

Leading Through Values

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Abstract

This paper provides the context and reasoning behind a national pilot project in England, 'Leading Through Values'. It sets out to explore what is understood by values in both educational practice and learning theory, and to raise a more explicit debate about values education and its potential for influencing both educational and societal change. The paper charts the rise of values education in academic and practice domains alongside the growth and development of parallel or contextual agendas. A definition of values education is offered to provide clarity in what is a congested and contested arena. This is essential for the present discussion and the project to which it contributes. The middle part of the paper explores the pedagogy of values education and the potential pitfalls or hazards that might be encountered. It then proceeds to make an argument for why schools, and in particular school leaders, might engage with values education. The case is made from both an intrinsic and extrinsic perspective, drawing on hard and soft evidence from those who have already commenced on this journey. The paper also maps how values fit with existing curricula and educational aims to support those who might be at the earlier stages of their journey in values education. The paper concludes in a consideration of the 'here and now' and posits that values education offers an exciting and engaging opportunity to schools in England at a particular moment of change.

Contents

Setting the scene	2
A values agenda?	4
What is Values Education?	5
Defining Values Education	10
A Values Education pedagogy	15
Why engage with values?	21
A moment for change?	33
Where next?	40
<hr/>	
References	41

Setting the scene

A secret world...

The premise for the project behind this paper and the paper itself could be said to be the notion that values are often mentioned, but rarely examined. Once one is tuned into the idea of 'values', it becomes almost impossible to avoid them in the humdrum of everyday life. Until that point however, values tend to exist in our subconscious, guiding our everyday thoughts, behaviours and actions, but only occasionally coming to the surface. Where they do emerge into our consciousness it is often because of a values clash - a disjuncture or dilemma that, for a time at least, requires a more critical and questioning mind.

Clashes of this magnitude may be irregular and infrequent, perhaps brought on by a work incident, a personal situation, or by world events and media. But we also tussle with our values on a more regular basis through our daily decisions over what to buy, what to wear, whether to drive or not, who to contact, what to eat. All of these involve value judgements, most often in the subconscious, and all can find us experiencing life as a living contradiction¹. On a particularly cold and rainy day for example, our values may well tell us to walk, but the warmth and protection of the car may win out. This simple example shows the complex, uncertain, and intensely personal space that values inhabit in our minds. This space, though known through associated behaviour and action to have external impacts (social, environmental etc), remains a largely secret and poorly understood world.

Peeling back the layers

The parties² behind the current 'Leading Through Values' project are all in some manner directly interested in the values that might be needed for a more just, sustainable and humane future. That such an endeavour is necessary is now almost beyond refute with mounting evidence of social, environmental, economic, political and cultural malaise at both the local and global scales. Climate change, economic recession, religious tensions, growing inequality, human rights

Notes:

1. The idea of living contradiction used in this project draws on the work of Jack Whitehead and others who have spearheaded the idea of Living Theory.
2. The parties behind the Leading Through Values pilot project include Oxfam, British Red Cross, Lifeworlds Learning, Think Global, Practical Action and the National Children's Bureau. They have come together to form the Values in Schools Alliance to explore the connections and possibilities that exist in values and education. More information is available at www.learningthroughvalues.org

abuses, and shifting geopolitical power dynamics are all examples of this. Importantly however, all of this is being questioned, challenged and countered by mitigating responses and alternative pathways from across the world. This 'preferred future' is a shared vision of those behind this project; the desire to better understand the values that might underpin, guide and motivate such a future, is the glue that enables their otherwise disparate agendas to bind around a common cause.

Another binding factor is a shared belief and investment in young people, and those who work with, and educate them. Education is a hugely influential period in the lives of tomorrow's leaders and decision makers, and greatly influences the choices made by the power brokers of today. But if the issues of today were created by the thinking of yesterday (a now widely accepted premise), then surely 'business as usual' becomes an inappropriate response. What type of education and learning is required, to help young people develop the resilience, skills and attributes to build a better future? Where and how, does greater understanding, and more conscious appreciation of values, support this intent? Can a leadership model built upon a values pedagogy change habits of mind such that dispositions supportive of a better future become the subconscious norm?

These are some of the questions asked by the current project, and through close work with nine primary schools, we will begin peeling back the layers of this secret world. We hope that what we expose will help to answer these questions, or at the very least refine them so that others can inform and contribute to the shaping of appropriate educational responses.

A values agenda?

Values in education are nothing new. Many who will read this paper or who work in, or with, schools would probably consider values as core to what they do and/or offer. This project does not seek to deny or challenge that. Rather, its purpose is to recognise, formalise and strengthen that which already exists by developing the spaces and language through which to broaden and deepen engagement with values in formal education. Through defining *Values Education* as a recognisable body of theory and practice, whilst simultaneously providing tangible pathways for those beyond the current fold, this work develops a solid *case for change* that places values at the core of 21st century learning.

The rationale for this work is twofold. The first is in response to a particular ‘moment of change’ - a specific juncture that has become magnified by the overlapping lenses of politics, economics, ecology, sociology and culture. The growing synergy between these sometimes disparate fields can be traced to multiple sources or challenges including climate change, global inequality, environmental decay, social cohesion or conflict, but irrespective of origin and key to this moment of change, is their shared DNA as ‘Bigger Than Self’ issues (see Box 1). Through this sharing, ‘values’ have emerged as a common language of exchange, but the extent to which values have been deconstructed and understood is less clear, leaving considerable scope for misappropriation or even harm. For critical educators then, there is an opportunity, perhaps a need, to clarify our understanding of values and ensure that their use in schools and communities is subject to appropriate rigour and integrity.

The second rationale behind this work is the particular threshold currently facing formal education³. Stringent budget cuts and a change in government in May 2010 have resulted in a significant change in, and some would argue reduction in support for, work around Bigger Than Self issues in both formal and informal education. This has led many to re-assess what it was that these initiatives or agendas offered, with values often emerging at the forefront. Alongside these reflections, new opportunities in terms of assessment, curricula and governance, have left schools with increased freedoms to determine their own culture and direction. This has led to

Box 1: Bigger Than Self issues

There are many issues that may feel simply too big to deal with, but that is not a reason to ignore them! For us the big issues include those relating to:

- global poverty
- sustainability
- humanitarianism.

Such issues are sometimes known as Bigger Than Self (BTS) issues, but the terms Global, Complex, Controversial and Universal are also used. To a large extent the term does not matter, but the skills, dispositions and ability to consider these issues, to form an opinion, and to take relevant action does. Values are at the heart of this.

Notes:

3. The changes to which this paper mainly refers are those affecting formal education in England, though these may be apparent in and relevant to other territories, nations and sectors.

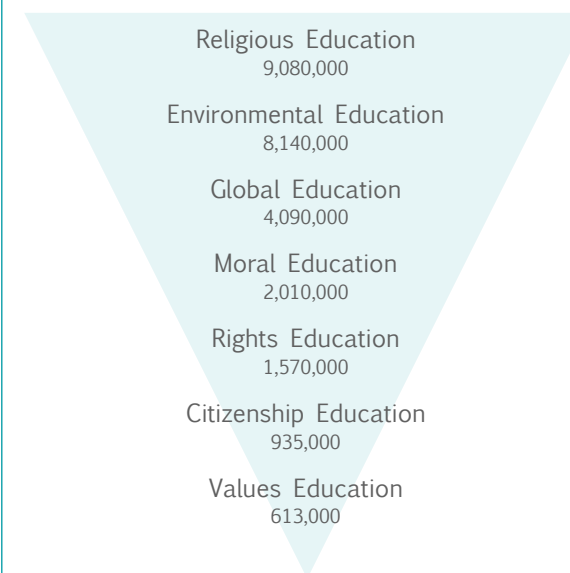
vibrant dialogue around school vision and ethos, appropriate curricula, and leadership, all underpinned (with varying degrees of transparency and acknowledgement) by a concern with values. This work explores whether those challenged by current educational change but committed to the role of values within their schools, their curricula, and their community, might find an opportunity to reframe their practice through Values Education. It will give space for essential dialogue, improved language through which to communicate values, and create a solidarity of purpose for those who see Values Education as vital to nurturing ‘future-ready’⁴ learners.

What is Values Education?

As a recognisable body of theory and practice, Values Education, is still in its relative infancy, despite the stated significance of values by many educators and in many fields of education. A representation of this is shown in the inverse values triangle created from a simple Google search of selected terminology (see box 2). This is far from scientific, but remains indicative of the relative lack of work compared with other ‘educations’. There are many plausible reasons for the invisibility of Values Education as an explicit field, and this is not the place for a full discussion of those. The notion of ‘presumed acceptance’ however, is of sufficient importance to merit brief attention.

