Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education

The Final Report of theValues in Action Schools Project

October 2010

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An Australian Government Initiative

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Executive summary

Education equips young people with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to take advantage of opportunity and to face the challenges of this [global] era with confidence.

As well as knowledge and skills, a school's legacy to young people should include national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participation in Australia's civic life.

...[students need to develop] personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, respect and empathy for others [which help them] establish and maintain healthy and satisfying lives.

Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008)

Background

It was a powerful and poignant coincidence. On Wednesday 10 December 2008 the teachers, academics, education systems officers and project managers of the Values in Action Schools Project (VASP) met in Melbourne for the first time. They had gathered at their first briefing session to commence work on new values education projects that set out to deepen our understanding of the impacts of values education in Australian schooling. Two days later, on Friday 12 December 2008, the Australian Education Ministers formally released a new national declaration on their aspirations for young Australians for the next decade and beyond.

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008) succeeded the Hobart and Adelaide Declarations on goals of schooling (Australian Education Council 1989; 1999). It focuses on the needs of all young Australians in the 21st century. As well as setting equity and excellence in school education as the number one national goal, the *Melbourne Declaration* emphasises the importance for young Australians to develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others. The Values in Action Schools Project was embarking on an educational journey of national significance, an exploration of potential value to all Australian schools as they worked towards those aspirational goals set out in the *Melbourne Declaration*. This Final Report is an account of what the project has achieved and what it can tell school communities about educating young Australians in the values and attributes needed to establish and maintain healthy and satisfying lives.

The task is not new. The importance of values in developing confident, ethical, resilient and successful learners has underpinned goals for Australian schooling in both implicit and explicit language for many years. However, the role of schooling in the values education of young Australians has been a contentious and contested issue. Since 2002 the Australian Government has made a concerted effort to fund and foster a range of activities to support schools in developing explicit, informed, systematic and effective approaches to values education in all areas of school policy and classroom practice.

The Australian Government's commitment has provided Australian school systems and school communities with the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (DEST 2005); a series of national forums and conferences for

sharing professional expertise; partnership projects with parents, principals and teacher educators; teaching and learning advice; curriculum and professional learning materials; and a strong research base. Collectively these comprise a compelling foundation to support improved school practice and outcomes in this difficult domain of school education.

Introducing the Values in Action Schools Project

The Values in Action Schools Project is a schools-based element of the corpus of values work. The VASP was initiated in 2008 as part of a broader Australian Government values education program, and conducted by Education Services Australia on behalf of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The VASP was designed to supplement and extend the work of the previous two stages of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) funded by the Australian Government following the release of the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* in 2005 (DEST).

Stage 1 of the VEGPSP (conducted between May 2005 and April 2006) and Stage 2 (conducted between October 2006 and April 2008) involved 309 schools working in 51 clusters from around Australia. Clusters were funded to design, implement and report on purpose-built action research projects in values education that applied the *National Framework* in local contexts. The overall project goal was to use the school experiences to discern, articulate and disseminate good practice in values education for all Australian schools.

The then Curriculum Corporation[1] managed Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP, gathered local data from each school cluster and provided final reports to the Australian Government. This data included teacher reflections, student case studies, attendance and critical incident data, and the reflections

of University Advisors attached to each cluster project. The Final Report of Stage 1, *Implementing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (Curriculum Corporation 2006), was able to identify and assert ten 'inferences' about the nature of good practice in effective values education from the activity in the Stage 1 cluster projects. The Stage 2 project clusters tested and extended the findings from Stage 1. The Final Report of Stage 2, *At the Heart of What We Do: Values Education at the Centre of Schooling* (Curriculum Corporation 2008), provided more confident, more refined and more assertive claims that there were ten 'principles of good practice' evident in the work of the Stage 2 project clusters. Again, the data sources informing the findings in the report were largely local data sets, including case studies, teacher reflection on changed teaching practice, and observed changes in student outcomes.

The VASP constitutes the third iteration of the VEGPSP. It builds upon the work previously undertaken by funded project schools since the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* was adopted by all Australian Education Ministers in 2005. This Final Report presents an evaluation of the impact of the VASP on teachers, students and parents.

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[1] Education Services Australia Limited was established on 1 March 2010 through the merger of Curriculum Corporation and Education.au Limited.

The purpose of the Values in Action Schools Project

The core purpose of the VASP was to further develop the evidence base for informing improved school policy and practice in values education.

The project was to build on the work of Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP, and to explore additional evidence of impacts that result from effective values education practice. More specifically, the aims of the project were to:

- explore linkages between values education and student wellbeing, positive education, and other relevant learning areas

- focus on curriculum and student-centred learning approaches to values education

- develop approaches to improving teacher professional learning and increasing parental engagement

- capture and disseminate valuable and practical information from clusters to the broader education community

- collect relevant information, feedback and evidence that is of the highest possible value to the professional learning of teachers in Australian schools.

In October 2008 an invitation and guidelines were sent to all Australian schools inviting them to form clusters (3 to 10 schools) and apply for funding of up to $54,000 to conduct relevant values education projects. After a three-stage evaluation and selection process, 15 cluster projects were nominated for funding from 140 compliant applications. Successful applicants were invited to gather in Melbourne on 10 December 2008 for a briefing session to induct cluster representatives into the project and introduce its methodologies.

Project methods

The VASP built on the previous two school-based values projects in that an ongoing action research cycle drove activity at the local cluster level and cluster reporting was to provide a means of gathering qualitative data about local project outcomes.

However, after reviewing the project methodologies used in Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP, 'story' emerged as a powerful and compelling aspect of the evidence gathering. Cluster Coordinators had reported using 'story' to drive positive change and sustain their values initiatives. In addition, as the values conversation across the nation grew through conferences, the publication of monographs, commissioned quantitative research and expanded professional development activity, it became apparent that data on teachers' perceptions of their role as values educators was both of interest and a key determinant of successful project implementation.

These developments informed a different design for the VASP. In addition to the tools used in Stages 1 and 2, such as iterative cluster project reports, local schools data and University Advisors' reports, the VASP project methodology combined highly structured qualitative and all-of-cluster quantitative methods to identify project impacts.

The key qualitative data-gathering tool applied in all clusters was the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique (Davies & Dart 2005).[2] The MSC technique is a qualitative and participatory research method useful for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of social research and social change projects. It draws on participants' experiences and perceptions to provide narrative testaments of participant-based change experienced in response to an intervention.

MSC is a powerful tool for monitoring, evaluation and organisational learning. The technique goes beyond merely capturing and documenting participants' stories of impact; it offers a means of engaging in effective dialogue. Each story represents the storyteller's interpretation of impact, which is then reviewed and discussed with other participants. The process offers an opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders to enter into a dialogue about program intention, the impact of

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[2] For a comprehensive guide to the Most Significant Change technique, see Davies and Dart (2005).

interventions and, ultimately, future directions. When applied in school contexts with groups of parents, teachers and students, the technique offered the potential to deliver rich and diverse responses and to identify any themes or patterns in the impacts.

The MSC technique was introduced to clusters at the beginning of the project and was administered towards the end of cluster project activity. The project participants generated more than 200 stories of significant change from their values education projects. The stories came from teachers, students and parents. Twelve or more stories from each cluster were recorded and presented back to the cluster as transcripts. Participants at the local level then reviewed, discussed and selected four stories of most significant change from their project. That resulted in 60 stories demonstrating the most significant change. From these 60, another panel process selected a final 14 stories, which were deemed to show the most significant change

of all the project stories. These were then shared at the national Evaluation Summit held for VASP participants in Melbourne, October 2009. Here, mixed groups of participants from the projects read and reflected on each of the stories to make a further final selection of six. These six stories appear in the pages that follow. Because of the primacy of 'story' in assessing the impact of values interventions, this Final Report presents these six stories of most significant change as key impact data. The 'voices' from the entire collection of MSC stories also appear throughout the report and reflect the perceptions of key project stakeholders.

A quantitative data set, comprising teacher perception surveys, captured teachers' perceptions about their role in values education before and after the enactment of values projects. The post-project survey also gave participating teachers the opportunity to reflect on how using values-rich teaching approaches had affected their professional practice.

Finally, as in Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP, each cluster project provided an iterative project report to Education Services Australia, which gave an account of project activity at all sites in the cluster and provided a range of data relating to their projects. These data included student work samples and artefacts, student survey data, attendance and other school environment data, as well as teacher observations and school newsletters. Cluster reports were further supplemented by observation reports from each cluster's University Advisor. All of these data sources were subject to review and analysis and are reflected in the account of project impacts in Section 3 of this report.

Project activity

The VASP constitutes the third and final stage of the VEGPSP. It was conducted between December 2008 and November 2009 and ultimately involved 86 schools working in 15 clusters (of 3 to 10 schools). The schools were located in urban, regional, rural and remote areas across Australia and there were clusters that included a mix of

primary and secondary schools, and intersectoral and intercultural settings. Some of these clusters had participated in Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP and were building further on their previous work in values education; others were initiating values education activity. Most were providing new school contexts in which to explore the impacts of values education implementation.

The role of the clusters was to design, implement, evaluate and report on targeted and directed projects that met local needs. Clusters focused on designated special interest areas such as student wellbeing, resilience and positive education, social inclusion, service learning, improving academic outcomes, civics and citizenship, and Indigenous, interfaith and intercultural approaches. (Full descriptions of the cluster projects are included in Section 4 of this report; see also Appendix 3.)

All clusters were introduced to the good practice approaches to values education identified in Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP, and were encouraged to adopt them in their projects. In particular, VASP clusters were encouraged to consider the ten principles of good practice that emerged from Stages 1 and 2. These are described in *At the Heart of What We Do: Values Education at the Centre of Schooling – The Final Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2*, (Curriculum Corporation 2008). The principles are:

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.

Key impacts from the Values in Action Schools Project

> *VASP has once again confirmed my strong belief that values education, both explicit and implicit, must underpin all we do in our schools.*
> (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

Five key and interrelated impacts of the VASP have been identified from the participatory analysis provided through the Most Significant Change technique and secondary analysis of the other project data. They are:

1. Values consciousness
2. Wellbeing
3. Agency
4. Connectedness
5. Transformation

Elaborations and the evidence relating to each of these impacts can be found in Section 2 of this report.

Impact 1: Values consciousness

An important impact of the values projects on students, teachers and parents was an increased consciousness of the meaning of values and the power of values education to transform learning and life. This heightened awareness presented as a knowing or consciousness that transcends a superficial understanding of values disconnected

from action. Evidence gathered from all clusters indicates that this increased awareness of values and values education was developed through various forms of reflection, dialogue and communication, and personal story.

Across the 15 cluster projects, many teachers were able to think deeply about their teaching and the values they modelled in and outside the classroom, their students' growing awareness of values, and their own values. A new, renewed or affirmed values consciousness was also evident in teacher perceptions after the enactment of values education projects.

The development of students' awareness of values and action was supported through the many entry points they had into values education across the clusters, including youth forums, forums on social issues such as poverty, outreach programs, values summits, values expos, arts-based performances and exhibitions, virtual communication, storytelling, literature studies, and inquiries into Asian religions and human rights. Students reported on how a values consciousness had impacted on their actions. Some enthused about the feelings of self-worth, happiness and wellbeing that came from giving to others.

It is perhaps not surprising then that many of the teachers' reflections on the impact of the VASP focused on students' potential and their capacity to demonstrate the kind of thinking, creativity, ethical and intercultural understanding, and social competence advocated in the design for a 21st century Australian Curriculum by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA 2009, pp 12–14). Teachers spoke of being 'heartened' by the fact that students hold strong values and are interested in exploring these in a range of contexts.

The development of a values consciousness was also enhanced through the many opportunities for dialogue and communication provided across the clusters. In addition to the dialogue that took place between teachers and students in the classroom, communication around values was established between teachers and parents, and parents and

their children. In some schools this was formalised through newsletters, parent and community forums, artistic performances, values homework, philosophical 'chewies' or 'big' questions, surveys and interviews. These forms of communication not only helped to establish a relationship between teachers and parents regarding students' values education, but afforded parents time and opportunity to reflect on their own values.

Personal stories also played a central role in embedding values consciousness in many of the cluster schools and communities. In addition to the MSC stories, through which participants reflected on the outcomes of the values projects, the exchange of personal stories formed an important part of student learning.

Impact 2: Wellbeing

The second impact of the VASP was that values education improved student wellbeing. This is an important outcome, as research has shown that the social and emotional wellbeing of Australian students decreases from primary to secondary school (Bernard, Stephanou & Urbach 2007). International research conducted by UNICEF (2007) has described the 'changing ecology of childhood' (p 39), whereby the lives of young people in developed countries, such as Australia, are shaped by forces that do not necessarily assist them to learn and apply values that optimise their personal lives and the pro-social behaviours important in navigating the complexity of the contemporary, global world (see Fraillon 2005). The sustained improvement in student wellbeing forms part of the Australian Government's Social Inclusion agenda (DEEWR 2010).

A range of evidence supports the impact of values education on improved student wellbeing, most especially the voices of the students themselves. These voices attest to a process of self-discovery and recall the important relationship between values and wellbeing described by Hill (2004, p 18). He asserts that all human beings are driven to make sense of social reality, and so attention must be paid to the goals and values that give meaning to their

lives and reasons for them to participate fully in life. Many VASP clusters reported on improvements in student wellbeing as a result of their action projects, identifying student wellbeing as an area of strategic importance in the future.

The evidence indicates that student wellbeing was enhanced through the application of values-focused and student-centred pedagogies, which allowed students to reflect deeply on the nature of values and what these mean to them and others. Examples from the clusters of these pedagogies include activities such as silent sitting, reflective writing, multimedia production, drama performance and poetry writing. Through these activities, teachers provided a values framework to support wellbeing (see Hill 2004) and raised students' awareness of the importance of values in their own and others' lives. In thinking about, acting on and feeling values, students developed feelings of self-worth, empathy, responsible personal behaviour and engagement.

The process of self-discovery and self-knowing is important to all students, but findings from the VASP suggest that this is especially the case for students who are 'at risk', marginalised or disadvantaged.

There is also evidence that shows changes in students' understanding of the impact of their actions on the wellbeing of others. This evidence supports other research that suggests that to understand student social and emotional wellbeing it is important for others to understand their internal world (Bernard, Stephanou & Urbach 2007; see Fraillon 2005). The mutuality of this understanding is reflected in this comment: 'The project allowed everyone [students and teachers] to look inside themselves and really work out what they value, who they are' (Teacher reflection, University Advisor's report, Beenleigh Cluster).

While primarily focused on the wellbeing of students, there is compelling evidence in the VASP that wellbeing impacts were experienced by teachers, parents and families, and in classroom and whole school environments.

Impact 3: Agency

An important impact of the VASP on students, as facilitated by teachers and supported by parents, was the development of various forms of agency. Agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make choices and act on them. In this way the outcomes of the VASP align with the Educational Goals for Young Australians, outlined in the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA 2008), which aim for schools and communities to assist students to become active and informed citizens; to play an active role in their own learning; to participate in Australian civic life and work for the common good; and to become responsible local and global citizens.

The evidence of strengthened student agency in the outcomes of the VASP also resonates with Sandel's (2009) view that values are learnt and acted upon in communities for the 'common good', whereby moral and ethical integrity help to develop social cohesion and solidarity. Working for the common good involves students in what Noddings (1992) describes as an 'ethics of care', often developed through engagement with complex global issues (see Noddings 2006). This outcome of the VASP highlights the importance of values education programs involving various forms of giving, outreach, community development and service learning.

Evidence from the VASP indicates that student agency was facilitated through meaningful engagement in community projects; opportunities for the development of student voice, initiative and leadership; and an explicit focus on ethical, intercultural and social issues.

Across the clusters, many students were engaged in authentic community projects that allowed them to enact their values and to reflect on the different ways they may have contributed to the 'common good'. Examples of this include service learning and outreach projects, incorporating voluntary community work such as 'meals on wheels'; hospitality programs; leadership and mentoring programs; fundraising projects and aid projects such as 'Mini Vinnies'; random acts of kindness activities; and community promotion projects.

These projects complement the comprehensive review of service and community learning provided by Lovat et al (2009a, pp 32–38) in that each project involved students in experiences that aimed to benefit members of the wider community beyond the classroom and involved students in structured reflection on their experience and learning.

