Teachers need to work together, irrespective of the subjects they teach, to help foster effective teaching and support for values education in schools. Teachers ought to regard the fostering of values as part of their job, and an aspect that is integral to their teaching.

Schools meanwhile ought to take a proactive approach to fostering values, rather than a reactive approach. In some instances, values are only emphasised once there has been an incident that disrupts school functioning. Since learners spend the majority of their time at school, it ought to be a place that supports families' and communities' efforts to establish strong values in learners. Teachers are tasked with the job of helping children see that values are not only an important part of the educational process, but also of their overall development as an individual. Teachers should realise that values are caught by children as much as they are taught – which further emphasises the need for teachers to be an example to learners at all times.

School leadership

School leadership is critical in developing values education as a core part of schooling and thus the leadership should play a critical role in guiding the staff and learners to an ideal value system. The school management team should consider teacher development and qualifications before teachers are assigned to teach LO, and LO should be taken seriously and allocated appropriate resources accordingly. Success is achieved when values education becomes an integral part of all aspects of school life. The greatest success is achieved when connections are made between values education and other initiatives and become the priority of systems, sectors and schools. Values must be intrinsic and integrated into all that a school does.

Conclusion

A burgeoning research output has positioned itself to explore the focus and content of values

education, with very limited attention being paid to implementation in the schooling system. Using the South African schooling system as a research site, we explored the experiences of the school community with regard to implementing values education. To guide our exploration, we asked the question: “How are values embedded in the South African LO curriculum?” We drew our theoretical orientation from the literature on approaches to the implementation of values. Although contextualised to the South African Senior Phase LO curriculum, the knowledge generated from this study is critical for both international and local researchers as it charts a way to an area that is less researched. Based on the findings, there is need to implement values education following an eclectic approach that involves a partnership between the school and its community.

Notes

- i. ‘Senior Phase’ refers to the first three years of secondary education in South Africa and is aimed at learners aged 13 to 15 years.
- ii. Published under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

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