There is, among many, a presumed acceptance associated with values - an assumption that they are present, even omnipresent in our schools, our communities and society, and that educations of whatever prefix are naturally built around values. It is certainly the case that schools and the education system are frequently represented by politicians, the media, and the public at large as the obvious conduit for fixing societal values (often confusingly cast as morals, character or behaviour). This can lead to values challenges being ‘dealt with’ through pre-existing channels (subject areas) reinforced by narrow curricula and observable assessment

Box 2: The inverse values triangle



Source: Google hits using selected terms (5 Sept 2012)

Notes:

4. The term ‘future-ready’ has been widely used in the US to engage in discussion about the skills, dispositions and attitudes required of both students and teachers in the 21st century. It is used in this work in conjunction with futures education (see for example Hicks 2006) as a stimulus for raising debate around Values Education and its connections to campus, curricula and community.

criteria. Owing to the complexity of values in both form (what they mean), and function (how they manifest themselves), such simplistic responses rarely deal with the challenge. Indeed the reductionist tendency to teach values through a *'retreat to basics'* (Archard 1998) may even be detrimental to the initial intent as *'one cannot retreat far enough to secure a position that is free of the division of views that prompted the retreat'* (ibid)⁵.

"Public opinion cries out for quick answers and ready solutions, whereas many problems call for a patient, concerted, negotiated strategy of reform. This is precisely the case where education policies are concerned."

Delors 1996

The suggestion for the present work then, is that we should not shy away from the complexity of values or make assumptions that they are, or can be, adequately addressed through existing means. Values challenges require specific pedagogies and comprehension that, whilst sharing characteristics with existing educations, are instrumental enough to deserve their own.

An emergent field

Writing of his work in the early 1990s, Robb (2008) references the lack of literature available on Values Education and of the need to formulate his own definitions based primarily on work from the US and material evidence gathered in Scotland. Robb's observations are echoed by others and mark out the early-mid 1990s as a time when Values Education began to emerge into the spotlight. This is seen in work from around the world including in Australia (Lovat and Toomey, 2009), South Africa (Asmal 2001b), the USA (XXX), the UK (Hand, 2010), and in international collaborations through UNICEF (Living Values Education, 2012) and UNESCO (1999).

Why this period proves so pivotal is less clear, though various authors make suggestions in this direction. Talbot, writing of the UK for example, speaks of the perceived *"moral crisis in society"* following the murder of Jamie Bulger by two ten year olds and the resultant complaints that *"schools weren't doing the job they should be doing: imparting society's values to the young"* (1999). Lovatt and Toomey identify greater research into teaching and schools at this time, as instrumental in *"overturning earlier beliefs that values were exclusively the preserve of families and religious bodies"* and of *"a growing belief that entering into the world of personal and societal values is a legitimate and increasingly important role for teachers and schools to play"* (2009:xi).

Notes:

5. Archard's use of the 'retreat to basics' was in specific relation to the development and delivery of sex education and the challenges of moral pluralism that a school may face in its delivery. The role of pluralism or multiple perspectives in the area of Values Education is one of both challenge and opportunity that will be returned to throughout this paper.

It may also be pertinent to reflect on more general events of the time and implications of these for the values held by societies and cultures both individually and collectively. The end of the Cold War, the demise of apartheid, the growing forces of globalisation, the accelerating creep of technological change (especially of the Internet), the germination of new economic powers (Brazil, Russia, India, China etc), and the increasing severity and frequency of environmental alarms, are just some of the phenomena that could be referenced.

“At least in the ‘developed’ part of the planet a few seminal and closely connected departures have happened, or are happening currently, that create a new and indeed unprecedented setting for individual life pursuits, raising a series of challenges never before encountered.”

Bauman 2007

In a varied literature, these shifts⁶ have been cited as leading to a questioning of identity, purpose and belief; a questioning identified by the UNESCO Commission on Education for the 21st Century. It reported that *“people today have a dizzying feeling of being torn between a globalization whose manifestations they can see and sometimes have to endure, and their search for roots, reference points and a sense of belonging”* (Delors 1996:17). This rupture is perhaps most usefully explained by Zygmunt Bauman (2007) in his writings on ‘liquid modernity’ in which he posits uncertainty as the new certainty. He talks of today’s social forms (the structures that determine individual choice, patterns of acceptable social behaviour etc) changing so fast that they rarely set or solidify, before being made liquid again by another inexorable change or happening. In the shadow of such disorientating dilemmas it becomes harder, as Bauman goes on to explain, for people to establish the values and behaviours that underpin their actions and life-long plans if their frames of reference are constantly changing.

The time is now

In the UK at least, it would seem that there is indeed a disorienting dilemma felt by many and this has spawned increasing public debate and engagement with values. Politicians, the media, businesses, academics and non-governmental organisations are all talking values with varying degrees of transparency and effect. And there is no shortage of fodder to stimulate discussion whether it be the banking crisis, budget cuts, the Arab Spring, the 2010 riots, the rise (or not) of the “Big Society”, the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, or the role (and occasional behaviour) of the Royal Family.

Notes:

6. The idea of ‘shift’ is a useful construct for educators as it can help to convey the gravitas of particular events or processes as distinct from ‘change’ that may be more everyday in our minds and therefore not elicit the required attention. Caution should of course be shared not to use it to cause alarm or fear as this can prove detrimental to the intent. A popular realisation of ‘shift’ can be found in various versions of ‘Shift Happens’ - a short film demonstrating the fluidity of our times. We have recommended a version of this for viewing in the Further Information section of this paper on [page X](#).

Education is regularly at the forefront of these debates, though often in its familiar guise as the problem or solution. It is rare to find education discussed in a more empowering sense as the crucible from which a renegotiated future may emerge, and yet this is precisely the role that education must aspire to. For those supporting such aspirations, values are emerging as an invaluable ingredient, and as the evidence of this grows, so too does the visibility of Values Education as a distinct entity.

Building on the best

Irrespective of the external pressures, why should this emergent field of Values Education be of interest to school communities and their leaders? They are, after all, painfully familiar with the fads and initiatives that pass through their curricula and classrooms. The answer that many proponents of Values Education would offer is in the question. The political transience and financial fragility of educational initiatives has created many a ghost in formal education, and whilst some are happily exorcised from the memory, there are others whose spirit seems to linger, whose lessons resonate and whose presence is missed. Invariably, you will find that values feature prominently in these latter examples.

Values Education is thus in part emerging as a powerful opportunity to consolidate and build upon the best of what has been, whilst forging an independence (from government sponsored agendas) that fosters resilience to the inevitable shifts of our liquid times. Values Education also creates a greater sense of ownership, negotiated at source, that builds confidence and competence in the broader aims of the education establishment including the vital watchword, 'attainment'.

Returning then to the inverse values triangle depicted in Box 2 (page 5), a response to the question 'what is values education?' might be that it is the unseen and unspoken foundation of many existing educations (see Box 3) and an apt response to 'living in an age of uncertainty'⁷. The challenge is to unmask the potential of 'learning through values'⁸ through greater dialogue, experimentation, adaptation and reporting. That challenge begins by the need to define what we mean by Values Education.

"Education has to face up to this problem now more than ever as a world society struggles painfully to be born: education is at the heart of both personal and community development"

Delors 1996

Box 3: The values triangle



Notes:

7. 'Living in an age of uncertainty' is borrowed from the subtitle of Zygmunt Bauman's book *Liquid Times* (2007).

8. 'Learning through values' is an initiative of Lifeworlds Learning (a partner in the present project) and is intended to provide a hub for dialogue and sharing around Values Education. It is not the only such portal and provides onward links to others that readers are encouraged to explore.

Key Points: What is Values Education?

Values Education...

- ... is a relatively new term and still not widely utilised.
 - ... emerged in the 1990s, seemingly in response to:
 - concerns about a moral crisis in society (particularly among young people)
 - educational research into the part schools play in the formation of values.
 - ... has coincided with global shifts and a subsequent questioning of values and identity.
 - ... is increasingly proving itself as an apt response for today's learners.
 - ... is building upon and strengthening the best of previous educational initiatives.
 - ... supports schools to develop greater independence from, and resilience to change.
-

Defining Values Education?

The lack of a widely shared definition of Values Education is at least partly responsible for its relative obscurity compared with other educations. This position is amplified by the presumed acceptance of values in education introduced at the start of the previous section (page 5).