This real-life experiential learning, which connects students' actions, thoughts and feelings (after Dewey 1963), appeared to generate a deep understanding of 'self and other', and so builds upon Stage 2 of the VEGPSP, where findings demonstrated the significant values learning for students in projects that are 'deeply personal, deeply real and deeply engaging' (Curriculum Corporation 2008, p 40).

Evidence of the impact of the VASP on student agency was also found in reflective comments from teachers. Across the clusters, this perception of an increased student agency was raised in the context of teachers designing real-life experiences that facilitated student agency. As a result of their participation in the VASP, teachers had a deeper understanding of the significance of values learning in contexts that are meaningful to students. Teachers spoke about developing more positive and open relationships with students, which allowed them to more effectively 'notice' students and what they do.

This finding echoes other research that asserts that student agency is supported through a teacher agency developed and enhanced through professional learning programs such as the VASP (see Deakin Crick et al 2005). In recognising the significance of connecting values education to students' lives, it is important for teachers to reflect on how best the whole school community can facilitate this kind of learning. The findings relate to the case studies of student agency reported in the VEGPSP Stage 2 report (Curriculum Corporation 2008) and confirm that students need to feel safe and supported in their values learning, not least because of the emotional learning experiences they encounter.

Impact 4: Connectedness

The impact of the VASP on positive and wide-ranging connections made between teachers, students and parents extends the findings of Stage 2 of the VEGPSP and identifies a clear and positive direction for schools. The relationships forged between students, teachers and parents in many of the clusters supported student engagement in learning; improved parent engagement in their children's learning; and allowed teachers to develop new relationships with their students, each other and the parents and families in their school community.

This impact of the VASP illustrates Wenger's (1998, 2006) concept of communities of practice. Wenger views communities of practice as groups of people who share a concern and passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. The elements of a community of practice include:

- shared domains of interest (in this case, values in action)
- community, whereby members build relationships and learn from each other (students, teachers and parents)
- practice, where members of the community share experiences and stories (eg MSC stories, wiki posts, online forums)
- resources (eg assessment rubrics, community events and displays, values-based language)
- tools (eg web links, forums, surveys, newsletters).

Evidence from the VASP indicates that better connections between students, teachers and parents were developed through shared goals and practices for values education; the development of mutual feelings of respect, trust and safety; and varied opportunities for collaboration.

Many clusters reported on the power of the partnerships that were developed through the VASP and the impetus for values education derived from goals and practices shared between the school and the home. Examples of these collaborative partnerships between schools and families include parent and community forums, storytelling by

elders in the community, collaborative assessment tasks, surveys, interviews, community displays, celebration evenings and web links.

In light of efforts to build connections across the school and wider community, some reports attest to parents being 'grateful' for the opportunity to support their child in values-based work at home, or speak of the 'huge enthusiasm and desire' of parents to be involved at a deeper level in their child's values education with the school (Teacher reflections, post-project survey).

The communities of practice (Wenger 1998, 2006) established around the VASP facilitated mutual feelings of respect, trust, compassion and safety. There were many reports of improved and stronger relationships between teachers, students and parents. These groups spoke of improved relationships in the classroom, school and home; noticeable improvements in respectful behaviours; opportunities to share thoughts and feelings in environments that were safe and built on trust; greater understanding of others; and the support that comes for values education when everyone works together.

It is worth noting that the nature of the relationships established between members of the different communities of practice through the VASP, as revealed in both qualitative and quantitative data, both confirm and contrast with the findings of Lovat et al (2009b) in their report to the Australian Government on the impact of values education on student effects and school ambience. The connections built through many of the VASP projects exemplify the quality outcomes for students, teachers and parents that arise from community engagement. This is particularly the case for the relationships established between teachers and parents.

Impact 5: Transformation

Change and transformation was the heart of the VASP in that all clusters implemented their values projects using an action research cycle, and were encouraged to apply the principles of good practice

in values education (Curriculum Corporation 2008). Teachers and students were urged to engage in continuous reflection on the action they implemented in their schools (Schön 1983).

This systematic reflection on the actions taken by various stakeholders was incorporated into the VASP through the MSC stories and the Evaluation Summit; the briefing sessions; pre- and post-project surveys; mid-project and final reports on the VASP; and the analysis of different forms of evidence to illustrate impacts. It is worth emphasising the unique contribution the VASP makes to reflective practice in values education, both through these reflection activities and the inclusion of the reflections of parents and students in the evaluation of project impacts.

Evidence indicates that these transformations were supported through the momentum and opportunities for change provided through the values projects. The transformations reported by clusters centred around changes in the professional practice as well as personal attitudes, behaviours, relationships and group dynamics. Transformations were experienced and observed by teachers, students and parents alike.

There is widespread evidence across all the data sources of the 'ripple effect' of the values projects and the momentum created for widespread professional and personal change. In particular, the MSC stories and the reflective comments included with the post-project survey provide valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of this change.

Reflections from teachers point 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'.

Students and parents likewise told stories of personal change and shared their observations of noticeable changes in others. One student described

how the class had 'evolved' and said that values have 'helped us become more mature, adjusted kids and it's a great thing to have in your older life and it will help you make friends with people and get along' (Student MSC story, Tasmanian Values Cluster).

The findings described here in relation to the impact of transformation resonate with Fullan's (1999) argument that reform in schools must fundamentally involve making a difference to the lives of young people. Within his comprehensive research and scholarship on change in schools and systems, Fullan (2001) asks educators to reflect on what would happen if (teachers) valued students' opinions and what would happen if schools involved the parent community in students' learning. The VASP has shown that profound professional and personal transformation can result when these questions are addressed and that all stakeholders in values education may, as Fullan urges, find meaning in action and change.

Conclusion

The impacts identified in the Values in Action Schools Project attest to how a systematic and planned approach to values education can improve students' engagement with schooling and promote better learning outcomes, and enhance their social and emotional wellbeing. In addition, the VASP demonstrates, through the voices of the participants themselves, how values education can transform classrooms, relationships, school environments, teacher professional practice and parents' engagement in their children's schooling.

These are significant outcomes for all Australian schools. Together with Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project, the VASP has made a major contribution to our understanding of what good values education is, how it can be implemented and what sorts of difference it can make for students, teachers and whole school communities. The VASP has effectively built on the previous VEGPSP work and added in a unique way to the compelling body of evidence about the impacts of values education. The evidence

has come directly from the voices of the hundreds of VASP project participants in the 15 clusters. These voices, together with the voices from the other 166 schools of Stage 1 and the 143 schools from Stage 2, form a chorus of testimony to the fact that values education, when given the time, focus and application of the good practice principles identified in VEGPSP, can yield profound outcomes for school communities.

This Final Report on the Values in Action Schools Project attempts to capture the essence of what the 15 project clusters have achieved. By its nature, the report cannot do justice to all the rich work that has taken place. Nor does it pretend that the outcomes have been uniform across the diverse school and cluster contexts. The report acknowledges the many tribulations, frustrations, false starts, disappointments and uncertainties that a number of projects experienced. While not all clusters succeeded to the extent they may have wanted in the short time available for their projects, it is equally true to note that all clusters attest to a significant learning about values education that will be of continuing benefit to their communities.

On behalf of the wider Australian education community, the VASP project managers wish to acknowledge the efforts of the hundreds of teachers, principals, students and parents as well as the numerous academics and education system officers who have contributed to the VASP work and the outcomes described in this report. We thank them for their work, their generous sharing, their insights and their many different contributions that have extended our knowledge and understanding of how values education can impact on the schooling experience.

The VASP provides all Australian schools and the entire education community with additional insights and more evidence of how values education can contribute to the whole purpose of schooling and how it so well serves the goals for schooling as expressed in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008).

Impacts of Values Education

- Wellbeing
- Transformation
- Connectedness
- Values consciousness
- Agency

I learned how to trust people, not be scared. I believe in myself now.

The values work has asked me to take a risk in my teaching and I have loved it.

I feel like I've made a paradigm shift in my teaching in the sense that I didn't always deliberately include parents in my program.

It was about awareness and articulation of my own personal values. It was about helping other students to do the same.

I think this values work has made me think more before I act at home and school.

Use a shared values language
Embed student-centred and values focused pedagogies
Promote values as an integrated curriculum concept
Teach values explicitly
Model values
Create opportunities for increased student agency
Foster intercultural understanding, social cohesion and inclusion
Continue professional learning and collaboration
Encourage teacher risk taking
Collect data for continuous improvement
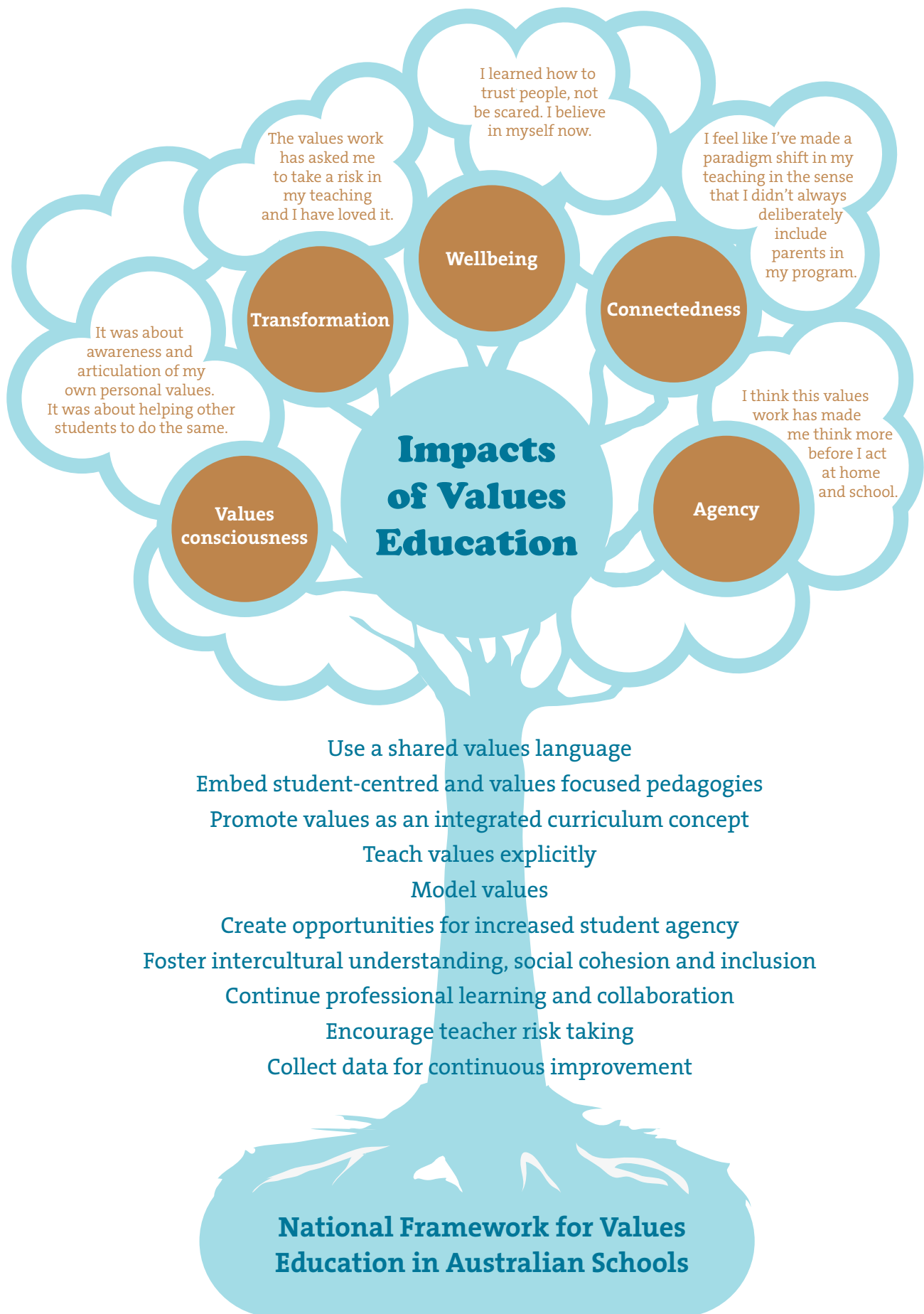
National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools

Figure 1: Growth and impacts of the Australian values education initiative 2005–2009

Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project

Looking for the impacts of values education

Looking for the impacts of values education

Background

The Values in Action Schools Project (VASP) was commissioned by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to build on the work and the outcomes of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) Stages 1 (2005–06) and 2 (2006–08).

Stage 1 of the VEGPSP provided opportunities for schools to conduct local values education projects that would demonstrate how the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (DEST 2005) might be implemented in school practice. The Final Report – *Implementing the National Framework for Values Education: Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project in Australian Schools* (Curriculum Corporation 2006) – described and analysed the work of the 26 school clusters and their 166 schools, and identified a set of 'inferences' about good practice values education, which were recommended to all Australian schools.

The Stage 2 project invited Australian schools to participate in a second round of funded values education projects in an additional range of school contexts to more precisely identify 'good practice' in values education. In particular, the 25 Stage 2 clusters (involving 143 schools) were selected to focus on integrating values education across all key learning areas and to address values education in intercultural and global contexts. A number of the Stage 1 clusters were invited to extend their work in Stage 2 in order to observe the outcomes of longer-term values education work. In managing Stage 2, the then Curriculum Corporation[3] revised the action research model and the evidence-gathering methods to deepen the understanding of and the evidence for the claims of good practice in this complex domain of school education.

Stage 1 clusters effectively only had an eight-month project timeframe. The Stage 2 project was conducted over a longer twenty-month duration in 2006–08. The resulting Final Report on Stage 2 of the VEGPSP, *At the Heart of What We Do: Values Education at the Centre of Schooling*, published in August 2008 (Curriculum Corporation), largely supported the findings of Stage 1 but was able to more confidently and more precisely describe and recommend to Australian schools ten 'principles of good practice' in values education. The report no longer referred to inferences but asserted principles, 'in recognition of the fact that the Stage 2 cluster experiences have added new insights and understandings about these good practices' (p 9). This progression of insight and understanding came from the additional weight of evidence gathered from the added range of school experiences, the longer-term experience of some clusters and the use of different types of qualitative data gathering, such as teacher case writing.

Although the 51 clusters and the 309 schools in Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP produced many engaging accounts of different approaches to implementing values education in a more 'planned and systematic way', as promoted by the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (DEST 2005, p 3), DEEWR wanted to take the work 'one step further'. With the ten principles of good practice in hand, DEEWR wanted to fund another round of values education schools projects to explore more deeply the evidence of impacts in schools where 'values are in action' throughout school activity. In particular, DEEWR wanted to examine the connections between values education and impacts on student wellbeing, on student-centred learning, on curriculum, on teacher professional practice and on increasing parental engagement. This new work was to build on the previous projects but, in addition, was to collect relevant information and evidence 'of the highest possible value to the professional

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[3] Education Services Australia Limited was established on 1 March 2010 through the merger of Curriculum Corporation and Education.au Limited.

learning of teachers in Australian schools'. Guided by this brief, the VASP was initiated to take the national values education agenda one step further.

In October 2008 Curriculum Corporation, on behalf of DEEWR, invited all Australian schools to apply (in clusters of 3 to 10 schools) for funding to conduct their VASP cluster projects. Initially 14 clusters were selected, according to a set of VASP selection criteria and the quality of cluster applications. The selected clusters included schools from rural, remote and metropolitan areas, and their project proposals presented the best fit for the VASP objectives and special areas of interest. The cluster projects were to run from December 2008 until the end of October 2009, approximately eight months of effective school implementation time.