Defining any 'education' is riddled with challenges and each definition brings as many detractors and critics as it does supporters. This inevitably leads to yet more definitions or frameworks until we end up with an educational landscape so populated in concepts, skills and values (all of them suggested as 'essential' or 'key' by their authors or sponsors) that it can become one of confusion and distraction. In the UK this has been evident in the fields of global learning and education for sustainable development (ESD) and is also true of many other educations.

It is easy to become so bewildered by these differences that they become a cause of inaction and disengagement. In relation to ESD, Stephen Sterling raises this issue and suggests that in overcoming such inertia we *"... look for commonality between the various frameworks, regarding them as indicative rather than prescriptive. They are there to be used, edited, critically discussed and adapted as part of the learning process, rather than adopted wholesale"* (2010:33).

This more empowering perspective brings new purpose to the process of defining, whereby it becomes less about telling (about right and wrong) and more about asking (about ideas, perspectives and insights). It thus contributes to what Edward Said calls *"the activation rather than the stuffing of the mind"* which he goes on to suggest is *"the main business of education"* (2001:93).

In relation to Values Education, William Robb in particular writes of the importance of the definition process (2008). He identifies three commonly cited obstacles to defining Values Education (see Box 4), and goes on to show how these can all be overcome through a more pro-active and holistic approach to defining as identified above. His argument is persuasive and holds strong parallels with much of the most recent pedagogical thinking around critical

"unless we take the time to find out what values education is, it is not possible to effectively promote, study, and practice it".

Robb 2008

Box 4: Difficult to define?

- Values education, like education, is an essentially contested concept - it cannot be defined because it has so many meanings.
- An individual has no right to force his or her definition on others - there are many definitions - no one can claim to have the right definition.
- Defining is just playing with words: it is a semantic game that takes us away from practical action.

Source: Robb 2008:3

literacy, dialogic teaching, and transformational learning, but importantly it also steers clear of the drift into post-modern relativism. Rayment considers such drift a major challenge for educators and posits that a failure to adequately address this risks “*setting learners adrift on a sea of valueless relativism*” (2011:21).

The difficulty of reaching a definition is not then a reason to avoid the challenge and as Robb argues “*...the fact that definitions change does not mean that it is a waste of time seeking them. On the contrary, in my experience some of the debates in education and philosophy are false - they would not be happening if the “opposing sides” had taken the time to define in detail the words they use*” (2008:3). Of particular importance in Robb’s work is the acceptance of any definition as “*only right for the time being*” (ibid.), as this liberates educator and learner to critically engage in the dialogue and debate. For many involved in Values Education, this is of itself, a fundamental value.

Ideologically too, this interpretation fits well with many critiques of current educational thinking and the assertion that “*education is part of the problem and part of the solution. We need to redefine it and we need to promote transformative learning*” (Gadotti 2010:157). Failure to do so is far from the value-neutrality that was once assumed of education, for as Said cautions “*collective passions derived from uncritically memorised texts are the bane of human life and whether they flow directly into political dogma or into simplified versions of the past, they have atrocious results, which it must be every teacher’s obligation, to combat with the weapons of criticism*” (2001:92). At this point then, readers are invited to take up their “*weapons of criticism*” and to engage in a brief foray through current definitions of Values Education.

Values Education... for now at least

Mirroring the relative dearth of work around Values Education as a distinct entity, definitions are rather thin on the ground. They become more available if the net is cast a little wider to take in closely related notions such as ‘values in education’ and ‘values-based education’⁹. Yet more definitions become available if venturing into ‘moral’, ‘character’, ‘ethical’ and ‘spiritual’ educations that are considered synonymous with Values Education by some. This latter

“During debate, understanding is increased when people arrive at different definitions for the same thing. The resultant resolution of difference provides a better definition. A definition is only right for the time being.”

Robb 2008

“values cannot simply be asserted; they must be put on the table, be debated, be negotiated, be synthesised, be modified, be earned. And this process, this dialogue is in and of itself a value to be cherished”.

Asmal 2001a

Notes:

9. There remains considerable debate around terminology and in particular between Values Education and Values in Education. This debate is sufficient enough to have been the stated focus of a full conference “Values Education for Life and Learning” in October 2012 in the UK.

expansion has been left out of the current exercise, but features, for those interested, in a separate document allied to this project (see Wilson and Bowden (forthcoming 2013)).

We begin our consideration of current definitions with the work of the Association for Living Values Education International (ALIVE) that was formed in 2004, but its members have been working on Living Values Education (LVE) in around 65 countries worldwide since 1997. LVE emerged from an international gathering of educators organised by UNICEF and Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU) in 1996 to discuss *“the needs of children around the world, their experiences of working with values, and how educators can integrate values to better prepare students for lifelong learning”* (Living Values Education 2012). Using a BKWSU publication on Living Values as a stimulus, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as a framework, a definition of Living Values Education emerged as:

“... a way of conceptualizing education that promotes the development of values-based learning communities and places the search for meaning and purpose at the heart of education. LVE emphasizes the worth and integrity of each person involved in the provision of education, in the home, school and community. In fostering quality education, LVE supports the overall development of the individual and a culture of positive values in each society and throughout the world, believing that education is a purposeful activity designed to help humanity flourish.”

(Living Values Education, 2010:2)

One of the most extensive studies of Values Education to date comes from Australia with a series of projects exploring the potential of Values Education, and in particular the contribution it can make to student attainment and school ambience. Much of this work is reported in lengthy documents and publications (Lovat, Toomey, Dally and Clement 2009; Lovat and Toomey 2009) and serves to test and demonstrate Values Education rather than define it per se. That said, the understanding used by the Australian government at the outset of these projects considered Values Education to be:

Notes:

10. The international team behind Living Values Education (LVE) have developed a considerable body of evidence demonstrating the impact of LVE in schools (this is referenced later in this paper) and are one of the few sources of learning materials designed explicitly to support the implementation of values-based education.

“... any explicit and/or implicit school-based activity to promote student understanding and knowledge of values, and to inculcate the skills and dispositions of students so they can enact particular values as individuals and as members of the wider community.”

(Dept of Education Science and Training (DEST) cited in Lovat & Toomey, 2009:xii)

Both of the definitions offered so far stem from processes where a particular set of values has been identified as desirable and may even be explicitly promoted. Whilst there may be nothing overtly disagreeable in those values, a call to “enact particular values” may lead some readers to infer a process of indoctrination and therefore disengage.

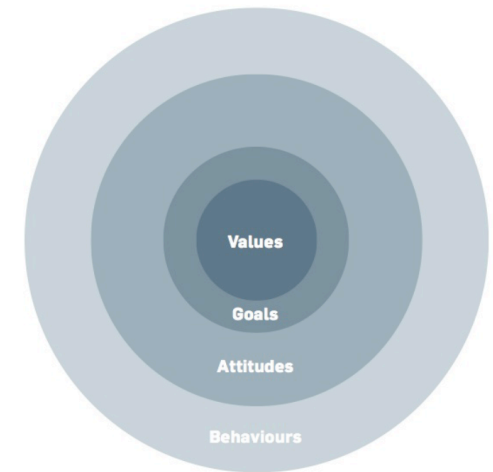
This concern lends favour to more open definitions of Values Education that avoid prescriptive language. William Robb arrived at his own definition of Values Education in the early 1990s, at a time when little of the current material had even been conceived. He went on, through practice and reflection to amend his definition of Values Education to:

“... an activity which can take place in any organisation during which people are assisted by others, who may be older, in authority or more experienced, to make explicit those values underlying their own behaviour, to assess the effectiveness of these values and associated behaviour for their own and others' long-term wellbeing and to reflect on and acquire other values and behaviour which they themselves realise are more effective for long-term well-being of self and others”.

(Robb 2008)

Robb’s definition makes more explicit the links between Values Education, critical pedagogy, organisational learning, and crucially for this project, Bigger Than Self issues. He also alludes to values underlying behaviour, introducing an important distinction in Values Education that is further evidenced in Box 5. Recognising that values are deeper than characteristics, attitudes and behaviour, is a vital point of clarification. This helps to set Values Education apart from moral and character education, which tend to focus more on the rights and wrongs of conduct and justifications for this. They do not, as a matter of course, delve (at least explicitly) into an understanding of the values underpinning such choice.

Box 5: Values run deep



Source: Hawkins (2012)

“Opinions are the ripples on the surface of the public’s consciousness, shallow and easily changed. Attitudes are the currents below the surface, deeper and stronger. Values are the deep tides of the public mood, slow to change, but powerful.”

Sir Robert Worcester, Chairman/founder MORI

Source: Kleanthous, A. and Peck, J. (2006)

The rigour offered by Robb's definition is therefore the working definition of Values Education that will be adopted... for now. The "for now" is significant for as Robb himself writes "defining values education requires writing down one's existing implicit definition for testing by oneself and others" (2008) - a challenge to be embraced as the current project unfolds.

Key Points: Defining Values Education

Values Education...

- ... is, to date at least, a poorly defined concept compared with other 'educations'.
 - ... has to be re-visited and re-defined as new audiences engage in understanding it.
 - ... should be a contested matter - the critical dialogue around meaning is a value in itself.
 - ... is distinct from Moral Education and Character Education (though is often confused).
 - ... should not be defined in a prescriptive manner that risks indoctrination.
 - ... as presently understood is a working definition - testing it forms part of this project.
-

A Values Education pedagogy

Values Education is not an add-on or distraction from the normal business of educating, whatever that may be. It is an approach that *“helps each adult and child across an entire school to understand, reflect on, think deeply about, and become the living embodiment of a series of values”* (Gilbert, 2009:vii). To this extent Values Education frequently brings, and may even require, teachers and school leaders to critically re-assess their practice and emerge with *“another vision of their pedagogical work”* (Combes 2003 cited in Drake 2007). Such a vision will be dependent on the peculiarities of the individual setting with its unique combination of staff, community, and of course, learners.

That accepted, virtually all successful Values Education initiatives exhibit strong commonality in their pedagogical principles. Of paramount importance is the principle understanding that Values Education is not about the transmission of values. Any form of Values Education that sets out with predetermined values to be acquired by its recipients, is not only likely to fail, but to meet outright resistance and/or cause considerable harm. This can (perhaps rightly so) lead to the dismissal of values in the curriculum or that values are even the remit of schools and educators. This uncritical stance ignores however, that denying learners opportunities to consider values, means they will most likely draw their values from the ‘hidden curriculum’ of their schools and classrooms, and from the often unsustainable and unjust societies in which they live (Newman 2009).

The most effective pedagogies for Values Education are those that empower learners to identify, question, expand, affirm, and act on, their own value set. Such pedagogies are not unique to Values Education and are of interest to many concerned that education has become *“programmed by what is on offer, packaged, framed, shaped and predisposed towards acceptance and consent, without much regard for questions of justice, discrimination and judgement”* (Said 2001). This view of education, in which younger generations are integrated into the *“logic and conformity of the system”* (Freire 1970) is unrecognisable in the essence of good Values Education which is much better aligned with the words of another great

“values cannot be taught in any direct fashion. Values are assimilated and adopted. The manner in which we teach probably does more to instil values than the subject matter of what we teach”.

Justice Kate O'Regan cited in Asmal 2001b

educational thinker, J Krishnamurti. Among his many writings on education, one exchange with a group of students at Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh, India, has particular resonance for the current paper and project:

“Are you going to conform, fit in, accept all the old values? You know what these values are - money, position, prestige, power. That is all man wants and society wants you to fit into that pattern of values. But if you now begin to think, to observe, to learn, not from books, but learn for yourself by watching, listening to everything that is happening around you, you will grow up to be a different human being - one who cares”

(J Krishnamurti 1974:9)

Accepting the temporal and spatial specifics (India in the 1970s), Krishnamurti’s concerns bear remarkable resonance to those of other historical and contemporary educators, and in particular to the risk of creating what he refers to as “second-hand human beings”. Freire famously captures this risk in relation to the educator stating that whilst *‘the teacher is of course an artist, ... being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves’* (Horton & Freire, 1991)

The significance attached to ‘thinking’ by Krishnamurti, Freire, and others is especially relevant to Values Education for it is the ability to think critically that binds many of the pedagogies used. This commonality extends into other educational areas too (see box 6), providing a potential bridge for those new to Values Education. What is not yet established however is a common language through which to clearly converse and that is something that this work will seek to address.

The second core pedagogic principle across the literature is that of modelling. As the quote from Justice O’Regan at the top of page 15 asserts, at least as much weight rests on the environment of Values Education as on its content. This may seem obvious given the significance of socialisation in the formation of values, but such clarity is not always evident. For Values Education to be effective, especially in the domains of attainment and behaviour,

“We think so that we can arrange the world, either in our minds or outside of our minds, in a manner that satisfies our values”.

de Bono 2005

Box 6: Values bridges

The following are a selection of educational areas identified within the literature as being a potential bridge to Values Education in terms of shared or similar pedagogies.

- Global Citizenship/Global Learning
- Education for Sustainable Development
- Humanitarian Education
- Human Rights Education
- Moral/Character Education
- Co-operative Education
- Civics/Citizenship
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Community Cohesion
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Learning
- Philosophy for Children
- Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry
- Dialogic Teaching

consideration of the learning environment is a vital parallel to the creation of any values-based curriculum. This point is reinforced by none other than Nelson Mandela who reminds us that *“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 or educators or politicians or priests who say one thing and do another send mixed messages to those in their charge ... The question of leadership, generally, and in the educational sphere particularly, is therefore of vital importance”* (2001a).

“Adopting a values-based approach to teaching and learning can radically change relationships, and how the school functions, within a short space of time”.

Duckworth 2009:5

A pedagogy for Values Education must be much more than classroom content then. It must spill over into the very fabric of the school - its atmosphere, its community, its support staff, its governing body, and its leaders. Indeed leadership and a conscious engagement with what is understood by this within schools, emerges as the critical factor in enabling Values Education to pass into being and become real. That this is so, should not be considered a threat however. Far from it. Emerging evidence suggests that Values Education provides new opportunities and efficiencies for school leaders, liberating whole-school changes that have been historically frustrated by fragmentation and false starts.

The phrase ‘whole-school’ is one of several terms to have been used so widely in education over the past decade that the political significance of its intent has been all but lost. It is not uncommon to hear people talk of a ‘whole-school approach’ but the realisation of genuine whole-school praxis is frequently less evident. This is especially so, in an era when the proliferation of initiatives facing schools, are all claiming and vying for theirs to be the framework around which the whole school can grow. This has not only proven bewildering for many schools, but also highly inefficient given that many initiatives are rooted in a remarkably similar set of values. Could Values Education therefore provide a common core around which different initiatives could coalesce and find a shared voice? It is certainly the case that properly implemented Values Education can only be whole-school. This is not out of ideologic sentiment, but because of the importance attached to the form and function of relationships within and beyond the school. For Values Education to work there is clear evidence of the need to scrutinise what is understood by ‘whole-school’, and to ensure that this exercise includes all of those who contribute to the life of the school. **[organisational learning?]**

Values are Bigger Than Self

A third pedagogic principle brings us back to the idea of Bigger Than Self (BTS) issues (see page 4). BTS issues have a dual role to play in Values Education as they could be argued to simultaneously form both its basis and purpose. Their basis comes from their very existence in the world around us - through the media, communities, families, entertainment and of course, education (Bauman 2007:5). In a globalised world it is virtually impossible to escape the misery or excesses of the world, whether on our doorstep or in distant places involving distant people that we are never likely to meet. BTS issues also feature heavily in the stated intent of virtually all Values Education - to equip citizens for a more just, peaceful, sustainable, resilient and human world.

These assertions go beyond well-exercised semantics and are clearly evident in research and reports from across the world and from across education sectors. A recent report on higher education in the UK found that the formation of values amongst students were often elicited and developed through relating them to a “...*real-world situation and to students’ own interests and values*” (Sterling 2012:34). Similar findings are drawn in many papers on Values Education and similar views are clearly expressed amongst those at the very heart of current educational thinking. This is exemplified by Robin Alexander, Chair of the influential Cambridge Primary Review, who when questioned about the parameters of the review observed that:

“...our society is complex and fraught and the world is changing fast. So among the many questions which we set ourselves were those about the kind of world in which children are growing up, its impact on children’s lives, children’s likely prospects as adults, and the skills and understanding which they might need in order not to be mere passive observers of social and global change but play their part in ensuring that society moves in a sensible direction and that the world remains a liveable and sustainable place.”

Alexander 2012

If critical thinking and modelled environments serve as the process of Values Education, then in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, Bigger Than Self issues could be said

to provide the context through which young people, educators, and learning organisations engage with Values Education. This offers a rich palette of content for Values Education and also ensures that rather than being seen as an ‘add-on’ for schools, it is directly connected to enabling young people to become *‘responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society’* (Department for Education, 2012)¹¹. What this responsibility and contribution will mean for young people growing up in a society that is shifting so rapidly, is still further reason to consider the potential of Values Education.