Table 1: Values in Action Schools Project clusters

Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster	ACT, NSW, Qld, SA, Tas 10 centres	Engaging the Disengaged
Beenleigh Believe, Achieve, Succeed Cluster	Qld 4 schools	Out of Apathy
Catholic Schools of the Clarence	NSW 10 schools	Resilience, Wellbeing and Learning
Cross Border Values Community	NT, SA, Tas, WA 6 schools	Values through ICT and Philosophy
Far North Queensland Cluster	Qld 3 schools	Living Values, Living Relationships
Flinders Park–Whyalla Link Values Cluster	SA 3 schools	Transitions: Values-based Approaches
Greater Brisbane Schools – Values Education through Service Learning	Qld 10 schools	Embedding Values Education through Service Learning
Lanyon Cluster of Schools	ACT 5 schools	Values Investigators: Teachers and Students Researching Values Together
Maroondah Education Coalition	Vic 3 schools	Youth Voice: Fostering Inclusiveness, Respect and Tolerance
Melbourne Eastern Regions Values Cluster	Vic 8 schools	Improving Teacher Practice through Values Education
Palmerston Values Cluster	NT 4 schools	Living and Growing Our Values
Reporting Values Cluster	WA 3 schools	Values in Action: Building Resilience and Inclusion
Skoolaborate Cluster	NSW, Qld, Vic 5 schools	The Values Exchange
Southern Highlands Schools of NSW	NSW 7 schools	Learning and Acting for Poverty
Tasmanian Values Cluster	Tas 4 schools	Connecting Communities

On the matter of method

In common with the VEGPSP projects, the VASP methodology included:

- the action research model to guide cluster projects
- engagement and attachment of teacher-educator University Advisors to support each cluster
- guidelines, templates and face-to-face briefing sessions to support cluster projects
- collaborative support to clusters from jurisdictional, Catholic education and independent schools sector officers
- a scheduled project reporting regime.

In addition to these common building blocks, the VASP methodology was augmented by several new approaches, designed to gather more evidence about the impacts of effective values education practice:

- Quantitative data sets – Pre- and post-project teacher perception surveys were conducted across all 15 clusters to capture teachers' perceptions about their role in values education before and after the enactment of values projects.
- Collection of a broad range of 'artefacts' from the cluster work – Each cluster project gathered a range of data relating to their specific projects, which included student work samples and artefacts, student survey data, school newsletters, units of work, attendance and other school environment data, as well as teacher and parent observations.
- The use of the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique of gathering project participant accounts of change.

The action research process of the VASP

The VASP involved participants in an ongoing action research cycle marked by four phases: reflect, design/plan, act and evaluate/observe. This reflexive cycle is illustrated in Figure 2.
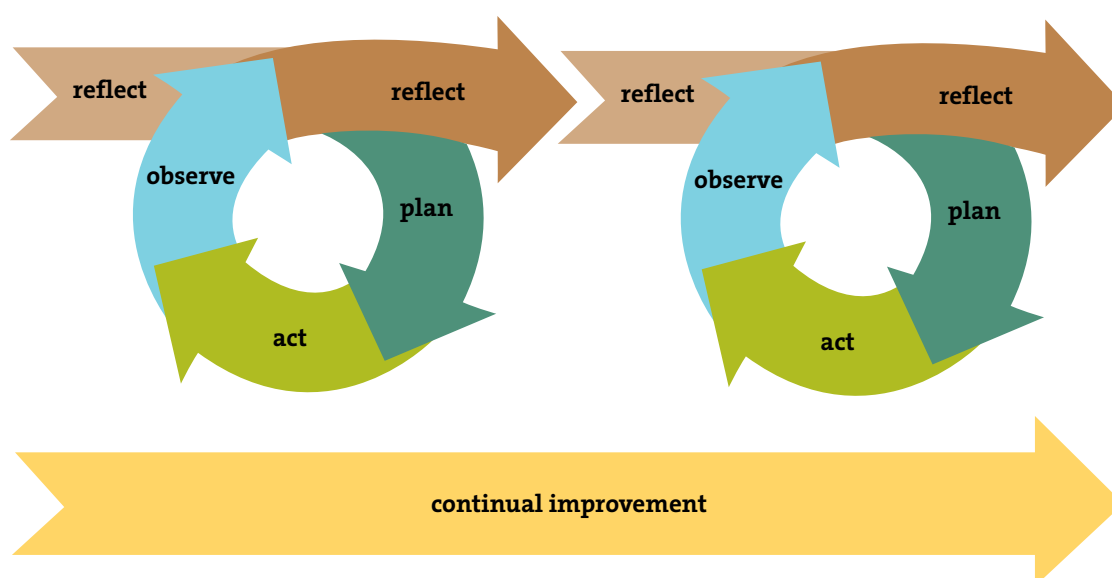

Figure 2: The action research cycle, based on Kemmis & McTaggart 1988; Schmuck 1998

Reflection on good practice in values education

During this phase, schools and clusters of schools articulated their project intentions and engaged specific teachers and cohorts of students. Cluster Coordinators were also encouraged to involve parents in these conversations. The phase included:

- schools reflecting on values approaches and good practices in values education appropriate to the needs of their students and communities
- the formation of clusters of schools around a specific values project
- the design of an initial plan of implementation for this project
- the completion by teachers and school-based participants of a pre-project online survey (see below and Appendix 6) about their perceptions of values education.

Design of the VASP projects

This planning phase brought together all project stakeholders: Curriculum Corporation Project Managers, Cluster Coordinators, Deputy Coordinators, University Advisors and State and Territory Values Education Contact Officers. Project plans were developed, reviewed and refined, and additional support was provided as schools began their work. This community of practice encouraged cluster leadership teams to see their work within a bigger frame, and share and seek advice from a variety of places. The phase included:

- identifying and engaging University Advisors from teacher education faculties to support the VASP clusters

- a briefing session for all stakeholders, outlining the nature and scope of the VASP, hosted by Curriculum Corporation and held in Melbourne, December 2008
- a collaborative process of project design, using email and teleconferencing
- face-to-face meetings among stakeholders
- establishing VASP pages on the *Values Education for Australian Schooling* website (www.valueseducation.edu.au/values), which included supports for clusters in the form of a discussion forum, resources and links, notes from briefing sessions, cluster project overviews and the *Values in Action* newsletter.

Enacting the VASP projects

Many opportunities for collegiate sharing among Cluster Coordinators, Deputy Coordinators, University Advisors and Values Education Contact Officers were provided during this implementation phase of the project. All VASP Cluster Coordinators attended a national conference, which focused on national and international trends in values education. The phase included:

- ongoing meetings and continuous communication between all stakeholders to reflect on the implementation of the values projects
- a VASP briefing session, held in Canberra in April 2009, for the purpose of reflecting on the initial stages of each cluster's project
- participation by all stakeholders in the National Values Education Conference in Canberra, April 2009
- site visits by Curriculum Corporation Project Managers to observe the values projects in action and to provide advice and support
- the completion by each cluster of a mid-project report to Curriculum Corporation about initial impacts and outcomes of their VASP cluster project.

Evaluation of VASP projects

This phase focused on collecting and consolidating project evaluation data. This included:

- reports from Cluster Coordinators on their project activities and outcomes in two iterative reports with their final report being submitted to Curriculum Corporation at the end of October 2009

- submissions by clusters of key project artefacts, including such items as any locally based data, samples of units, surveys, teacher journals, student work samples and newsletters

- completion by teachers and school-based participants of a post-project online survey (see below and Appendix 6) about their perceptions of values education

- observational and reflection reports from cluster University Advisors

- the collection of MSC stories from cohorts in each cluster.

The collection of significant changes stories provided very direct participant input about the outcomes of the cluster projects. Stories of change were collected from cohorts of parents, teachers and students. This story collection was notable because the perspectives of these three cohorts revealed the high level of importance each group ascribed to the values education approaches being enacted in classrooms and beyond. Parents' responses were particularly powerful, as they felt they were involved in a mainstream curriculum discussion. This part of the evaluation phase included:

- collection and interpretation of stories of change in each cluster using the MSC technique

- selection of stories by each cluster representing the most significant change in terms of their particular project

- participation of students, parents and teachers from each cluster; Cluster Coordinators; Deputy Coordinators; University Advisors; State and Territory Values Education Contact Officers; and personnel from Curriculum Corporation and DEEWR at the VASP Evaluation Summit in Melbourne, October 2009

- identification by these participants of the key themes in the stories of change

- selection by these key participants of those stories that represent the most significant change in relation to values education approaches and practice.

Most Significant Change technique

The Most Significant Change technique (Davies & Dart 2005)[4] is a qualitative research method useful for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of social research and action projects such as the VASP. The MSC technique engages all participants in purposeful reflection on a project, in developing a shared understanding of its outcomes, and in presenting information about its impact. The technique can be further used to improve future planning and design, as well as build staff capacity to implement ongoing change.

The decision to use the MSC technique arose from what was learnt about the nature of 'evidence' about values education in Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP. In a review of the outcomes of the project methodologies of those two previous projects, 'story' emerged as a powerful aspect of the 'evidence' gathering. In particular, teachers' stories, as expressed in the Stage 2 case writing, provided some of the most compelling evidence of changed teacher practice. And, as the values conversation across the nation grew – through conferences, monographs, commissioned quantitative research and expanded professional development activity – it became clear that data on teachers' perceptions about their role as values educators was both of interest and a key determinant of successful project implementation.

The MSC technique goes beyond merely capturing and documenting participants' stories of impact, to offering a means of engaging in effective dialogue. Designed to complement other forms of data gathering, the MSC technique focuses on the collection of stories of change, the discussion and

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4   For a comprehensive guide to the Most Significant Change technique, see Davies and Dart (2005).

selection of the most significant stories from this collection, and an explanation of why these stories are significant to the action that has been taken. This view sees stories as a form of inductive data because stories provide an authentic context for sharing and discussing experience. People naturally tell stories; they remember stories; and they can sometimes relay difficult messages through the story form. And when applied in school contexts with groups of parents, teachers and students, the technique delivered rich and diverse responses.

The MSC technique was introduced to clusters at the beginning of the project and was administered towards the end of cluster project activity. The project participants – teachers, students and parents – generated more than 200 stories of significant change from their values education projects. After an extended process of discussion and selection, both at the local cluster level and finally at the Evaluation Summit, participants selected six stories that they thought represented the most significant change from the VASP cluster projects.

This selection of the MSC stories is important for several reasons. It aids dialogue between participants on a deep level, focuses their attention on what they wanted to and tried to achieve in the project, and helps them to clarify what they value in relation to these objectives. In the process of selecting the most significant changes, participants identify domains of change: first at an individual level and community level; then in terms of unexpected forms of change; and last the lessons learned from the project. This process of reaching consensus highlights the many facets of the project and its impact on different participants, and forms the basis of wider communication and feedback on the project outcomes.

ACTIVITY		PURPOSE
Submission of project design and project plans	**STAGE ONE: Scoping the project design** (School clusters in collaboration with Curriculum Corporation)	Ensure that projects align with objectives and principles Basic understanding of context for VASP research
Research of the VASP • pre and post surveys • Most Significant Change (MSC) story collection • observational data Participatory action research • School-based data collection	**STAGE TWO: Data collection** (Curriculum Corporation Research of the VASP Schools/clusters – Participatory action research)	Document evidence of outcomes
MSC selection process held in each cluster	**STAGE THREE: Reflection, interpretation, rethinking, revising** (School clusters)	Expand understanding of impact of projects Expand understanding of intention of the projects Explore ways to enhance the effectiveness of the projects
Evaluation Summit • overview of VASP findings • presentation from each cluster on project and achievements • selection of stories from across all participating clusters	**STAGE FOUR: Evaluation, reflection** (Curriculum Corporation, Cluster representatives, University Advisors, State and Territory officers)	Consider usefulness of findings in meeting objectives of VASP Make judgements about the impact of the VASP

Figure 3: Applying an action research cycle to the Values in Action Schools Project

Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project

The process of collecting and selecting stories of change

Curriculum Corporation engaged Ms Tracey Delaney, an experienced MSC facilitator, to assist with the design of the MSC process for the VASP. Ms Delaney also led the MSC story selection activity at the Evaluation Summit.

Clusters were advised to convene a meeting at which teachers, students and parents would tell their stories of change. All participants received a brief overview of the MSC technique, which they then rehearsed by sharing in groups a recent important event they had experienced. Groups then selected their most interesting story.[5] After this rehearsal, participants considered the following questions:

- Looking back over the past eight months, what do you think was the most significant change to emerge as a result of your involvement with the values project?
- Why is this significant for you/your community?

Curriculum Corporation Project Managers recorded these stories on a digital audio recorder. The University Advisors, Values Education Contact Officers, other Curriculum Corporation personnel, and the VASP academic consultant and researcher, Dr Julie Hamston, assisted in this process at a number of the clusters.

The VASP Website Manager organised transcripts for all the stories (more than 200) on the digital audio file and sent these to the 15 clusters. From these transcripts, each group selected four stories from their cluster that demonstrated the most significant change.[6] These 60 'most significant stories' were returned to Curriculum Corporation.

At a further selection meeting at Curriculum Corporation a panel consisting of Project Managers and Dr Hamston selected 14 stories for presentation at the Evaluation Summit (from the 60)[7] that they

believed represented the most significant change to emerge from the VASP.

At the Evaluation Summit facilitated by Ms Tracey Delaney, participants representing each cluster were asked to: share their cluster activities through a poster presentation; join members of other clusters in selecting MSC stories; and discuss with members of other clusters future actions they would like to take around values education in their cluster/schools.

For the particular purpose of choosing the final six MSC stories, participants took part in a negotiated selection process. This was facilitated by Ms Tracey Delaney and involved the following procedure:

- One person to read aloud Story 1.
- After listening to the story, participants discuss the key points and main outcomes of the story, noting these on 'sticky notes'.
- Repeat for all stories.
- As individuals, think about which story you consider to be the most significant and why.
- Share your choice and reasons with the group.
- Try to reach a consensus in your group about the story you feel to be most significant.
- Be prepared to feed back your selection and reasons to the whole group.

The final six stories selected as representing the most significant change to have occurred from the VASP are included in the pages that follow. The remaining eight stories from this selection process are also included.

Because of the primacy of 'story' in assessing the impact of values interventions, this final report presents these stories of most significant change as key impact data, prior to any secondary analysis. The 'voices' from MSC stories also appear throughout the report and reflect the perceptions of key project stakeholders.

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5   In most clusters, the MSC process took place with the student cohort separate from the teacher and parent cohorts. It was thought that students would be less inhibited about sharing their stories if they were away from adults.

6   Curriculum Corporation requested that the story mix include one parent story, one teacher story, one student story and one other story.

7   Note that 14 stories were selected in total because the Flinders–Whyalla Cluster did not participate in the Evaluation Summit.

The participatory and reflective nature of the VASP is represented in Figure 3 and shows how an action research cycle has been integrated into the design of the project.

Teacher perception online surveys

The VASP used two sets of online survey data: a pre-project teacher perception survey and a post-project teacher perception survey. These surveys were designed to determine the perceptions of teachers about aspects of values education before and after enacting various values education approaches as part of the VASP, and to collect reflective comments at the conclusion of the VASP. Quantitative data from both surveys were generated into various formats and qualitative reflective comments were collated.

The pre-project survey was administered in March 2009 using an online survey instrument, SurveyMonkey™, and 312 completed responses were received. Participants were asked the following questions about their perceptions of aspects of values education:

- What role does the teacher play in values education?
- How is values education addressed in your school community?
- What is the nature and purpose of values education in schooling?
- How do students in your school act on their values?

The post-project survey was completed in October 2009 and 224 completed responses were received.[8] This survey repeated the same four questions asked in the pre-project survey, and added a fifth:

- Through your participation in the Values in Action Schools Project, have any of your perceptions about values education been confirmed or challenged?

Other data

The teacher perception surveys were informed by the ten principles of good practice reported in the VEGPSP Stage 2 report (Curriculum Corporation 2008).

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8   The total number of potential responses exceeded 600.

Most Significant Change stories

At the Evaluation Summit held in Melbourne on 16 October 2009, project stakeholders, working in 15 groups, read aloud all 14 stories of significant change. Each group was then asked to reach a consensus about which story represented the most significant change due to values interventions. A second task required each group to articulate why they selected a particular story and record these reasons for selection.

What follows are these final 14 stories of most significant change: first the final six stories and the reasons for their selection, followed by the other eight stories from the pool of 14.[9]

Story 1: Student story

As everyone from my school, and Mrs Walker, know, the past 12 months I've gone through a lot of stuff in my own life. And it got to the point where I wasn't myself anymore and I was finding it really hard to acknowledge people and just kind of didn't want to talk to many people. And the values project helped me realise that I can't go through life being like that, and I have to let things go. And it helped me realise that it does help to talk to other people and you don't have to do things by yourself; people are there. And like, some of the activities we did helped me find who I was as a person again and realise that I can go on with my life...and start fresh.

And working with the primary schools made me realise that they're exactly how I was, not a care in the world and just like, they are so bright, and smart, and a lot of them know exactly what they want out of life already. And it's just like amazing to see such young people wanting to have a go in our community and help.