Rising to the challenge

This potential stems from Values Education being seen not as a thing (a body of fixed knowledge and content to be delivered), but as a process or activity¹² (Hawkes, 2009; Lovat and Toomey, 2009:xii; Robb 2008:5) that can thrive in, Bauman’s liquid times. This conceptualisation of Values Education affords new opportunities to collaborate across sectors and use ideas and insights from sociology, psychology, ecology, neuroscience, economics, and politics to name the obvious. It also finds strong synergies with current pedagogical thought (i.e. critical literacy, transformational learning, dialogic teaching), and thinking around educational leadership (see for example Bottery, 2004; Mongon and Leadebetter 2012; West-Burnham, 2009). Indeed some of the most interesting work around transformational change (of the individual, the leader, the institution) - the sort of change that Values Education seeks (Lovat and Toomey, 2009:xii; Robb 2008:7) - suggests that an essential stimulus to change is ‘a disorienting dilemma’ (Mezirow 2000:22), perhaps of the very uncertainty alluded to in Bauman’s ‘liquid times’.

“Governments everywhere are busily trying to reform education systems. This is good but it is not enough. The real challenge is to transform them.”

Robinson 2012

Notes:

11. This is one of the 3 stated aims of the national curriculum in England as listed on the Department for Education website at the time of writing (winter 2012/13). The curriculum in England is presently undergoing a root and branch review and the Academies and Free Schools programmes are also seeing many schools given the option to opt out of the national curriculum altogether.

12. There is some debate over the use of the word ‘process’ to describe values education as it may be considered too abstract or passive, given the skills and capacities required to facilitate an ‘activity’. Robb (2008:5) in particular makes the point that anyone can be involved in a process, the implication being (as suggested in his own definition of values education, that to deliver an activity requires a much higher level of consciousness and competence.

Key Points: A Values Education pedagogy

Values Education...

- ... is not a predetermined body of knowledge for transmission.
 - ... is built around supporting learners to develop their own critical faculties and identity.
 - ... resonates strongly with other key 'educations' and methodologies.
 - ... is as much about the learning environment as it is about what is learnt.
 - ... is only genuine if operating at whole-school level - within and beyond its boundaries.
 - ... is highly dependent on effective and appropriate leadership.
 - ... is inextricably bound to Bigger Than Self issues.
-

Why engage with values?

Why then, should schools choose to engage with Values Education, especially at a time of such wholesale change and uncertainty within formal education? There are several well-reasoned theoretical arguments in the existing literature (see for example Bottery 2004, Cam 2012, Ryan 2008) and these are supported by more practice-based justifications such as the experience of head teacher, Julie Duckworth, captured in *'The Little Book of Values'* (2009).

Here, we offer a more distilled argument for why schools, and those supporting schools, might engage with values and Values Education. Our argument is constructed using two distinct (but sometimes inter-related perspectives).

The first perspective is an intrinsic one. This addresses the societal 'big picture' drivers for why schools should engage with values: the rapid pace of change; the complexity and range of social, environmental, economic, political and cultural challenges shaping young people's futures; and the growing recognition that a different pathway - a more just and sustainable future - is desirable for the wellbeing of all. We call these intrinsic reasons because they can be argued as worthwhile in their own right and are benevolent and social in nature. We have sometimes also thought of this as a macro perspective.

The second perspective is an extrinsic one - more micro and individualistic in nature. From this standpoint, the justification for engaging with Values Education is that an increasing body of evidence points to real improvements in attainment, behaviour and curriculum. This ABC approach (Bowden 2012) can be the primary concern of many schools, particularly during periods of flux such as that presently affecting formal education in England. Closer scrutiny during such upheaval can force or coerce schools into a pre-occupation with the micro and disengagement with anything considered peripheral or non-essential to core ABC concerns. Insights from Values Education suggest that the ABC need not be sacrificed, and is in most cases actually enhanced and enriched, such that Values Education may actually offer a solution to schools concerned with these priorities.

Whilst separated for the purposes of debate, our two perspectives are not mutually exclusive, despite media, political, and academic interests that may wish us to believe otherwise:

“Schools afford an arena for fighting about what kind of society we should be, how the old and new generations should relate, whether commerce should govern democracy or democracy shall govern commerce, and how individual freedoms should be rendered compatible with the common good. It is imperative that the new round of school fights center as much on the symbols of inclusion and equality as upon the rhetoric of individualism and quality. These values need one another so that the whole is at least as worthy as the sum of the parts, if not perhaps more so.”

Minow 1999

The remainder of this section explores further what each perspective might bring to a school interested in values and/or Values Education.

‘Formally teaching values in the school curriculum seems to somehow validate it along with Maths and Spelling. It is too important to simply lie in the “hidden curriculum”’

Living Values Education, 2010

Intrinsically good

“Most teachers join the profession to make a difference for the future. They are energised by a compelling moral purpose to do the right things for children. It is time to recapture that moral purpose.”

Ryan, 2009

Ryan’s quotation is explicitly intrinsic in tone and paints a picture of education as an endeavour for the greater or common good. Whilst many educators may recognise this vision, the lens through which they are asked to view it is too often obscured by a pre-occupation with more extrinsic measures. The drive for raising standards and hitting attainment targets in core areas has become the mantra by which many in education now perceive their lives, leaving the bigger picture of why they entered the profession as a sometimes forgotten scene. Ryan’s assertion that we should ‘recapture that moral purpose’ is echoed by many in education, but like others,

Ryan insists that this is not an either/or scenario. No-one is asserting that standards or attainment are any less important. Indeed as Edmund Gordon posits:

“In modern societies the achievement of universally effective education may not be possible in the absence of contexts in which social justice is valued and practiced. Similarly, the achievements of social justice may not be possible in the absence of achievement of universally effective education.”

Gordon cited in Powell, 2001

Acceptance of this symbiosis is insufficient however. For it to become a reality, there must be a pro-active re-balancing of attention in favour of social justice. More so, there is a need to equally qualify social justice as ‘effective’ and then to widely question what we mean by effective in both spheres. Ryan’s argument for recapturing the ‘moral purpose’ is an attempt to do just this, and makes a strong case for first deconstructing the ideals by which we may choose to set our course. Values Education is critical to this process, as a deeper understanding of values (see Hawkins 2012 for example) reveals them to be central to the attitudes and behaviours that are commonly used to define moral purpose.

The intrinsic argument for engaging with Values Education goes far beyond theoretical logic and common sense however. It can also be considered an essential component in tackling many of the challenges facing society, at both a local and global scale. These challenges are many, interrelated, and complex. They also transcend both time and space in their scale and for these reasons it has proven useful to refer to them as Bigger Than Self (BTS) issues as previously defined in Box 1 on page 4.

BTS issues, like many other issues are best engaged with the benefit of specific content, knowledge and understanding. Whilst this is present in existing curricula, it is rarely explicit, connected, or critical enough to support comprehensive learning. More to the point, it is frequently dispensed in ways that may actually hinder learning. This is not always through want of trying, but more because the received wisdom of educators, institutions and libraries falls

short of purpose in preparing young people (and adults alike!) for life in the 21st century. Instead as McKeown and Hopkins suggest in relation to education for sustainability:

“...we, and especially the next generation will have to learn our way to such a future....Quality teaching that maintains the status quo of a world of social and economic inequity along with too rapid use of natural resources and abuse of ecosystems is no longer acceptable.”

Mckeown & Hopkins 2010, cited in Watson 2012

Their assertion is far from isolated. As we live out the theory of a more connected, challenging and uncertain world, through work, leisure, the media, and home life, many have come to recognise the gaps in learning for the next generation (and of our own). This point is well made in a recent Oxfam Education paper ‘Over to you’ in which research into the views and attitudes of teachers, parents, businesses and young people is usefully summarised (King, 2012). Of particular relevance to this project and paper is the finding of a Think Global¹³ poll cited by King in which ‘94% of teachers said schools should prepare pupils for a fast changing and globalised world’ (ibid). King goes on to posit that similar findings across the board, and *most importantly* amongst young people, make a case for ensuring school curricula reflect and develop ‘*appropriate knowledge and understanding, values, attitudes and skills to ... support pupils to successfully engage with the world.*’ (ibid.)