And like with the teachers that worked in my group with my school, I don't just see them as teachers anymore, they are like friends. Everyone in my group sort of bonded and it's just really good because I made new friends and met new people and yeah.

Reasons for selection

This story was selected by four groups of participants.

- It is a powerful story of personal transformation.
- It showed how the development of trust allowed the development of relationships.
- This development resulted from self-reflection.
- The project allowed the student to take on a leadership role.

- The student acted on the following values: optimism, compassion, respect, self-respect, trust and courage.
- It showed how the student had internalised the values learning.
- It also highlighted the whole school development of relationships.

9   Participants' names and cluster/school identifiers have been changed in all the following stories.

Story 2: Teacher story

I think the most significant change that I've become aware of was that the students seem a lot calmer, they seem a lot happier to be in class. Being involved in the project has improved relationships between the staff and the students. And part of that has been that the kids are much less self-centred than when they first started in the project.

When we started talking about the values in an explicit sense, and getting an understanding of what the values meant, I noticed that there was even a bit of self-centredness in their understanding of the values. Like the value of 'respect' for example, was about people having respect for me. 'Freedom' was about my freedom, and 'fair go' was about other people giving me a fair go. But because we had the focus on giving, it gave the kids the opportunity to make that shift.

In a woodwork class for example, when kids were halfway through doing a job and got released, if the teacher would say 'Well come on guys, how about we finish this guy's job so it can be sent up to Property and sent on to him', and the kids would go, 'No, stuff him. We're not going to finish his job. We're doing our own job.' But through the weeks of the project he noticed that the kids were very willing to finish off another kid's job so that it could be sent on to him. There was a shift away from 'what's in it for me?', to them having a healthy respect for other individuals and a definite understanding of how giving can be quite altruistic.

And one student in particular, I've seen enormous changes in him. He's been involved in a whole lot of different activities to do with giving, on the sporting field, in hospitality, in woodwork, and just in his core curriculum. And probably the culminating event for him in my observation was an essay that he wrote that wasn't actually anything to do with values. He was writing on my local hero, and, sorry, and he wrote it about his mum as his local hero, and even though this lesson had absolutely nothing to do with values, when you read his essay, as rough and ready as it is, it's just dripping with all the values of respect and caring, compassion and all of that sort of stuff. So I think that that was probably the most significant change that I noticed out of the project.

Reasons for selection

This story was selected by four groups of participants.

- We chose this story because it focuses on inclusion and diversity as basic tenets of values.
- There is real change in this example – transformation of thinking in the community and the classroom and outside the VASP in other areas.
- It highlights the language of values and the development of shared values.
- It shows how a positive environment and a move towards others brings hope and support for students.
- There is a connection between Heads, Hearts, and Hands in this story.
- The VASP is about giving hope to students.

Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project

My most significant change is one that's occurred I think in all the children in my class, but I think most significantly in two students. Jack, at the beginning of the year, was unable to read and write, but also couldn't name other students in the class. He could only name himself and his best friend. And that for me indicated that he didn't really have relationships at school, and didn't really see school as a place where you built relationships and [he] was therefore disconnected from the class and also disconnected from school in general.

Jack has not only improved his literacy skills, but he now values each member of our class. We wrote put-ups, compliments for each of the students in our class. Each student wrote one for everybody, and I suggested, given his literacy skills, that he wrote the same one for everybody. And he insisted that he would write a different one for everybody because, you know, each person was different and deserved their own put-up. So even though it was painfully slow, he wrote one sentence for every student in the class. Which was perfect, because our value was tolerance, so it was all about valuing differences within our classroom.

And then the cycle was complete, because in circle time afterwards, a student turned to Jack and said – I can't remember her exact words – but basically she said 'Thank you Jack, for writing me my own sentence. I know it's hard for you to write, and it means a lot to me that you wrote a sentence for me'. So not only is Jack appreciating and valuing other students in the class, they are, in turn, appreciating and valuing him and his differences, his struggles, and the fact that he's really given something to them.

Reasons for selection

This story was selected by four groups of participants.

- It shows how values give meaning to actions.
- The story was evocative and emotive.
- The experience was life changing for all involved.
- The story demonstrated the academic and social benefits of values education.
- It highlighted the positive outcomes for the student in terms of his emotional, social and intellectual development.
- It changed the focus of the student's life – it was a significant critical incident.
- We all know a student like Jack.
- It highlights the whole class functioning better through inclusive practice and behaviours.
- The students felt comfortable and safe to be themselves.
- The project had a significant impact on one student due to whole class changed behaviours.
- There was transference of learned values into action.
- There were improved relationships, with students knowing about each other.
- It showed students valuing each other's differences – emerging from inclusive and tolerant behaviours.
- It also showed the academic impact of values education.
- The story is all about realising that what matters (in students, in life) is relationships.
- It highlights that acceptance and building relationships can lead to quality teaching, quality outcomes and quality (real!) change.
- It shows how the explicit teaching of values has engaged someone who was originally on the fringes.
- It demonstrated that people matter.

Story 4: Student story

Basically my story was after the Forum I got back to school and was explaining to all my mates about why I got the last period off and all of that. A lot of them thought it was a waste of time going and talking about the Burmese kids and thought it was all a load of rubbish. In the Forum I had the opportunity to speak to some of the Burmese kids, when I spoke to my friends and all of that they started actually coming around. And like I've just noticed after that kind of event and after I was telling them and like sticking up for the Burmese kids and that, they've all of them started accepting them a lot more.

There's one example of it like one of the Burmese kids came up to us the other day 'cause we were in free dress and 'cause we had an enviro duty or something like that and he was like, 'Oh hey man, you kicking up the dusty' and speaking in very broken English. Before like going to values project and stuff like that, like you'd almost swear at them and walk off and all that type of thing, but like the thing that I noticed straight away is just immediately my mates started accepting them and like being, showing a bit more understanding towards them and you know replying back and being all friendly to him and that. Which was really good to see.

Reasons for selection

This story was selected by four groups of participants.

- This story teaches about the potential of individuals to become agents of positive, pro-social change in relation to the values of tolerance, respect and inclusion.
- This story highlights the significance of student voice.
- It highlights transformation and a realisation of the input of values education.
- It demonstrates the power of the students' forum.
- It reinforces that little things can make a difference.
- The story was a demonstration of the impact of values education.
- It highlights students showing courage.
- It highlights two-way interaction between diverse groups of people.
- It shows students being an example and encouraging change.

Story 5: Teacher story

I've got a boy in my class who's in [social welfare] care. He's been there for about two years now. Previously he owned the behaviours of his parents, so it was, you know, all the things that had happened and all the stuff that he witnessed and was, you know, part of, he took that on himself and he didn't see that his parents had done anything wrong, and he blamed social welfare for taking them away and all those sorts of things.

We started doing just pastoral care activities, talking about all the values that we look at, and then this term we've gone into it. The unit of work is, you know, the values unit of work and then we've got the literacy also tied to it. As part of my listening and speaking activity – it was oral storytelling – so I had to tell my partner the story and my partner had to tell that story back to the class. He went off with his friend, and he went outside and he told them the story of his dad and what his dad used to do to them and stuff like that.

Afterwards, I didn't know until they were about to present it and I read the book and I was like 'You probably can't tell that', and I called them both over and said 'Do you understand what's happened here?' and he said 'I know that these things happen and I know that this was my dad's choice. He did this. And I'm not wrong and this is not bad, and this doesn't reflect on me in any way. This was my dad's choice'. But in class prior to that, we talk a lot about making your choices and a part of what we're doing is, you know, you choose your behaviour, you choose your consequences, no one else has any bearing over what you do apart from yourself – 'The only one responsible for your behaviour is you'. And he said that back to me, like that exact line, like 'No one else is responsible for dad's behaviour but dad' so for that big change in him from, you know, this kid two years ago, that social welfare

were bastards and all these horrible words he used to call them, to now that's dad's, and not even anything bad about dad, just 'Dad has chosen this life. Dad did this to us'. So I think for him it's going to take him a long way, just being part of this because he was a real angry, wound up, nothing, everything about him had to be fair and fair to benefit him. Now it's 'If I've done something wrong, that's what I've done' but the biggest significant change was that he was like 'No, that's not who I am and I don't care if everyone knows what happened to me'.

Why it is [the most significant change]? I think just seeing where he's come from. I taught this boy in transition and I saw his parents have a fight outside my classroom. So he's been immersed in this life for years and years and years and years. Now he's taken away from that. When he was first taken away mum and dad did nothing wrong. He would do anything to get back to mum and dad. Anything at all. He didn't see that that lifestyle was wrong. He didn't see what they were doing was wrong, he just thought that's how families live. So now he can see that those things weren't right and that's not how a family is, and he can also see that the behaviours are yours. You've got to own those behaviours and he sees that it's...sorry, I'm trying to...

We do respect, responsibility and teamwork. Now he's seen that his dad needs to take responsibility for his actions but he hasn't done anything wrong and I think he's going to be a better person for it. He's going to be, probably be able to function better in society and his outlook for life now, the one that we had for him, is a lot broader now. You know. Before we'd probably say he's going to turn out probably the same as dad. Now he sees that it wasn't right and his dad, that was his dad's stuff. He doesn't need to own any of the behaviours that his dad did.

It was significant for me because... he'd taken that on board and he'd had that thought process to think, 'Yeah, this is not me anymore'.

Reasons for selection

This story was selected by four groups of participants.

- We felt this story was an enormous turning point. There was a whole new world of understanding reflected in the words of the student. It was a dawning moment of self-determination and an awareness (perhaps developing) of the development of the power and control of/for his life. There was also growth for the teacher and affirmation of the work/role of the teaching profession.
- The story highlighted accepting self in a loving relationship with others.
- This story highlighted personal growth.
- The story had a strong emotional effect because the child was able to understand that he could have a different value base to that of his home. The teacher made a deep and lasting positive impact on the way the child saw himself and his place in the world.

Story 6: Teacher story

Well I think mine's a bit similar to some that have already been said. Mine I guess is a parallel journey of my own journey as a leader in our school, and the school's journey along the values work that we've been doing.

I've been at our school for about seven years and I'm taking on more and more leadership sort of tasks, and this values project has given me the chance to try and run a program that's going to effect whole school change. So for me, my journey has coincided with the school's journey to do with getting engagement from large sectors of our school community. So that for me is the 'Wow!', the fact that we made that happen. And I'm thinking of teachers who would come up to me in the staffroom and they'd say excited things about what they were about to do in their class to do with values. They'd say, 'I've got this great resource you might be interested in, 'cause it's about values', and so I could feel the rising teacher enthusiasm for what we were starting with our values research. I can feel student excitement. Kids come up and they are thrilled to be part of our student representative body.

This is the first year that we've trialled this in the school and it's been the values project that has been the task that we've set them. Even this very morning when we were getting ready to come to this meeting today, one of the two students I was bringing with me, we were talking about a lot of quotes that I'd put together, of the vast amounts of information we'd been given from our families, who'd got totally engaged with this project and had sent back the most intimate, thoughtful, deep, reflective thoughts about what they value. And for me, this morning, I got goose bumps. The student who I was bringing this morning said 'Yeah, my mum really liked those when you put them in the newsletter, those quotes from other people, she stuck them up all round the house' and I thought that sums it up. It's something that's grabbed people and that's happened throughout every layer of our school and it's something I've been very honoured to be part of, and very proud of.

Reasons for selection

This story was selected by one group of participants.

- It shows the breadth of impact this project has had on the school and community.
- The teacher saw the difference that the project had on the school community and, in turn, was reinvigorated. The shared ownership of the project gave it momentum.
- The families provided information on community values and this gave momentum through building trust and reinforced the message of the school.
- The students' awareness and engagement were enhanced.
- It highlighted whole school change that was shared by all.

More voices of Most Significant Change

The following eight stories of significant change were also reviewed and discussed by groups at the Evaluation Summit. These stories were in the 14 final stories of most significant change selected through the MSC process. They are presented here as evidence of the range of story data gathered.

Story 7: Teacher story

I've outlined here a whole process of how KidsMatter has helped...[our] school. But I won't outline that for brevity's sake. But with the onset of the values or the VASP project at...[our] school, the staff saw an opportunity to bind and consolidate the already good work being achieved through KidsMatter with the VASP initiative. Students have responded well to the children's literature offered by Bounce Back!, addressing specific issues of resilience and emotions, among others, in a simplistic fashion and in an entertaining way through animal characters and those they could easily relate to, in books such as *Green Eggs and Ham* and *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Lessons are timetabled weekly and in our hectic schedule they can form the basis of literature reviews in English or discussions in religion.

We found though that the nine overarching values of VASP have provided the framework for guiding teacher talk in many school scenarios. The most effective has been our weekly assemblies where each individual value has been simply explained. Here they've been given life in Jesus' stories, and through relevant schoolyard and classroom examples of behaviour, that accords with each value. While KidsMatter and Bounce Back! literature has been issue specific, eg bullying, anger, sadness, the nine core values have been far reaching and versatile in their application, equipping teachers with the verbal ammunition to deal with the usual morning tea and lunchtime post-mortems of the incidents between rowdy children to classroom arguments over equipment or a lack of doing one's best.

Funnily enough, as teachers we pride ourselves in the effectiveness of our communications but the ease of imparting the core values and their examples to children has been surprising. The succinct description of each value has facilitated teachers 'talking the talk' of values education and highlighting children who are 'walking the walk' in using those values much better than before. Children have been noticeably attentive during Monday morning explanations of each value and during awards ceremonies for children being rewarded for utilising the values. They appear to show genuine interest in what value is going to be delineated next and related to what were otherwise confusing concepts because they have been put into the context of the school.

There has been evidence of the flow-on effect from teachers to students who are becoming proficient at using and remembering the language of values. A mother of an ASD child even commented in an IFE meeting that her daughter had remarked that she wasn't showing care and compassion in the throes of receiving a chastising. Children appear to be more readily able to match theirs and the actions of others to the nine values when outlined by teachers first, for instance, not imposing on one's freedom by manipulating friendship groups or being the boss of others.

Values talk has been cropping up in lessons even indirectly related to the topic at hand. The ideals of values education appear to be permeating into other KLAs which is fantastic because we are not Catholic or Christian in distinct areas only. I believe it was when asking children what were the main parts of a community

necessary for people to live together, children immediately began mentioning the nine values, as opposed to the anticipated answers outlining the recreational, residential, industrial and commercial areas of communities. So perhaps the children's answers were more accurate after all.

Younger children in particular seem to be giving more recognition/acceptance to people with differences. Many children who are on the ASD spectrum at…[our school] who have always been treated with great tolerance and respect have celebrated a new found pride in their differences. We had a Mary MacKillop competition, and the award recipients, and a little fellow who had a highly commended certificate, elaborated upon the importance of acceptance of individuals who are different. A DEEWR consultant commented,

and the KidsMatter team agreed, that the most noticeable change in attitude, resilience and values in the long run would probably be in children who are in Kindergarten/Year 1 at the beginning of the program's implementation.

I guess the crux of the most significant change for our school is that the person children want to be and are asked to be, one who acts out of the goodness God made them in, is more attainable now and realistic because they've been shown how values can be implemented into their own lives. It has been emphasised to children that we're not just a Catholic school by name at…[our school].

Story 8: Teacher story

One of the things as an educator that I continually, and have always had heart-breaking moments over, has been things that stop our young people feeling safe and happy and learning. And I've often seen that…in the bullying and the name calling and the harassment that goes on in a school…and I actually can remember back to being a big sister of a five-year-old and being challenged by the bullying and the harassment that went on in a school, and stopped a little brother from learning…

My biggest 'Aha!' moment with philosophy was…when we were talking about courage and bravery. And one little boy gave an example of pulling his brother out of a dam and really saving his life…And I listen in philosophy circle and the children speak. And I thought, 'No-one's going to top that', and another young person said, 'I was brave today and I showed lots of courage because Blah was bullying Blah and I stood up for her'. And then the children really started to speak about the bullying and harassment and the bravery and the courage that

it's taking them to deal with that. And for me that was the really powerful moment and I think that that's a way forward in a school. We have the values play where 'everybody be's caring and everybody be's a little bear and shows love and care'. And we have the values hat and we all go around being respectful with the values hat. And nothing changes. With philosophy…and the structure around the listening, 'I'm not wrong and you're not wrong, we're both right', seem to be a really powerful tool for those children.

And I know these children spoke today about respect and they used the word 'respect' but I actually think they're also talking about tolerance and understanding and a fair go. I think when they use the word 'respect' I think they're talking about a lot of other values that you would recognise as parents and as families… it's a really powerful way to really connect people with values so that it becomes part of who they are, not part of the costume they're wearing for that day.

Story 9: Student story

I've had this kid in my class that...annoys me sometimes and because of these projects I felt like I don't just react to him, I actually think about the consequences that could happen after. And before that I didn't – I would pretty much just react...[and] do a lot of things that I probably shouldn't.

It's just taught me about how some of these people that are in these projects...they don't react to anything. They – they get hard times from governments, they get hard times from everyone and they have to actually stop and wait for a little bit...They just stop and wait and then they deal with it in their own ways without having to bring violence.

[I've learnt] that I could actually be – I can actually be a nicer person...without having to do the jokes about, being like jokes are mean and all that...

Story 10: Student story

Okay, me being part of the values team has been a really great experience. And I find that doing that has helped the children get to know the values better, because it's other students teaching them. So it's not like they have the right answer to say, because in front of the teacher you always think, 'Oh this isn't the right answer, I can't say what I think'. So yeah. I think that there's been a big improvement since the students have taken the values on as their own responsibility, considering that the teachers did it before us and people didn't feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings with them...

Well the values team are responsible for teaching other students about values and putting out the values newsletter and doing the certificates at assembly. We are the team that if anyone has problems, they can come to us if they want to share it with us or anything...

I think people are starting to realise that showing values is better than not showing values. So they're starting to get more friends, they're starting to become better people...

I personally feel that when our teacher said at the start of the year 'we're going to start circle time', our whole class felt a bit uncomfortable, sharing their thoughts and feelings. But now it feels like, when we have circle time, it feels like a friendly vibe. Everyone wants to share. Everyone wants to have ideas and help others and stuff...

I know that I can trust everyone in my class, that if I say something, like my feelings, that it won't come out of the circle and people won't laugh. They'll respect, yeah.

Story 11: Parent story

I've given a lot of thought to the whole notion of values since I've been involved in this project and I think that's been...a good opportunity for me to think about these sort of things in a structured way. I think I had quite strong views at the beginning of the project that values was obviously an important part of education but it was mostly a responsibility for parents, and that school was about reinforcing what we teach our children at home, in a more implicit way. And I think that had been validated for me because Emma's teacher in Year 1 is really good at that implicit sort of values education. I've seen her do it myself and the stuff that Emma talks about at home about school reflects that as well.

But I think having been involved in the project and having spoken to parents and teachers and seen the children interact, and the different activities they've been involved in, I've realised

that the explicit side is equally important because I think children do develop an inherent ability to differentiate between right and wrong behaviour. And they tend to know when they've made the wrong choice, but they can't always articulate that in terms of values. So to be able to teach children to communicate in terms of values, and to be able to link their behaviour to a particular value, is just such a fantastic tool for them as they grow up and become citizens...

So I'm now clearer in my mind that explicit values education is as important as the implicit stuff. I think they go together, and I think I've got a clearer picture of how our responsibility as parents, in terms of values education, can connect with what happens at school, and I suppose the challenge...is how you continue to facilitate that cooperation and that commonality in terms of values language...

Story 12: Student story

Before today, I thought poverty was just another English word from the dictionary. I didn't know anything about it. Until Mrs Wigley came in...and we did a bit of brainstorming on what we knew of poverty. And then I realised, hang on a second, I know a lot about poverty here. 'Cause my dad came from England, and everyone thinks, 'Oh England's got London, heaps of people there'. But if you go to the western side of England, there's not many people there. It's more country and land, and that's where my dad grew up. And you see people living on the street.

When the Big Day In came...the person that talked about India...[and] said how they're living there. And I realised, 'Hang on a second, we need to change what they're doing here'. If they're going not to have a good life, if they find a plastic bottle, don't just chuck it away, if you were in

India. They'd keep it and you might get a dollar out of it, and that could buy a bit of, a bowl of rice or some water. Maybe some milk. And when I saw these pictures, I realised they were sleeping on bricks, with maybe just a cloth over it, so it would keep them a little clean. And they had to work when they were about three years old, and they didn't have a good education. Now where's children's rights in here? Children deserve to have a home...and they deserve to have a bed to sleep in at least. Well that's what I thought. But these people don't. They have to sleep on just bricks. So I, our school...are trying to help fix this problem with all the...[other cluster schools] by putting fundraisers and like ...[one of the other schools], maybe giving, buying a well and giving it to them.

I thought it was interesting that the government aren't helping the problem. If you give money to the government, they don't really give it to them. They give half. They think, 'Oh they're a bit greedy, we'll just take that, and we'll give them a bit of it'. That's what they're doing. I reckon we should sponsor a child, like I do...This child now has a bed to sleep on, a blanket, a pillow, and now has a home to live in. He's almost got enough money to move to a different country that has better protection from getting killed. And I think that if we're going to fix poverty, we've got to do it all together. Everyone, one person can make a difference, but everyone can make a big difference.

And our class...has been doing this thing, faces of poverty, art with Mr Ross. We do, we're bringing in cardboard boxes and we're putting people in poverty on the front and back and sides on them. And we're making a collage and putting it in and try and raise some money so parents can come and see what we're trying to be learning here. We've also done PowerPoint presentations, and we're making a thing for GarageBand, and we're putting our music and sad music, and then we're going to do a PowerPoint presentation and put our voice in...children have rights.

Story 13: Student story

Okay, well I think when we started [the project], before we had the values, we had, we just had rules, like don't litter, don't leave stuff lying around in the sandbox and things like that. And people sort of ignored them, because it didn't really seem important then. But now that we have the values, like we have respect, and under that we have that it's disrespectful to leave your things around for other people, people can kind of connect the rules to a value and see that it's important. And so I think people are more likely to obey the rules now than they were before, because they can see how it's important to other people.

Yeah well...we have these sandboxes where you can build whatever you want. But the rule is that when you're done you have to take it away so that someone else can build there. And we had a few people in there building, and then the boys they always like to bring everything out and put it everywhere, like motorcycles and everything. And then there was three boys there, and one said, 'Oh you have to take your stuff before you

leave,' and then another one was like, 'Won't it just get returned automatically in a hundred minutes?' and he was like, 'Yeah, but other people need to use this space during that time, so if you could take it away that would be good'. So, then he took it away and that was a good example.

Well [I chose that story because] I think respect is probably one of the biggest values out of the group of values that we selected. And that shows that, each story shows, how it was put into place and how that wouldn't have happened before we had the values. So it shows that they're making a difference.

My experience of using values education as a teacher in the classroom has been quite powerful; not only personally but professionally. I've noticed a very big difference in the students that I have this year. They are a very confident group, very generally speaking, very strong characters. Many of them are competitive by nature. So using the techniques that you know… worked with us on, especially the [silent sitting time], I've noticed that's…had a huge effect on the students in terms of bringing that energy level down…We do it immediately after every lunch and it helps them focus on what now is needed in class. The mind mapping, the quotes, the songs, the activities we used to reinforce the value have been very powerful in, like I spoke about earlier, making the value explicit in terms of breaking open its meaning. And again picking up on what other teachers have said, so many times you have a class of 25–30 people come to you – young people with young minds of young families, all with different values, all with different socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, religious backgrounds even – and to try and find a common ground from which to work with values; by teaching values explicitly gives you that common ground. And as mentioned earlier with someone else, for some kids they don't get that at home, and for me, if I can just reach one child who hasn't had that experience of what that value is about, I've done my job…as an educator. Because I know that child, if I've seen it have an effect with them, I know that that will stay with them for their life's journey. And yeah, I guess I've been lucky this year because I've seen it touch so many of my students.

I've probably done a lot more or tried to do a lot with my particular class and I've seen quite profound effects. Sometimes there's days when it…feels like they haven't internalised it…But even now within their social interactions in the playground or their coping skills, the resilience that they now demonstrate. I believe that, beside the program achieved, I've really seen them work together really well…

I've seen it [the understanding] with certain students, they've changed socially towards friends, towards people in the community, towards – even how they interact and talk with me, they're on a much more adult level. They speak in a way that is more empathetic to my voice. They may be coming asking me for help but the way they verbalise their issue or their concern or their question, whatever it may be, is way more empathetic to how I may respond to them. I've seen girls who've gone through that pre-teen phrase of this narky little 'myeah', and some of them are still there, but you can see them, it's hard to describe what I see because I can't…

Yeah, that's the word I was looking for… grounded.

…and even in their relations with each other now, as a lot of the students commented today, I've noticed big changes in their interactions. Girls are now playing with boys, and they're going between games…now they swap between games between lunch hours, you know. And you can see a comfortability and an acceptance… knowing that they can play this and next lunch go and play a different game with different people and not feel they're going to be scorned or scoffed at or put down…[With new children they are] welcoming. They go out of their way to make them feel a part…

Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project

Impacts of the Values in Action Schools Project
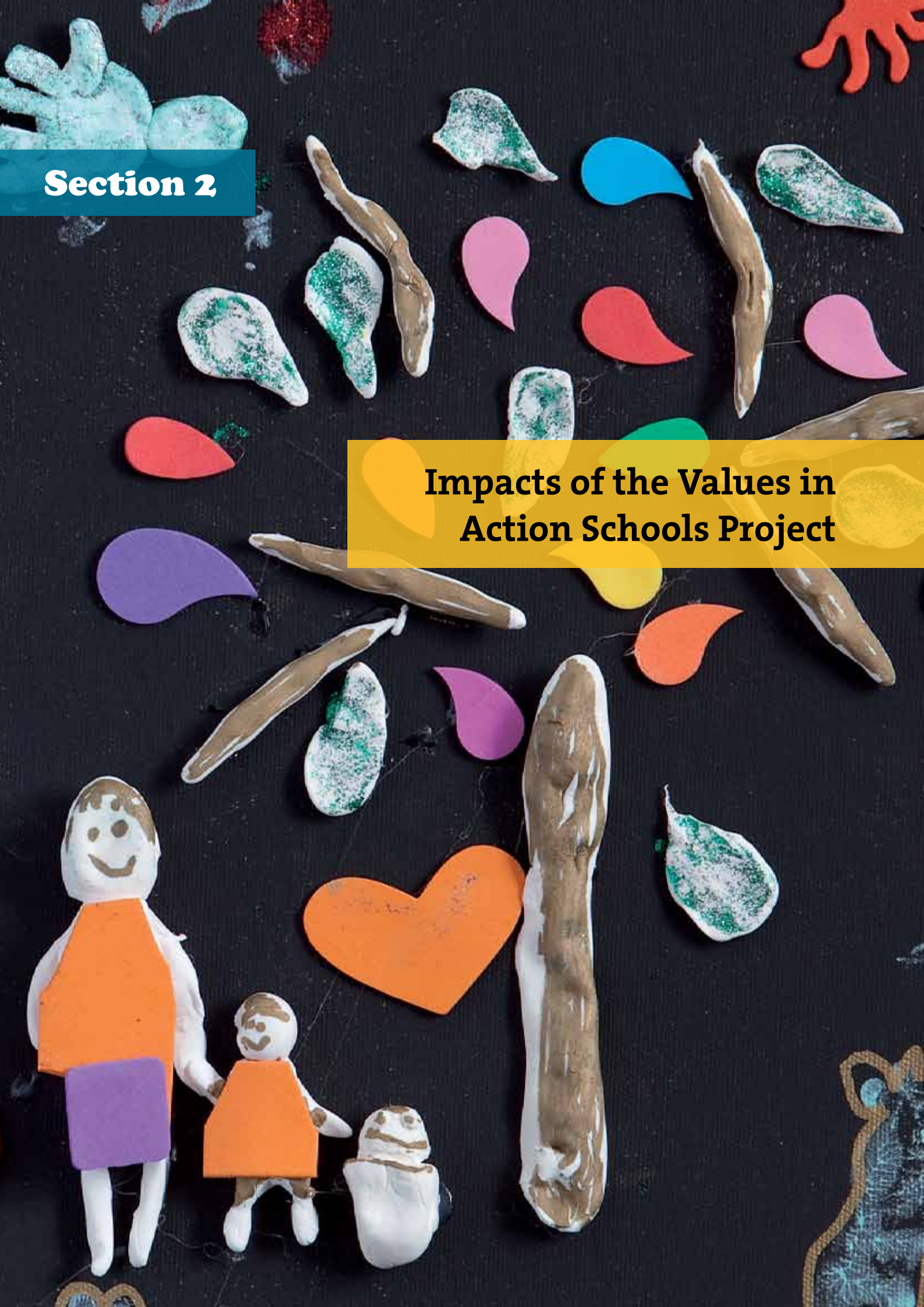
Impacts of the Values in Action Schools Project

A comprehensive evidence base supports the five key impacts gleaned from the Values Action in Schools Project (VASP). The process of evaluating the impact of the VASP on teachers, students and parents included two phases of analysis:

- **participatory analysis** **prior to and during the Evaluation Summit**
- **secondary analysis** **after the final reporting stage of the VASP.**

Participatory analysis

The participatory analysis of the impact of the VASP took place at cluster level through the Most Significant Change (MSC) process. It culminated at the Evaluation Summit in Melbourne, 2009, where teacher, parent and student representatives from each cluster reviewed and analysed 14 stories of change (reduced from the total of 60).[10] In this process participants reflected on what they had wanted to do in their cluster projects and what they achieved, and clarified what they valued in relation to these objectives.

In working towards a consensus on the changes that occurred through the VASP, the participants identified domains of change at:

- an individual and community level
- in terms of unexpected forms of change and the lessons learned from the project.

Secondary analysis

In addition to the participatory analysis of MSC stories selected during the Evaluation Summit, a secondary analysis was applied to all project data. Dr Julie Hamston, the project's academic research consultant, reviewed all significant change stories and all other data sets collected from the VASP. This involved:

- an audit of all the MSC stories selected by the 15 clusters (60 in total, from more than 200)
- an organisation into themes (38 in total) and sub-themes (145 in total) of the domains of change identified by the participants at the Evaluation Summit
- an interpretation of results, including trend data, from the teacher perception surveys (pre-project survey, n = 312; post-project survey, n = 224)[11]
- an audit of the written teacher reflections accompanying the post-project teacher perception survey (143 in total)
- an audit of the school-based data collected by the 15 clusters, including units of work, student work samples and artefacts such as visual, multimedia, print and electronic texts, and survey results
- an audit of the final reports written by the VASP Cluster Coordinators and University Advisors (30 in total).

Information gleaned from the briefing sessions and onsite visits to cluster schools by Project Managers and other Curriculum Corporation personnel has also been incorporated.

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10 The Flinders Park–Whyalla Values Cluster did not attend the Evaluation Summit.