A critical reader may at this point assert that a paper from Oxfam (an organisation that campaigns and supports schools in precisely this territory) would of course make this point, but their findings are echoed in many less partisan reports and by the early outputs of the current project. They are also supported, though perhaps in less direct language, by many involved in the reform of education systems. See for example the recent thoughts of Ken Robinson below, in which it is easy to see strong parallels with the position above:

“Most people now accept that there is a major crisis in the world’s natural climate and that it’s got something to do with how human beings have been behaving for the past 300 years. In the interests of industrialism, we’ve looted a selection of the earth’s resources and imperilled all of them. One climate crisis is probably enough for you. But I

Notes:

13. Think Global is the national umbrella body for a wide range of organisations and individuals supporting education for a more just and sustainable world. They carry out periodic public attitude surveys on behalf of the membership in order to inform and shape local and national policy and practice. The poll cited here comes from *Teachers’ Attitudes to Global Learning, January 2009, An Ipsos MORI Research Study on behalf of DEA* available at <http://www.think-global.org.uk/resources/item.asp?id=905>

believe there is another one whose origins are the same and whose consequences are equally perilous. This is a crisis of human resources.

The evidence is growing that we are systematically wasting the talents and the sensibilities of countless people, young and old and that the social and economic costs are immense. Education is at the heart of the problem.”

Robinson 2012

There are frequent references to the place of values in educational reform, including within the current curriculum review in England, where values feature prominently in Department for Education statements on the national curriculum¹⁴ - see Box 7 (right). Less evident in this and other statements suggesting the importance of values is an explicit engagement with Values Education as a distinct entity and pedagogy. This is significant because it leaves open to question whose values this new education/curriculum will reflect and the manner in which values will be treated within schools and curricula. In a recent book on the closely related field of moral education, Philip Cam provides a very useful expose of these dilemmas (Cam, 2012:5). He cautions of falling into the trap of moral absolutism (there is one true or correct view and it is mine (or ours)) or the polar opposite of moral relativism (if everyone’s views are valid and true for them, then any set of values and beliefs is as good as another). This can lead to the transmission of values (in the former) or the rejection of values (in the latter) and is ultimately defeating the intent of bringing values more explicitly into the realm of formal schooling. Instead, as Cam argues, we need to ‘*encourage discussion and thoughtful deliberation about beliefs and values*’ (2012:5). Richard Sennet makes some important qualifying points about the nature of that ‘discussion’. His points are particularly pertinent to Values Education in that he makes clear the distinction between discussion as a *mechanism* of problem-solving from which consensus emerges, to a more genuine dialogic approach defined as:

"a discussion which does not resolve itself by finding common ground. Though no shared agreements may be reached, through the process of exchange people may become more aware of their own views and expand their understanding of one another."

Sennet 2012:19

Box 7: Values in the curriculum

The curriculum should reflect values in our society that promote personal development, equality of opportunity, economic wellbeing, a healthy and just democracy, and a sustainable future.

These values should relate to:

- ourselves, as individuals capable of spiritual, moral, social, intellectual and physical growth and development
- our relationships, as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of happy and healthy lives, and to the good of the community
- our society, which is shaped by the contributions of a diverse range of people, cultures and heritages
- our environment, as the basis of life and a source of wonder and inspiration that needs to be protected.

Source: UK Department for Education, 2012

Notes:

14. The national curriculum referred to here is that for England only. It is the guidance and explanation as current in October 2012 and dated from April 2012 on the department website.

This broadening of minds and openness to ‘the other’ are among the essential cognitive skills identified as essential for the learning needed to deliver on the aspirations of 21st century learners.

Before looking at the data supporting our intrinsic perspective, it may be useful to reflect on the core intrinsic arguments for schools to engage in Values Education. Drawn from discussion so far we, at present, find these to include:

- Young people are learning in an increasingly complex and interdependent world and this requires skills, and dispositions that can be developed and honed through an engagement with values and bigger than self issues;
- There is broad recognition of the need for young people to more successfully engage with the world around them at both the local and global scale and to form opinions and take actions rooted in a clearer understanding of their values;
- Dialogic learning is an essential tool in supporting the emergence of a more just and sustainable world. Bigger Than Self issues provide a relevant and engaging context for such dialogue, whilst Values Education provides the necessary language and understanding;
- The need to ‘learn our way’ to learning that is appropriate for the challenges of the 21st century requires a transformation of learning built around values and a curriculum of relevance;
- Values education is the connector for currently disparate educations and between the formal and informal curriculum¹⁵;
- Values education provides an inclusive, participatory and critical framework around which to build a whole-school vision for more just and sustainable futures.

Hard data to support this position is sporadic within a UK context and is, in part, the reason for the pilot project allied to this paper. One exception to this is a 2010 report into the impact of the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) from UNICEF. Whilst not specifically

Notes:

15. The informal curriculum refers to the learning that takes place through engagement within the school community and the wider communal settings of the learner including that of the family home. Values Education can provide a language or currency through which to improve and enrich such learning.

'Values Education' the values inherent in, and explored through, a focus on rights make this a useful report for reviewing potential impact in the UK. The authors reviewed 31 schools that had been involved in the RRSA over a three year period and reported that:

'The values provided by the RRSA have, according to the adults and young people in the evaluation, had a significant and positive influence on school ethos, relationships, inclusivity, understanding of the wider world and the well-being of the school community.'

(Sebba and Robinson, 2010)

More specific data relating to Values Education can be found in an example from Australia, completed through a decade of 'a systematic and planned approach to values education' (Hamston et al, 2010) that sought to assess its transformational potential for pupil wellbeing, positive education and general improvements in learning. Their research provides strong support for intrinsic justifications, pointing to:

"... profound transformations in student learning. Teachers described students' 'deeper understanding' of 'complex issues' – how children 'can take on sophisticated concepts when they are explicitly taught' and change 'their attitude and perception of [a] value'. In turn, teachers wrote of being encouraged to 'continue exploring complex issues and values with students'.

Hamston et al, 2010

This Australian study echoes much of the understanding and pedagogy referred to earlier in this paper. In particular the programme highlights the significant role of the teacher/educator as the purveyor of an appropriate environment in which values (including their own) can be openly and critically explored in relation to local and global issues. In its final report, the Australian study identifies 10 specific elements of its success:

1. Establish and consistently use a common and shared values language across the school.
2. Use pedagogies that are values-focused and student-centred within all curriculum.

3. Develop values education as an integrated curriculum concept, rather than as a program, an event or an addition to the curriculum.
4. Explicitly teach values so that students know what the values mean and how the values are lived.
5. Implicitly model values and explicitly foster the modelling of values.
6. Develop relevant and engaging values approaches connected to local and global contexts and which offer real opportunity for student agency.
7. Use values education to consciously foster intercultural understanding, social cohesion and social inclusion.
8. Provide teachers with informed, sustained and targeted professional learning and foster their professional collaborations.
9. Encourage teachers to take risks in their approaches to values education.
10. Gather and monitor data for continuous improvement in values education.

(Hamston et al, 2010) Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project

Though drawn from a different educational context the above are of great benefit to the current pilot project and to educators and schools seeking reassurance or support for engaging with Values Education.

Extrinsically expedient

A growing body of evidence connects values-based initiatives with marked improvements in behaviour, and a 'knock-on' effect felt through curriculum and individual attainment. Much of this evidence is however, anecdotal and often described as something that is 'felt' rather than explicitly measured. It is seen, heard, and sensed in the atmosphere, ethos and relationships of

the school as well expressed by Dr Debs Hiley, chair of governors at the Herefordshire school featured in Julie Duckworth's book:

"The effect on individual pupils, of developing Values Education, is that pupils take greater personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour."

Hawkes, 2009

"In terms of happiness, behaviour and discipline within the school I think the impact is enormous. Some of this is quantifiable - for example, exclusion figures have reduced - but much of the impact is immeasurable. Visitors, from new parents to visiting heads, find the 'values' palpable."

(Duckworth, 2009:6)

Other values-focussed schools report similar findings with exclusion figures often given as one of the most outward measures of impact (Living Values Education, 2010; Sebba and Robinson, 2010). Measures relating to attainment exist only sporadically, in part because improved attainment is not often a primary driver for implementing a values initiative.