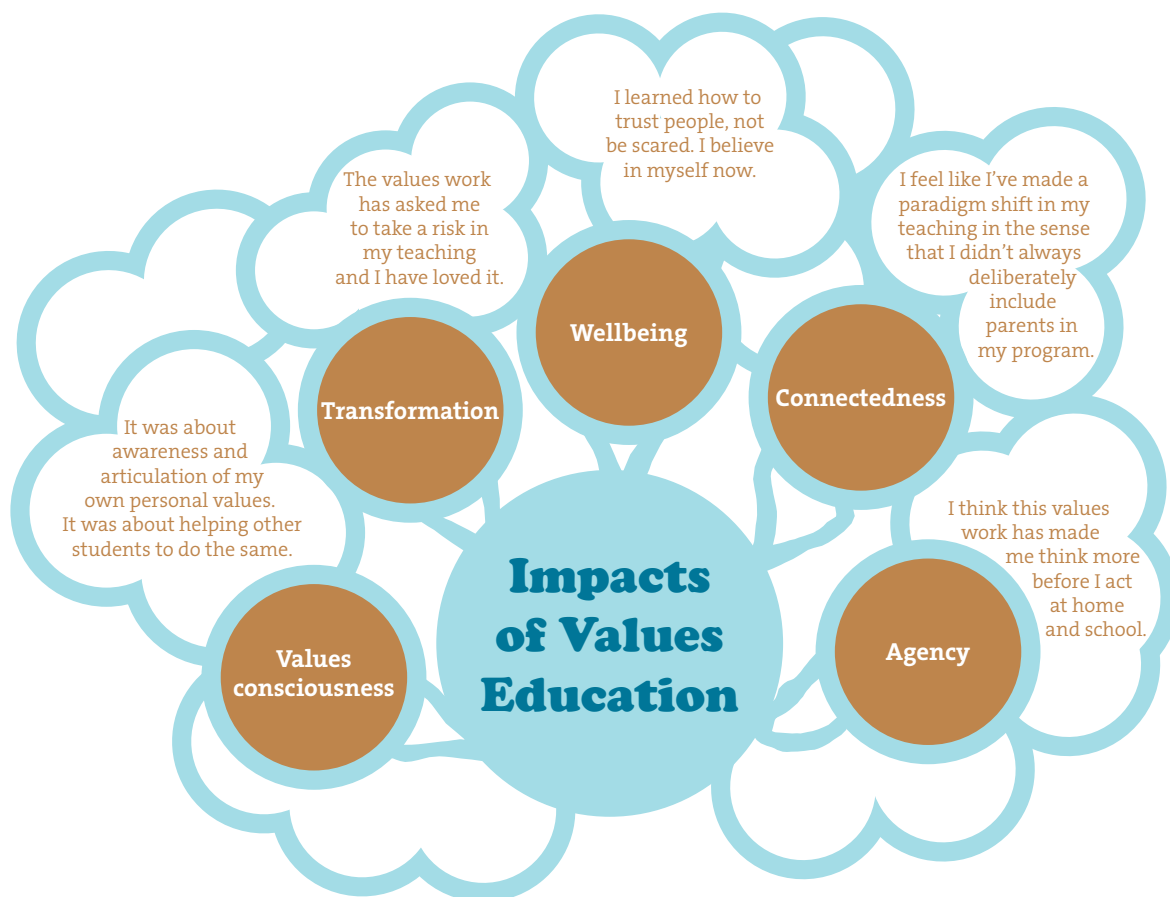11 The total number of potential responses exceeded 600.

The values work
has asked me
to take a risk in
my teaching
and I have loved it.

I learned how to
trust people, not
be scared. I believe
in myself now.

I feel like I've made a
paradigm shift in my
teaching in the sense
that I didn't always
deliberately
include
parents in
my program.

It was about
awareness and
articulation of my
own personal values.
It was about helping other
students to do the same.

I think this values
work has made
me think more
before I act
at home
and school.

Wellbeing

Transformation

Connectedness

Values
consciousness

Impacts
of Values
Education

Agency

Figure 4: Key impacts of the Values in Action Schools Project

The five key and interrelated impacts of the VASP identified from the participatory and secondary analyses of the data were:

1. Values consciousness
2. Wellbeing
3. Agency
4. Connectedness
5. Transformation

They are represented in Figure 4. These impacts on teachers, students and parents are illustrated through selective excerpts, which highlight the reflective nature of the data.[12]

Impact 1: Values consciousness

An important impact of the values projects on students, teachers and parents was the development of an increased awareness of the meaning of values and the power of values education to transform learning and life. This increased awareness signifies a values knowing or consciousness that transcends a superficial understanding of values disconnected from action. It aligns with Robert Sternberg's definition of wisdom (2004), which he sees as 'the use of one's intelligence and experience as mediated by values towards the achievement of the common good' (p 164).

While it could be argued that the development of a values consciousness was central to all of the cluster projects, as revealed in the discussion below, seven clusters chose to design projects with this as an explicit aim for students and/or teachers and/or parents.

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12 Note that these excerpts include identified and de-identified data.

Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster	Aimed to engage detained students in an active process of reflection and interrogation of the nature of values by supporting the development and articulation of a values vocabulary.
Catholic Schools of the Clarence	Focused on the explicit teaching of values in relation to resilience, wellbeing and learning.
Cross Border Values Community	Aimed to develop students' capacities to reason, discuss and reflect on values and to respect different values perspectives. By connecting learners around Australia via web 2.0 technology, teachers engaged students in moral and ethical decision making around 'big philosophical questions'.
Far North Queensland Cluster	Aimed to improve, through teacher professional learning, the explicit teaching and learning of core values based on faith values, (Indigenous) cultural values and the National Framework.
Lanyon Cluster of Schools	As part of a broader project on values pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, teachers and students acted as co-researchers, collecting and documenting evidence of how they have been transformed in relation to the values they have studied.
Melbourne Eastern Regions Values Cluster	Targeted the professional learning of teachers in relation to values and values-centred pedagogies.
Palmerston Values Cluster	Teachers formed professional learning communities, which centred on the explicit teaching of the values of respect and responsibility through storytelling.
Tasmanian Values Cluster	Informed by the perceived need for students to develop an explicit awareness of their own values and those of others, this project promoted conversations, community research and actions around values.

These projects variously aimed to develop an 'embedded consciousness' of values in the school and community (Curriculum Corporation 2008, p 10), whereby students, teachers and parents worked towards a greater awareness of what values mean and how they can be lived.

Evidence gathered from all clusters indicates that this increased awareness of values and values education was developed through various forms of **reflection**, **dialogue and communication**, and **personal story**.

Reflection

The cluster projects were designed around an action research cycle, which encouraged teachers to continually reflect on the implementation of values education in their schools and the impact of this on student learning. The extent of this varied across the clusters: some clusters built in time for ongoing reflective practice and implemented a range of strategies for teachers to share their values consciousness with others. The following example of a wiki posting illustrates how one cluster encouraged reflective practice between colleagues:

Obviously we are attempting to help show everyone what we are doing and how our values projects are going. Max and I have designed a unit based around the idea of 'Integrity', using 'Deadly Unna?' as a text for analysis. Starting out this unit I had some initial experiences with students struggling to understand the idea of integrity, and also how their behaviour reflects their own ideals of integrity. We've had many class discussions, including a series of questions that simply had a 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe' response. It was interesting to see that while a majority of kids regularly went to the 'wrong' side of the room, there were certain instances where they instinctively decided to do the 'right' thing with little justification for their actions. An example: You are walking down the street, when you come across a wallet; it has some ID and $100. Ahead of you, you see a teenage boy walking. Do you go up to him with the wallet and ask him if it is his? For this question the majority said 'no' that they would keep it, and yet with the same question, but with an elderly lady, most said they would approach her and ask. The interesting part of this activity was that many of them could not articulate the reason for one being approached but the other not, except to say he's a teenager. It will be interesting to see the data at the end of the unit, to see the change. (Teacher, wiki posting, Lanyon Cluster)

Other examples of teachers' reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983) included reflective journals, collaborative analysis of student data, online forums, regular meetings, master classes, and specialised professional development.

These data demonstrate how many teachers were able to think deeply about their teaching and the values they modelled in and outside the classroom, their students' growing awareness of values, and their own values. This thinking is illustrated in the following excerpts, which show how a relational consciousness develops when teachers reflect on what values mean to them and to others:

The project was about values education in many ways. It was about awareness and articulation of my own personal values. It was about helping other students to do the same. Finally, it was about sharing these values with the community in order to then provide the community with the same opportunity. It has been one of the most worthwhile projects that I have been associated with and also one of the most fulfilling. (Teacher reflection, University Advisor's report, Beenleigh Cluster)

Often the idea of a teacher is someone that stands at the front of the classroom, you know, lacks emotion... And over the years, and especially since I had a child myself, I've grown to understand that it's, you know, empathy, it's about the individuals, it's about personal growth, and to see that coming out of these students, and also by sharing my own personal stories, has made such an impact on these kids. (Teacher MSC story, Palmerston Cluster)

I have been more challenged by values outside my white middle class culture. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

Another reflection from a school leader confirms the significance of teachers working with an increased awareness of their own values:

The best outcome of the project for us, I think, is that we have been given the opportunity to highlight to our teachers how important it is to have meaningful relationships with their students...The embodiment of the values they are teaching the students have appeared throughout. (Teacher MSC story, Melbourne Eastern Regions Cluster)

A new, renewed or affirmed values consciousness was also evident in the teacher perception surveys in relation to the question: 'What role does the teacher play in values education?' Responses to this question revealed teachers' perceptions of their role in modelling values; their insights into students' values; and the various ways they supported a values consciousness through values-focused pedagogies.

The graphs in Figure 5 show movement in teachers' initial perceptions of their role as shown in the pre-project survey towards strong agreement/agreement with the majority of items after the completion of the values projects. Given that the time between pre- and post-survey implementation was six months, these shifts would seem considerable.

What role does the teacher play in values education?
Pre-project teacher survey
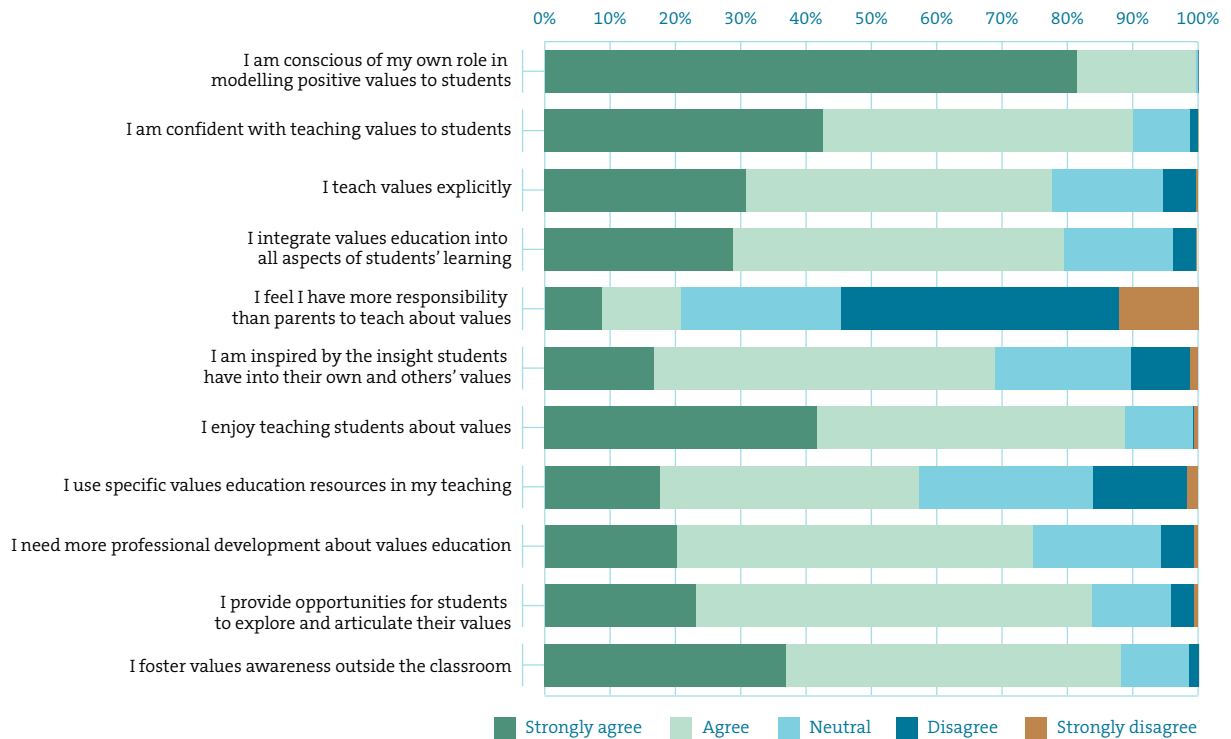
What role does the teacher play in values education?
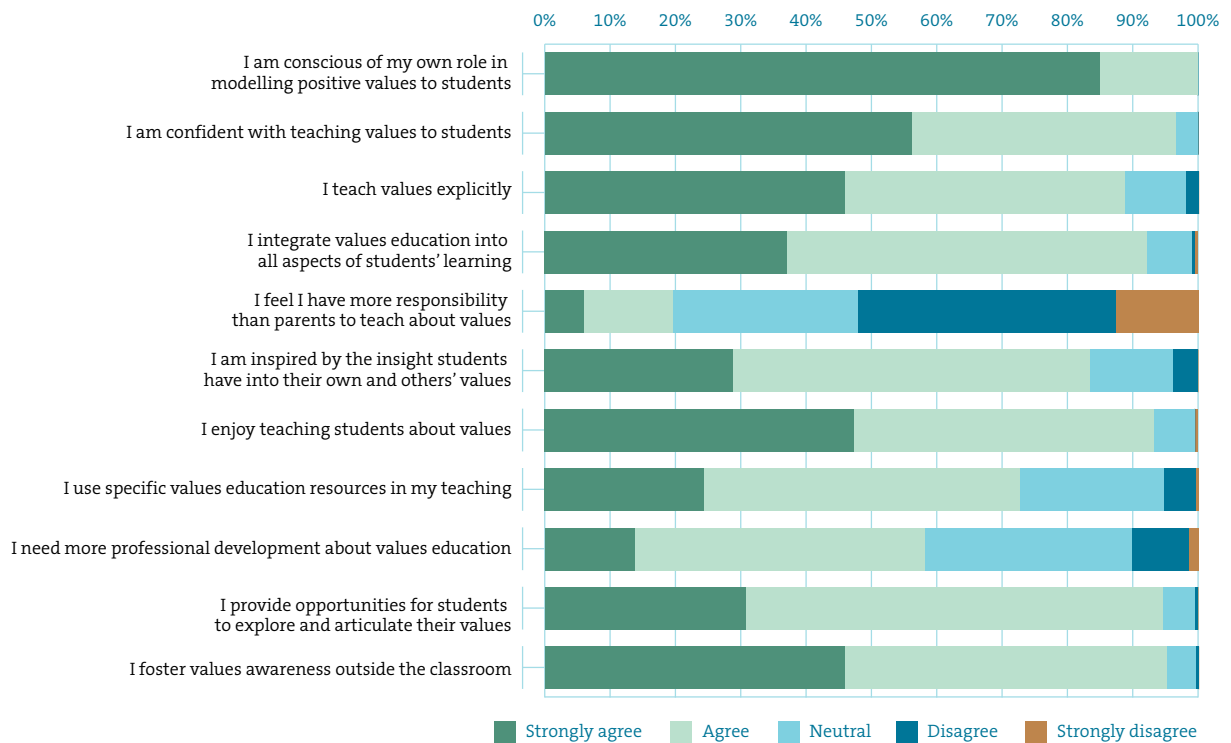### Post-project teacher survey

Figure 5: Results of teacher perception surveys

Interestingly, this general trend towards strong agreement/agreement does not apply to the items that ask whether the respondent feels he/she has more responsibility than parents to teach about values (possibly indicating a greater awareness of the mutual nature of this responsibility), and if the respondent feels he/she needs more professional development on values education (perhaps suggesting that the VASP provided substantial opportunities for professional learning, or that similar opportunities had been taken up previously).