Among the most complete evidence bases for the extrinsic benefits of Values Education, is the body of testimony and outcomes from the international Living Values Education Program (LVEP). Drawing on their experience working with schools around the world they have identified that:

- In Iceland, a veteran first-grade teacher reported seeing surprising and dramatic improvements in caring, respect, cooperation, concentration, and learning to read.
- In Lebanon, second-graders in a classroom at ACS have learned conflict resolution so well that they solve all peer conflicts themselves; the teacher reports she is free to teach.
- In Bermuda, three primary schools implementing LVEP as whole schools achieved an 80% drop in school disciplinary referrals within their first year of implementing LVEP.
- In the USA, a K-8 school implementing LVEP as a whole-school is now rated as the top seventh school in Florida. The principal stated, "There simply is no bullying."
- In Kenya, teens self-reported complete changes in their behavior, from violence to cooperation, and from being at the bottom of their class to doing well academically.

(Living Values Education, 2010).

In Thailand a detailed analysis of the impact of introducing LVEP at a whole-school level found that *'there was a 20 per cent increase in student attendance, a 10 per cent decrease in student tardiness, a 10 per cent increase in teacher attendance, a 20 per cent improvement in reading scores, a 15 per cent improvement in language scores and a 15 per cent improvement in math scores. There was also considerable improvement on all measures of school climate.'* (Living Values Education, 2010).

Returning to a UK, and specifically English, context the most thorough evidence on the impact of values on learning comes from several parallel values-based educations. A study completed by the universities of Sussex and Brighton into the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) for example, looked at 'learning, attainment, attendance and exclusions' as a specific indicator of success. Their sample of 31 schools (all phases) demonstrated mixed results with it proving difficult to separate the impact of the values-based RRSA approach from other background factors. The authors summarise their findings by stating:

'Pupils and staff saw the RRSA as contributing to their learning, for example, through the reductions in disruptions in lessons that reflect pupils' increased understanding of their right to learn and their responsibility to others to ensure they do not prevent them from doing so. The attainment of pupils in almost two thirds of the schools increased over the period 2007-10. Fixed-term exclusions decreased in 13 schools and stabilized in a further three schools for which data are available. However, the typical fluctuations seen in test results and changes in units of measurement for attendance and exclusions made overall trends in these data unclear.'

(Sebba and Robinson, 2010)

The challenge of connecting values-based education to specific improvements in attainment is echoed in other UK reports such as a 2010 study into the impact of IDE (International Dimension in Education) in Welsh schools. Again, though not explicitly identified as Values Education, the IDE programme is built around a solid values base (albeit not explicitly). In their review of IDE in Wales, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) identified that *'all schools noted a beneficial effect on the standard of learners' work, motivation and attainment levels, but currently found it hard to evidence'* (Nicholas et al, 2010).

Whilst statistically-sound correlations may still be lacking in relation to Values Education and attainment, the evidence from school leaders, staff, governors, learners, parents, communities, inspectors and observers as to the improvement in learning environment is consistent. And it is here that attention should perhaps focus. If Values Education can be shown to lead to an improved learning culture in which learning is of itself more valued, behavioural issues are reduced, and dialogic processes are encouraged and supported then it appears likely that improvements in standards and other metrics will follow.

“Ofsted noted that because we work on values education, our academic standards were obviously higher.”

Living Values Education, 2010

Of equal, perhaps greater, importance however is apparent improvement in enjoyment of learning, in community and whole-school relationships, and in the skills and attributes of young people to deal with a more complex and uncertain world, both locally and globally. It is here that the role of Bigger Than Self (BTS) issues as a relevant, engaging and challenging context for learning and Values Education again comes to the fore. BTS issues enable learners to access and challenge values that may not be dealt with on a daily basis, even though they are often connected to daily behaviour and actions. Furthermore, if properly supported with appropriate critical pedagogies then BTS issues enable a deeper understanding of values as part of our constructed lifeworlds, dependent on the influences, experiences and received wisdom of the local context. This can support a much needed engagement with the Eurocentric and Anthropocentric perspectives that continue to dominate formal education in England.

This latter observation is significant because these dominant perspectives have by many accounts created the very situations (social inequalities, injustice, climate change, broken societies, intercultural tensions etc) that those promoting and endorsing values-based approaches to learning would seek to counter. Could a focus on values through the lens of BTS issues unlock the potential of future generations of learners and teachers to become what Paul Warwick refers to as the ‘critical creatives’ (Warwick and Bowden, 2012) needed to respond to these challenges? Anecdotal and formal evidence certainly suggests that an explicit engagement with values can create the pre-conditions for change:

'The thing about values is that you find yourself thinking about it all the time. It becomes part of your personal life and not just something to be done at school. It makes you challenge the way you and others behave and makes you begin to expect more of your and others' behaviour'

(Rachel Ussher, PSHE co-ordinator cited in Duckworth, 2009:9)

Key Points: Why engage with values?

Values Education...

- ... offers an approach and context that is fit for our fast-changing times.
 - ... is meaningful and relevant to young people and so increases the enjoyment of learning.
 - ... can build upon existing educations and offer new efficiencies in curriculum and learning.
 - ... is an effective vehicle for whole-school engagement and development.
 - ... delivers 'palpable' improvements in the learning environment.
 - ... appears to reduce behavioural issues and improve attainment levels.
 - ... has close synergy with current pedagogic research and innovation.
 - ... is supported by leading voices in educational reform and transformation.
 - ... can draw upon a diverse body of support through BTS issues and expertise.
-

A moment for change?

Formal education in England is presently in the midst of what some claim to be the biggest shake-up for a generation, perhaps more. The gravitas of this was captured by the Chief Executive of the National College for School Leadership in his address to their 2012 annual conference:

*“There is no doubt that the changes underway in the system are profound. Just as we look back now on the Education Acts of 1944 and 1988 as watershed moments, I think we will look back on this period in the same way, because the system **will** be radically different a few years from now.”*

(Munby, 2012)

Change, even radical change, is not necessarily a bad thing. There will always be those who lament the loss of what they considered important or dear, but they are balanced by those able to embrace change with enthusiasm and see ‘*new opportunities to shape things for the better*’ (ibid). Given that Values Education is about the improved well-being of self and others it can be confidently aligned with the optimists’ view of change as one of the ‘new opportunities’ that Munby refers to. Indeed, Values Education provides an especially rich opportunity due to its praxis of bringing school stakeholders together around a common vision and pathway. This holds significant potential in the present moment for as Munby goes on to say:

Autonomy and freedom do not only apply to those that lead academies. Whatever type of school or organisation you lead, the message from this government is that you can choose your own path, but with that freedom comes accountability and the fact that you will be judged against the achievements of the best systems in the world.”

(ibid.)

That Values Education can simultaneously provide strong direction, a unifying ethos, and maintain and enhance achievement, makes it an attractive pathway. Furthermore, its emphasis

“We need leaders who can adapt their leadership to different circumstances. We have to ask ourselves the question – are the leadership approaches that have worked for us in the past still going to work for us in the future?”

Steve Munby, Chief Executive, National College of School Leadership cited in Dept for Education 2012b

on dialogic and critical pedagogies goes a long way in fostering the dynamic and resilient leadership required to sustain direction in an age of uncertainty.

The anatomy of change

The remainder of this section considers the potential of Values Education in responding to specific educational changes in England. Prior to that discussion however it is worthwhile situating those in education as people in their own right: people who inhabit and negotiate a world beyond the school gates. Reminding ourselves of the fuzziness that can separate the professional and the personal, is especially pertinent to a focus on values as they frequently migrate between, and inhabit, both domains. It is also particularly relevant at a time when in addition to upheavals in education, there are forces at work in wider society that can not help but influence change-makers within education. These forces include the state of the economy and the wisdom of rebuilding along the ‘business as usual’ model. Public debate on the extent of our ‘broken society’ and its causes, including the role of formal education, is another significant force. Add to these the personal impacts being felt by many in a time of national austerity, and it becomes clear that a lot is being asked of school leaders in very challenging times.

This clarification is not offered as an excuse, but in appreciation of recent research into the anatomy of change and in particular the possible reasons for resistance to, or rejection of, change. A useful and accessible introduction to these ideas is provided by Chip and Dan Heath in their book ‘Switch’ (2010). In this, they usefully blur the boundaries of change as historically separated into professional (change management), personal (self-help), and activist (change the world) spheres. As they go on to explain, this division is a diversion, because

‘all change efforts have something in common: For anything to change, someone has to start acting differently ... to start behaving in a new way’

(Heath & Heath, 2010:4)

This more holistic and complex understanding of change can be challenging, but is also increasingly seen as essential. Key authorities in education, management and leadership now talk not just of power, but equally of love, as vital components of a new professionalism that speaks not just to the environments in which we operate but to the hearts and minds of those we share them with¹⁶. Values play a crucial role in this.