The development of students' awareness of values and action was supported through the many entry points they had into values education across the clusters, such as youth forums, poverty forums, outreach programs, values summits, values expos, arts-based performances, virtual communication, storytelling, literature studies, and inquiries into Asian religions and human rights. Many of these integrated and cross-curricular perspectives were student-centred and encouraged student agency (discussed in detail below).
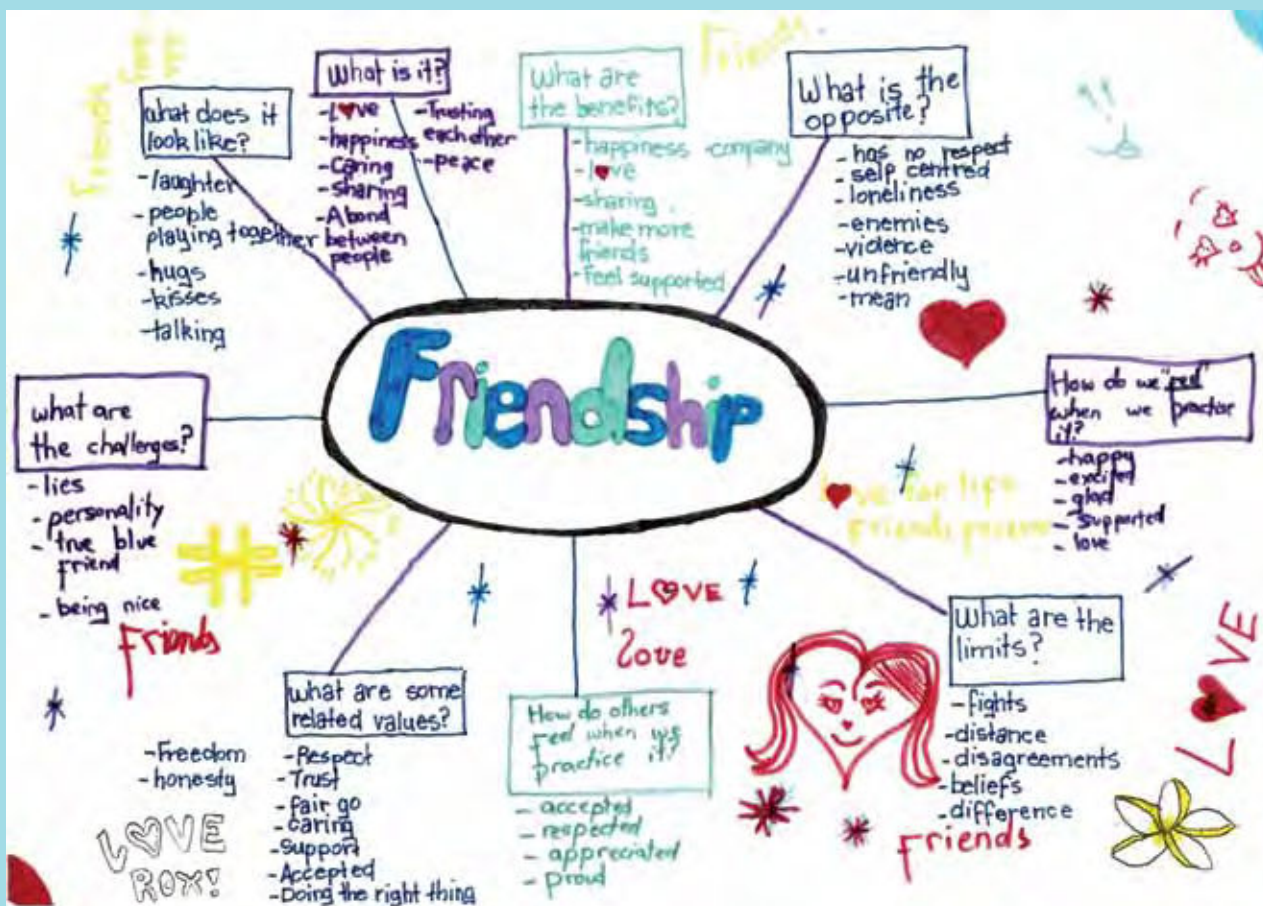
These varied learning contexts provided students with opportunities for sustained and deep reflection on their values, as seen here in the following student work samples:

Student work sample,
Catholic Schools of the Clarence

Student work sample, Far North Queensland Cluster

Various reports from students described how a values consciousness had impacted on their actions. The following story from an Indigenous student is a powerful testament to the process of reflecting on values. At the beginning of the unit of work his written response to the question 'What is caring and compassion?' consisted of the brief statement, 'being kind to others'. At the end of the values project he wrote:

I am kinder to everyone. I smile at them, which makes them feel good. Giving is more than just presents and money; it is making people feel good, like respect. If you treat people well, are kind to them and show you care for them they feel better. I let people play games with me now, even when they aren't my friends. Before I didn't let other people play unless they were my friends. I think I am more patient with people. If someone takes a long time I say, 'Take your time and don't rush'. I think I am a kinder person now. (Student impact story, Lanyon Cluster)

Another student described a similar change in thinking about and acting on values:

I think this [values through philosophy] project has made me think more before I act at home and school. It has helped me see the world differently than what I did before when I hadn't done anything on philosophy. It's definitely made me see the world from different angles and perspectives. (Student MSC story, Cross Border Community)

It is perhaps not surprising then that many of the teacher reflections on the impact of the VASP focused on students' potential and their capacity to demonstrate the kind of thinking, creativity, ethical and intercultural understanding, and social competence advocated in the design for a 21st century Australian Curriculum by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA 2009, pp 12–14). Teachers spoke of being 'heartened' by the fact that students have strong values and are interested in exploring their values in a range of contexts. One teacher commented that the VASP confirmed that students would take values education 'seriously.' Another admitted to being surprised at 'how articulate the students are about values in real life' (Teacher reflections, post-project survey).

Dialogue and communication

The development of a values consciousness was also enhanced through the many opportunities for dialogue and communication provided across the clusters. In addition to the dialogue that took place between teachers and students in the classroom, communication around values was established between teachers and parents, and parents and their children. In some schools this was formalised through such things as newsletters; parent and community forums; artistic performances; values homework; philosophical 'chewies' or 'big' questions; surveys and interviews. It seems clear that these forms of communication not only helped to establish a relationship between teachers and parents regarding their students'/children's values education, but afforded parents time and opportunity to reflect on their own values. This example of a co-assessment matrix developed by one of the project schools illustrates the mutual and relational nature of values learning.

Student work sample, Tasmanian Values Cluster

In some cases, the values projects opened up new and surprising forms of communication between teachers and parents. One story from a teacher describes the paradigm shift that resulted from dialogue with Indigenous parents:

I've had six parents come and visit. My sixth one came today. To come and...put into the program and...to get their input...I feel like I've made a paradigm shift in my teaching in a sense that I didn't always deliberately include parents in my program. You might try and include them in some peripheral thing you're doing, some fun activity or some other small thing, but I didn't always deliberately include them in my program, and deliberately making that choice...it's valuing the kids' backgrounds that bit more. (Teacher MSC story, Palmerston Cluster)

Other examples of rich and engaging dialogue further highlight the development of an increased awareness of values, in these instances through a shared values language, communicated across schools and homes:

I think one of the things that really impacted on me was sitting at home having a discussion with my ten-year-old about notions of positive and negative freedom. It gave me a sense of actually how free I was to teach him things, that often passes by. Just the very fact that this sheet came home and then we were able to talk about quite complex things, was a real eye opener. (Parent MSC story, Tasmanian Cluster)

We've put the big questions up on our notice board at home, which sits near our dining room table, so we've not only discussed them with the kids as they bring them home but anyone new who comes into the house – we end up in another discussion and another point of view...So that's been interesting and I think it's been a bit of an eye opener for the kids and for ourselves...And I think we have seen as a family a greater ability to share ideas and think about the different dimensions of a problem and question things; the kids feel safe to question things as well. (Parent MSC story, Cross Border Community)

Personal stories

In many of the cluster schools and communities, personal stories played a central role in embedding a values consciousness. In addition to the MSC stories, the exchange of personal stories formed an important part of student learning. Examples of this include the youth and poverty forums; storytelling by Indigenous elders; literature studies; dramatic and visual representations of personal journeys; letter writing; and impact stories. The moving homage from a detained youth to his mother (Story 6, Evaluation Summit, Section 2) illustrates the important relationship between personal story and the development of a values consciousness.

In the following examples from two student forums, it seems clear that personal stories have broadened the students' awareness of local and global issues and deepened their intercultural understanding:

When I arrived, Gemma was talking about her experience as a volunteer in Africa. She was so compelling and the students were spellbound. She used some powerful images to set the young people talking, for example 'fish and chip' babies who were wrapped in newspaper to keep them warm, and why knitting clothes and blankets was more than a 'feel good' enterprise. Also her tale of nappies, worn over three days,

left some gasping. There were some great questions at the end; one was 'How long have these people been living in poverty?' and her response relating to the consequences of colonialism was challenging and provocative. Her conclusions regarding the need to make a difference and transcend cultural and sometimes superficial appearances was incredibly powerful, especially when she asserted that volunteering goes beyond donating to a charitable cause, but is actually doing something and taking a stand. I understand, Bill, that you are her father. You must be very proud of her. (Email correspondence, University Advisor, Southern Highlands Schools)

So once again when kids...sit down and actually talk to people about the commonality that different cultures share, often that then becomes a great platform to build on, perhaps then in the braver moments talking about differences and making judgements about the value of those differences. And I know it's difficult to do from an ethnocentric point of view where you tend to think about your own culture as being right in every respect, but gee it's wonderful to see those kids at last sitting down and letting someone share a story about Sudan. (Teacher MSC story, Maroondah Education Coalition)

Support for this is also found in these comments from teachers: 'We believe that there was the development of a human/social capital, beyond the learning' (Teacher reflection, final VASP report, Australian Juvenile Detention Cluster); and 'Participation in this project has confirmed that it is of vital importance to teach values in schools – learning to count is important but learning WHAT COUNTS is more important' (Teacher reflection, post-project survey).

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Impact 2: Wellbeing

The VASP also demonstrated the significant impact that values education can have on improving student wellbeing. This is an important outcome, as research has shown that the social and emotional wellbeing of Australian students decreases from primary to secondary school (Bernard, Stephanou & Urbach 2007). International research conducted by UNICEF (2007) has described the 'changing ecology of childhood' (p 39), whereby the lives of young people in developed countries such as Australia are shaped by forces that do not necessarily assist them to learn and apply values that optimise their personal lives and the pro-social behaviours important in navigating the complexity of the contemporary, global world (see Fraillon 2005). The sustained improvement in student wellbeing forms part of the Australian Government's Social Inclusion agenda (DEEWR 2010).

Hill (2004, p 18) describes the interrelationship between values and wellbeing. He asserts that all human beings are driven to make sense of social reality, and so attention must be paid to the goals and values that give meaning to their lives and reasons for them to participate fully in life.

Testing the impact of values education on student wellbeing was core to three of the cluster projects.

Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster	Aimed to engage detained students in activities that required them to give of and beyond themselves; to establish a culture of ongoing reflection on and interrogation of the nature of values; and to support students to articulate their values and to apply their understanding of values in the context of their own lives. This project focused on wellbeing in the sense of transforming student apathy and powerlessness into an understanding of personal responsibility and the power to effect change.
Beenleigh Believe, Achieve, Succeed Cluster	Focused on transforming the perceived apathy of students within the cluster to self-knowing and self-belief through (1) a series of self-discovery workshops designed around the performing arts, and (2) a community project involving all students.
Catholic Schools of the Clarence	The resilience, wellbeing and learning for students of low socioeconomic and Indigenous backgrounds in this cluster was developed through strategies and approaches that fostered the explicit teaching of values.

These projects variously highlight the interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions of student wellbeing described by Fraillon (2005, pp 8–9). While there is obvious overlap, the Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster focused predominantly on developing those values that have been described as contributing to an interpersonal wellbeing, consisting of a communicative efficacy, empathy, acceptance and connectedness. The Beenleigh Cluster identified the need to develop values conducive to the self-esteem and self-efficacy central to the intrapersonal dimension of wellbeing, and Catholic Schools of the Clarence focused on the resilience, engagement, emotional regulation and spirituality described in relation to intrapersonal wellbeing.

Interestingly, other VASP clusters reported on improvements in student wellbeing as a result of their action projects, with one, the Flinders Park–Whyalla Link Cluster, identifying student wellbeing as an area of strategic importance in the future.

Thus, a range of evidence supports the impact of values education on improved student wellbeing, most especially the voices of the students themselves, summed up eloquently by one high school student who

said: 'I liked the fact that this program helped me to find myself and who I want to be. It helped me to have courage and go on with my life' (Student reflection, University Advisor's report, Beenleigh Cluster).

The evidence indicates that student wellbeing was enhanced through the **application of values-focused and student-centred pedagogies**, which allowed students to reflect deeply on the nature of values and what these mean to them and others.

Values-focused and student-centred schools, communities and activities supported the enhancement of student wellbeing. (For a comprehensive discussion of the impact of values pedagogies on student wellbeing, see Curriculum Corporation 2008.) Examples from the clusters include activities such as silent sitting, reflective writing, multimedia production, drama performance and poetry writing. Through these activities, teachers provided a values framework to support wellbeing (see Hill 2004) and raised students' awareness of the importance of values in their own and others' lives. The evidence from the VASP tells us that in thinking about, acting on and feeling values students developed feelings of self-worth, empathy, responsible personal behaviour and engagement.

The activities that connected wellbeing to 'giving' to others were particularly interesting. As one teacher commented: 'One cannot give unless one is aware that they have something to give' (Teacher MSC story, Australian Juvenile Detention Cluster). Through this focus on giving, students had opportunities to recreate their self-image and feelings of self-worth:

By getting an opportunity to be something for others, the students were not only learning about values education. Instead they had the opportunity to feel better about themselves in the most transforming way when one has a history of 'wrongdoings' – by doing something right, something good again. (University Advisor's report, Australian Juvenile Detention Cluster)

This view was reflected elsewhere:

I think as a whole group my students were able to see that they could give something and show care and compassion, which was the values we were looking at, and not give something materialistic, but give something of themselves. And they weren't actually expecting anything in return, but the feeling of... wellbeing that they got afterwards was really powerful for them. (Teacher MSC story, Australian Juvenile Detention Cluster)

The values-focused and student-centred activities provided students time and opportunity to engage with the nature of values and what they mean in their own lives. Several of these encouraged quiet, inner reflection, or an 'allowing time', to develop a values knowing or consciousness. The moving and inspiring stories of self-awareness and self-belief (Stories 2, 3 and 5, Evaluation Summit, Section 2) demonstrate the power of values education to change students' lives. Further evidence of self-discovery is found in these testimonials from students:

I got to show the inside of me/being myself/being yourself to express my individuality. (Student reflection, University Advisor's report, Beenleigh Cluster)

I found myself. I became different in a way I can't explain – but good. (Student reflection, University Advisor's report, Beenleigh Cluster)

I learned how to trust people, not be scared. I believe in myself now. (Student reflection, University Advisor's report, Beenleigh Cluster)

The process of self-discovery and self-knowing is important to all students, but findings from the VASP suggest that this is especially the case for students who are 'at risk', marginalised or disadvantaged. The power of this finding is demonstrated in the heartfelt and insightful written reflection of a male student in a detention centre: 'My advice to new boys that come into [institution] is to RESPECT myself and others. Stay strong and keep your head up. Look towards the future and want better for yourself and your friends and family. You only have ONE life and ONE life ONLY – treasure everything that you have in your life.'

Other data from the Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster strengthens this finding.

Results from a Personal Wellbeing Index (Cummins 2006) highlight a growth in students' understanding of wellbeing and its significance to their lives. These results suggest that through their close examination of values and, in particular, their focus on giving to others, many students showed an increased awareness of themselves and their place in the world.

There is also evidence that shows changes in students' understanding of the impact of their actions on the wellbeing of others, as seen in the following data excerpts. The first is a teacher's description of the way that students now value difference, and how students, previously marginalised, have experienced acceptance and self-worth:

There has also been a change in the way individuals in the class are valued. There are children from different cultural and racial backgrounds in the class, as well as an integrated child with a physical disability, and a child who has struggled to find acceptance by peer groups. All of these children have benefited from the values program. While in the early days these children needed to be placed in groups by the teacher, they are now often selected by others. In some cases these children have gone from being almost invisible in the classroom to being chosen as peer tutors and their talents acknowledged and valued. This has improved their confidence and self-esteem, leading to improved educational outcomes. (Teacher MSC story, Catholic Schools of the Clarence)

The other story excerpts, from students, illustrate their awareness of the role they play in enhancing the wellbeing of others:

Well, in our classroom, we used to be quite crazy, like when we got a pile of sheets everyone would grab them and have a fight over what sheet but now we're starting to respect each other more and like a person will get two sheets and hand them out to people and we're waiting our turn in grabbing things, and we're sharing stuff. Like if someone's lost their pencil or something you'd be 'oh, you can borrow mine, it's okay, it doesn't matter' and things like that. And we've changed a bit more, like we're all calmer, like we're all spending more time listening to each other and respecting each other's opinions. (Student MSC story, Palmerston Cluster)

Since we have been doing this thing, the whole class has sort of gained trust in everyone and so out in the playground we wouldn't used to play with each other. The girls would do their handball and stuff and the boys would play touch football. But now since we have been doing the values, everybody has joined together and they know how to trust each other and my favourite value is probably concentration because when we did that on the week, everybody got into their work and everybody liked it. (Student MSC story, Far North Queensland Cluster)

Well my favourite value is friendship 'cause today when I walked out to the playground I saw my friend Molly sitting under the monkey bars by herself and then I went over and talked to her and she said that she's got a lot on her mind and I said, 'Just forget about that stuff now and come out and play with us'. And so then she came out and played with me and then I went over and asked the boys if I could play touch football with them and they said yes. So me and Molly played football with the boys and all our other friends. (Student MSC story, Far North Queensland Cluster)

The values-focused and student-centred activities also provided teachers with a window into the students' inner world. One teacher spoke of what happens when one opens up the teaching to allow students to share aspects of themselves that may otherwise remain undisclosed:

I think the biggest change for me as a result of the [VASP] project was sharing students' goals and dreams for the future, as this is something in the past I haven't given much thought to. We are so focused on curriculum and improving academic results that the emotional wellbeing of the child is often forgotten. (Teacher reflection, University Advisor's report, Beenleigh Cluster)

This evidence supports other research that suggests that to understand student social and emotional wellbeing it is important for others to understand their internal world (Bernard, Stephanou & Urbach 2007; see Fraillon 2005). The mutuality of this understanding is reflected in this comment: 'The project allowed everyone [students and teachers] to look inside themselves and really work out what they value, who they are' (Teacher reflection, University Advisor's report, Beenleigh Cluster).