If the moment of change we are living through can utilise a broader appreciation of change and greater understanding of values, then the leadership and professionalism that emerges will allow schools not just to survive, but to thrive. This shift in consciousness, seizing the ‘permission to change’ (Bowden 2012), is the biggest obstacle, but must be overcome for as Munby asserts:

“...this is an era that won’t be defined so much by the policy changes taking place - unprecedented though many of them are - but by what we, as leaders, make of those changes, how we seize the opportunity to redefine our approach...”

(Munby, 2012)

How individual schools choose to redefine their approach and pursue particular opportunities is a local consideration, but it exists within in and relates to broader changes taking place at the national scale. These specific shifts, though widely known to most readers and previously mentioned in this paper, are briefly revisited here in relation to the motives of the present project: values and bigger than self issues.

Curriculum change

The coalition led coalition government that inherited power in May 2010, made a review of current curriculum in England one of their primary targets under education minister Michael Gove. The shape of the new curriculum is at the time of writing (winter 2012/13) still far from certain, though aspects of what is likely from September 2014 are becoming clearer. It is not the place, or intention, of this paper to offer a critique or even narrative of this process and there is no shortage of academic and public comment on this. Present interest is in the potential that the curriculum review may offer to Values Education as a moment of change.

Notes:

16. Warwick and Bowden (2012) have been exploring the nature of the relationship between love and power in school leadership and in particular in relationship to transformational learning. Their dialogue is ongoing with new papers and workshops exploring this tension forthcoming.

Perhaps the greatest potential is in the intent of the new curriculum to be less full than in the past¹⁷. This will mean fewer statutory subjects and greater flexibility for schools to determine a significant proportion of their own curriculum. As the Department for Education states:

'The Government envisages schools and teachers taking greater control over what is taught in schools and how it is taught, using their professional skills and experience to provide the best educational experience for all of their pupils. To bring the curriculum to life, teachers need the space to create lessons that engage their pupils, and children need the time to develop their ability to understand, retain and apply what they have learned.'

(Department for Education, 2011a)

The expert review on the curriculum commissioned by the Department for Education has indicated that where schools should ensure content that is *'motivating and meaningful to pupils'* and that provides *'opportunities for schools to innovate and develop'* (Department for Education, 2011b). These recommendations lend themselves well to Values Education and this connection is further enhanced in the recommendation of particular approaches such as Philosophy for Children (P4C) and Thinking Skills that have strong correlations with values.

The literature on values often identifies them as the *'connectors'* that bind issues and concerns at both a local and global context. As such a more explicit focus on values could prove instrumental in enabling schools to frame their curricula in a way that is locally relevant and meaningful, whilst remaining linked to the knowledge and understanding required in more statutory elements. In many instances, Bigger Than Self issues will provide a rich and expansive context for this learning.

Restructuring of schools

Schools in England are undergoing their biggest restructuring in living memory¹⁸. The move towards Academies, Free Schools and other non-authority controlled structures has caused

Notes:

17. A new 'reduced content' curricula is anticipated in England in Sept 2014 that is expected to give schools and their communities much greater freedoms to determine their own learning.

18. Changes to school governance and structure since the May 2010 elections have given rise to Academies and Free Schools as new models of schooling outside of local authority control. Many of these have been established around a particular value-set, though the degree to which this has been made explicit could be said to be highly variable.

widespread debate, not only on the organisational form of schools, but on the very purpose of education.

Under these conditions, many schools are using the opportunity of change (at times forced change) to rethink their purpose, their connections (to other schools and the community), and their culture and ethos. Values Education and its association with other values-based educations and approaches, offers an established and well-resourced platform for school restructuring. Furthermore, its natural focus on engaging all those within the school and its community can help to rebuild or acquire a sense of cohesion in terms of vision and purpose. In addition there are emerging schools structures such as the growing number of Co-operative Trust Schools that possess natural synergy with a greater focus on values and Bigger Than Self issues¹⁹.

Seizing a moment of change

A 'moment of change' is defined as a point in which established habits of mind encounter a barrier or challenge - a 'habit discontinuity' (Verplanken and Wood, 2006 cited in Thompson et al, 2011). They are normally associated with major change over a relatively short time-frame and so fit well with the change currently being experienced by the education sector in England. Moments of change are significant because they provide an opportunity to break existing habits and establish new ones. The notion of the habit is important in this:

Navigating the world is a complicated business. We are bombarded with information and choices virtually from the moment we wake up to the moment we go to sleep. If we were to attempt to make conscious decisions about every individual action and behaviour we undertook, our cognitive apparatus would be overwhelmed and we would get little done. Of course, as a moments introspection makes obvious, we do not make conscious decisions about every action. Rather, actions that need to be repeated frequently tend to become automatic – that is, guided without need of conscious direction – and can thus be regarded as habitual.

(Thompson et al, 2011)

Notes:

¹⁹ The present project is engaging closely with a variety of co-operative educators in order to explore the particular synergies that may exist between co-operative principles and values, co-operative trust schools, and Values Education. This work has resulted in the joint hosting of a symposium in November 2012 and in an article for the Co-operative news (Wilkins & Bowden 2013). Further work is forthcoming.

The changes taking place in education mean that schools and their leaders can no longer continue with any automatic, habitual behaviour that may have become established. Instead they are forced into a new consciousness about the future of their own and the wider learning environments in which they exist. It is this raised consciousness that has given a new level of alertness (sometimes driven by opportunity, sometimes by panic) to many school leaders and an apparent openness and appetite for new ideas.

It is in this space that Values Education has a real opportunity. An opportunity:

- to demonstrate its connectivity to existing initiatives and work within the school;
- to show its ability to unite learners, staff, leadership and the community around a shared vision for the future;
- to illustrate learning that is relevant and meaningful (as well as enjoyable) for 21st century learners;
- to foster positive learning environments through living values approaches;
- to contribute to higher standards through increased respect for, and enjoyment of learning;
- to explore and develop the skills and attributes required for a more just, sustainable, resilient and humane future;
- to build resilience to change through improved confidence and connections;
- to support a cohesive society in which diversity is celebrated and embraced;
- to collaborate with organisations that provide appropriate stimuli and expertise in Bigger Than Self issues.

Education is slow to change. It has been said that should a time traveller from Victorian times arrive in England today, it is in our schools that they would find greatest familiarity with their own era. This is intentionally flippant, but does raise a truism that education tends to

reproduce itself in its own image. If this is accepted, even in part, then what does it mean in light of the current shifts in education in England which have been said to be greater than any in living memory?

Whatever your personal take on this may be, the changes do seem to suggest that there is presently a moment of change in English education, a moment that will close and coalesce into new habits before long. The challenge is how to use this moment to influence habit formation at a time of heightened consciousness. The prospect of new habits forming around a shared vision of a more just and sustainable future is a significant motivation of the current project. However to simply assert what these new habits might be would ignore the greater goal of understanding habit formation and critically engaging with the values informing the process.

Key Points: A moment for change?

Formal education in England is presently experiencing a period of unprecedented change.

Change can be alienating and disorientating and that is normal.

Change opens up new opportunities and can be liberating and reinvigorating.

Leadership must adapt to the changing times and may have to change itself.

Change is intensely personal and transcends traditional boundaries and that is OK.

Values are often brought to the fore during periods of rapid change.

Values Education fits well with the current changes both as content and process.

The present moment of change has opened a void and an opportunity for Values Education.

Where next?

This paper set out to bring together disparate literatures and motivations in order to build a case for change supporting Values Education. It is a working document intended to evolve as new insights, and the reflections of critical readers, expose fresh arguments and force the revisioning of old ones. It is not an exhaustive review of work in this area and neither does it offer empirical evidence for its arguments. What it does do is provide stimulus for discussion, and it these conversations - about values, about bigger than self issues, about educational change - that are wanted.

Where they will lead is as uncertain as the times we are living in, but the intention is to build upon, test, and qualify the assertions made within this paper through the Leading Through Values Pilot Project. The nine schools involved are already providing intriguing snapshots of potential, but also exposing theoretical and practical challenges. That is if course the point of a pilot project and such dilemmas can only serve to enrich that which will eventually emerge.

The intervention phase of the Pilot Project (the work in schools) is due to be completed in April 2013 with reporting on its findings to follow shortly afterwards. At that point this paper will be revisited and republished in the light of empirical evidence. In the interim, readers interested in following progress in this work can find further papers and related resources through the project website hosted at www.learningthroughvalues.org

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