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Impact 3: Agency

An important impact of the VASP on students was the development of various forms of agency. In this way the outcomes of the VASP align with the Educational Goals for Young Australians, outlined in the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA 2008), which aim for schools and communities to assist students to become active and informed citizens; to play an active role in their own learning; to participate in Australian civic life and work for the common good; and to become responsible global and local citizens.

The emphasis on agency in the VASP also resonates with Sandel's (2009) view that values are learnt and acted upon in communities for the 'common good', whereby moral and ethical integrity help to develop social cohesion and solidarity. Working for the common good involves students in what Noddings (1992) describes as an 'ethics of care', often developed through engagement with complex global issues (see Noddings 2006).

This outcome of the VASP highlights the importance of values education programs involving various forms of giving, outreach, community development and service learning. This is particularly the case in light of research suggesting that the proportion of young Australians who volunteer is generally low (Muir et al 2009, pp 77–81), and given the Australian Government's National Volunteering Strategy, with a focus on agency and wellbeing, which seeks to redress this trend.[13]

A central focus on agency was evident in five clusters, where students participated in curriculum projects involving some form of service or community learning. Students in these clusters enacted their values and strengthened their own sense of purpose and wellbeing as agents of change, capable of making a difference to those around them. It must be noted, however, that a relationship between the development of a values consciousness, student wellbeing and student action was seen in other cluster projects.

Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster	Focused on students 'giving of and beyond themselves', and connected student agency with the development of an increased awareness of values and wellbeing.
Greater Brisbane Schools – Values Education through Service Learning	Aimed to embed values education into each school's ethos and curriculum, and to create opportunities – through service learning – for students to recognise, examine and develop their own values and their sense of civic responsibility.
Lanyon Cluster of Schools	Aimed to develop students' deep understanding of values and their agency through the creation of a 'culture of giving' and involvement in outreach programs for the local community.
Maroondah Education Coalition	Aimed to develop students' awareness and understanding of cultural diversity; to implement strategies that build positive relationships between members of different cultures; to stimulate thinking and discussion about identity and belonging; to challenge misconceptions related to different cultures; and to illustrate the power of youth voice to change community attitudes.
Southern Highlands Schools of NSW	Students from Years 5–8 in this cluster undertook an investigation about an aspect of poverty, its causes and consequences in the contemporary world and worked towards the development of solutions.

13 The National Volunteering Strategy will be implemented in 2011 (see www.deewr.gov.au).

Evidence indicates that student agency was facilitated through **meaningful engagement in community projects; opportunities for the development of student voice, initiative and leadership; and an explicit focus on ethical, intercultural and social issues.**

Meaningful engagement in community projects

Across the clusters, many students were engaged in authentic community projects, which gave them opportunities to enact their values and to reflect on the different ways they may have contributed to the 'common good'. Examples of this include service learning and outreach projects, incorporating voluntary community work such as 'meals on wheels'; hospitality programs; leadership and mentoring programs; fundraising projects and aid projects such as 'Mini Vinnies'; random acts of kindness activities; and community promotion projects.

These projects complement the comprehensive review of service and community learning provided by Lovat et al (2009a, pp 32–38) in that students were involved in activities to benefit members of the wider community, beyond the classroom, and in structured reflection on their experience and learning. The following comment from a teacher's wiki posting highlights this important relationship between learning about values and acting upon values:

On Friday I was fortunate to be part of the group of Year 4–5 students and teachers from Gordon who visited Goodwin Village on the Outreach Program. The unit of work 'Singing Together, Giving Together' was made meaningful for the students when they participated in their first outreach. Talking with and singing with a 102-year-old resident was a unique learning experience for the children. The student investigators asked questions of both the residents and their classmates, as well as taking photos. I followed up today asking the question, 'How do you think singing at outreach is 'giving' – for you and for the residents?' Responses were varied and thoughtful, and the data gathered showed how much more significant 'values' education is when placed in the context of giving. (Teacher wiki posting, final VASP report, Lanyon Cluster)

This real-life experiential learning that connects students' actions, thoughts and feelings (after Dewey 1963) appeared to generate a deep understanding of 'self and other', and so builds upon the findings of VEGPSP Stage 2 report, which demonstrated the significant values learning for students in projects that are 'deeply personal, deeply real and deeply engaging' (Curriculum Corporation 2008, p 40).

These thoughtful comments from students involved in service learning and outreach projects exemplify the positive personal feelings that many students reported as a result of doing something for others:

I really learnt to mature, to appreciate – just the fact that some people do need help...or they don't have that stuff done. And it's been a real – there's been a real positive change in everyone that I've seen who's done this [Meals on Wheels] program. They've always come back happier and knowing that oh I went out and talked to someone and we had the conversation and then they were a bit unhappy when we first came they were bored or they were sad or angry. But then when I left they were – we were both smiling. And it's been – it's really come down to the values respect and responsibility...And every time you come back it just feels better and better and you get this positive feeling. (Student MSC story, Greater Brisbane Cluster)

> I have realised that giving part of yourself makes me feel really great...this has helped me to change. (Student reflection, final VASP report, Lanyon Cluster)
>
> I felt good...I could see we were making a difference...doing something good. (Student reflection, final VASP report, Lanyon Cluster)

Evidence of the impact of the VASP on student agency can also be seen in reflective comments from teachers. One teacher referred to students developing a values perspective, where they 'take ownership of their choices [and] actions...' (Teacher reflection, post-project survey). One wrote: 'Students got a lot of meaning out of focusing on particular values which could then be consolidated by putting these into use in the community' (Teacher reflection, post-project survey). Another asserted that 'students have to own their own values education. Then it will happen and be sustained' (Teacher reflection, final VASP report, Melbourne Eastern Regions Cluster).

The following story excerpts from parents further illustrate how the values learnt through giving, service and outreach have become integral to children's lives:

> I think [my son] Callum's got a natural empathy in his character anyway, and I think [the project on poverty] helped deepen that...An example of his empathy and his willingness to help others is in the holidays he was asked to help feed a cat across the road and to help out the family, and he was willing to do so...at the end of the holidays the family came home and offered him money and said, 'You must take the money.'...He said, 'No, I really wanted to do this, because this is what I enjoy doing'. But they insisted. So anyway he took the money but he felt uncomfortable. So he decided to deal with that by sharing his money around with his friends...[he] told me that...he would prefer just to do the job without having been paid. And his motivation was just to be kind rather than financial. (Parent MSC story, Southern Highlands Schools)
>
> It's having an opportunity to talk to people outside of her normal scope of family, has made a big difference with her. And just yeah, she comes home and she is now interested in their stories and because she can contact her grandparents because they live away, you know she will often get on the phone now and go, 'Oh, what did you do today?' Instead of before it was always about what I did today and so it is a big change in her whole conversation. (Parent MSC story, Greater Brisbane Cluster).

Explicit focus on ethical, intercultural and social issues

Several clusters designed curriculum and learning experiences for students around ethical, intercultural and social issues, through which they could explore their values and discover more about themselves and others. Examples of these include: fundraising; the youth forum on refugees; the Big Day In forum on poverty; investigations of religions in Asia and human rights; online philosophical inquiries into 'big questions'; and the creation of virtual relationships and a study of the ethical dilemmas associated with these relationships.

The development of students' intercultural understanding is powerfully represented in the story of change above (Story 4, Evaluation Summit, Section 2), where one student describes how an individual can help to bridge the cultural divides that exist in the school and community. Inspired by personal stories of refugees and their experiences prior to and after their arrival in Australia, this student chose to cultivate relationships with refugee students in the school.

Other students revealed how learning about the lives of others motivated them to take individual action to address a serious social issue, as seen in this story excerpt:

Before our school started doing activities on poverty, I knew it was there, but I thought it would be a matter that would be fixed by others, and I sort of ignored it. But then our school started learning about poverty and we went to a program run by Bowral High, which was the Big Day In. And I heard a lady do a PowerPoint presentation on the slums in India and I saw how bad their living conditions were, and how they didn't have things they needed to survive. And I took most, as a society, we usually take most things for granted. Like, if I didn't get a toy I wanted, I would probably get bitterly disappointed. But these people don't have the things they really need. And I thought that if the matter was going to be resolved, everybody had to chip in, including me. So I've started doing charity events like the 40 Hour Famine and other things to raise money for poverty. The school activities have widened my knowledge on poverty, and I want to act and help fix the problem. (Student MSC story, Southern Highlands Schools)

Opportunities for student voice, initiative and leadership

Importantly, the service learning and community projects outlined above placed the student at the centre of the values learning, thereby encouraging initiative, leadership and powerful learning opportunities (see Deakin Crick 2006). One teacher attributed this to 'letting go of the reins' and giving students responsibility and ownership of the project (Teacher reflection, final VASP report, Greater Brisbane Cluster).

Powerful learning opportunities were also evident where students were encouraged to voice their values consciousness through multimedia productions designed to reach a wide community audience, and to demonstrate the responsibility they assumed as global and local citizens. The *Youth Voice Magazine* was produced by students in the Maroondah Education Coalition and demonstrated their thoughts and feelings about human rights. Topics in the magazine included:

- immigration – thoughts and feelings about being in a new place
- writing from refugee students – All about Me, My Destiny and Journey to a Dream
- responses to issues – letters to the editor on asylum seekers and racism
- celebrations of multiculturalism – artwork.

One student involved in this project spoke of the energy that comes from collaborative work with others:

We really do have a lot of views and opinions on things, and when we get together and have the opportunity to talk about them, like we have in this program, then a lot of things can actually be done and we actually do have quite a powerful voice. (Student MSC story, Maroondah Education Coalition)

Another described the impact of open dialogue around cultural and social issues:

'When you can apply this really open, honest discussion about your feelings and about experiences, it really does help understand people.' (Student MSC story, Maroondah Education Coalition)

The Beenleigh Cluster identified apathy as a major issue in the four low socioeconomic school communities. Many believed this apathy was rooted in a large number of students' (and in many cases staff and parents') lack of self-belief in their ability to change their own life circumstances or to positively impact on the world around them. The 'v' video was produced by one school in the Beenleigh Cluster. Students created the lyrics for the song 'Lovin' It', decided which aspects of the community they wished to celebrate in the video, and performed the song and dance moves to camera.

Singin' it Dancin' it Feelin' it Lovin' it

Hey you out there
Mind what you say
About where we live
And where we like to play

'Cause you're talking about the place
Where we belong
It's part of who we are
So come on listen to our song

Beenleigh, Eagleby
This is our community
Bubbling with energy
Filled with opportunity

Caring, Friendly, Thoughtful, Resilient
Colourful and vibrant
Oozing with confidence

Dancin' it Feelin' it Lovin' it
Being who I want to be
Proud of My Community

Fishing in the Logan
Chillin' at the duck pond
Checking out our history
At the rum distillery

Skate Park, Youth space
Footy fields – Hangin' at the Library
Taking in the scenery

Caring for the Wetlands
Picnic at the Red Bridge
Running through the sugar cane
Whoops – I'm gonna miss my train

Sporting Clubs, Theatres
Shopping at the Market Place
Always a festival
We put on a spectacle

Singin' it Dancin' it Feelin' it Lovin' it
Being who I wanna be
Proud of my community

Singin' it Dancin' it Feelin' it Lovin' it
Lovin' life at Beenleigh
Lovin' life at Eagleby

Feel the vibe
Feel the buzz
Feelin' like we've come alive

Livin' where we wanna be
Proud of our community

Feel the buzz
Feel the beat
Lovin' life at Beenleigh
Lovin' life at Eagleby

Singin' it Dancin' it Feelin' it Lovin' it

Student work sample: 'Lovin' It' song lyrics, Beenleigh Cluster

The significant impact of this learning opportunity on students was described by one teacher involved in the production of the 'Lovin' It' video. In relation to one disengaged student, Sam, the teacher commented that:

> …during the community phase of the project where students wrote, sang, danced and recorded their 'Lovin' it' song, Sam enthusiastically volunteered to accept singing and dancing roles and if I think back two years, there'd be no way in the world he would ever consider engaging with something like that. Sam, and other students from the 'at risk' group, has demonstrated increased levels of academic engagement and social involvement. (Teacher MSC story, Beenleigh Cluster)

Figure 6 from the post-project survey shows a strong movement away from teachers' initial perceptions in the pre-project survey in relation to the question: 'How do students in your school act on their values?' It is interesting to note the strong trend from 'sometimes' and 'unsure' to 'always' and 'often'. Further, it is worth noting that this trend has occurred for every item on this question.

How do students in your school act on their values?
Pre-project teacher survey
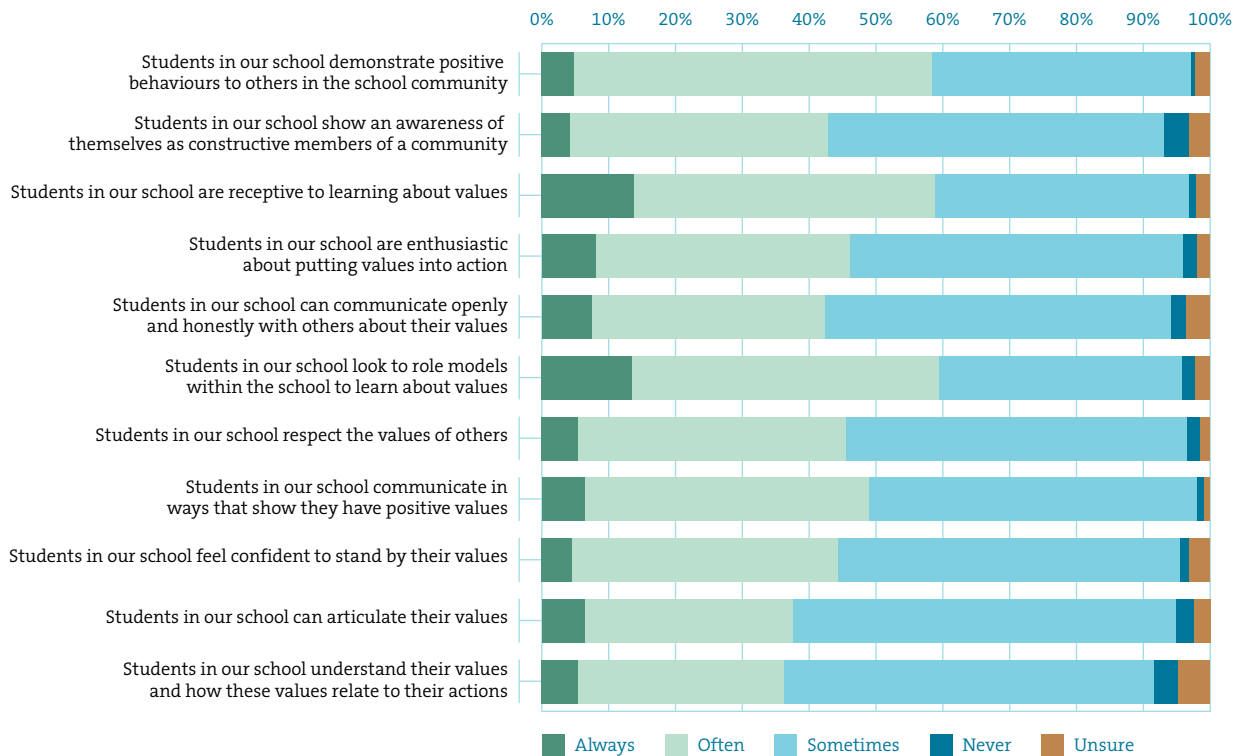
How do students in your school act on their values?
Post-project teacher survey
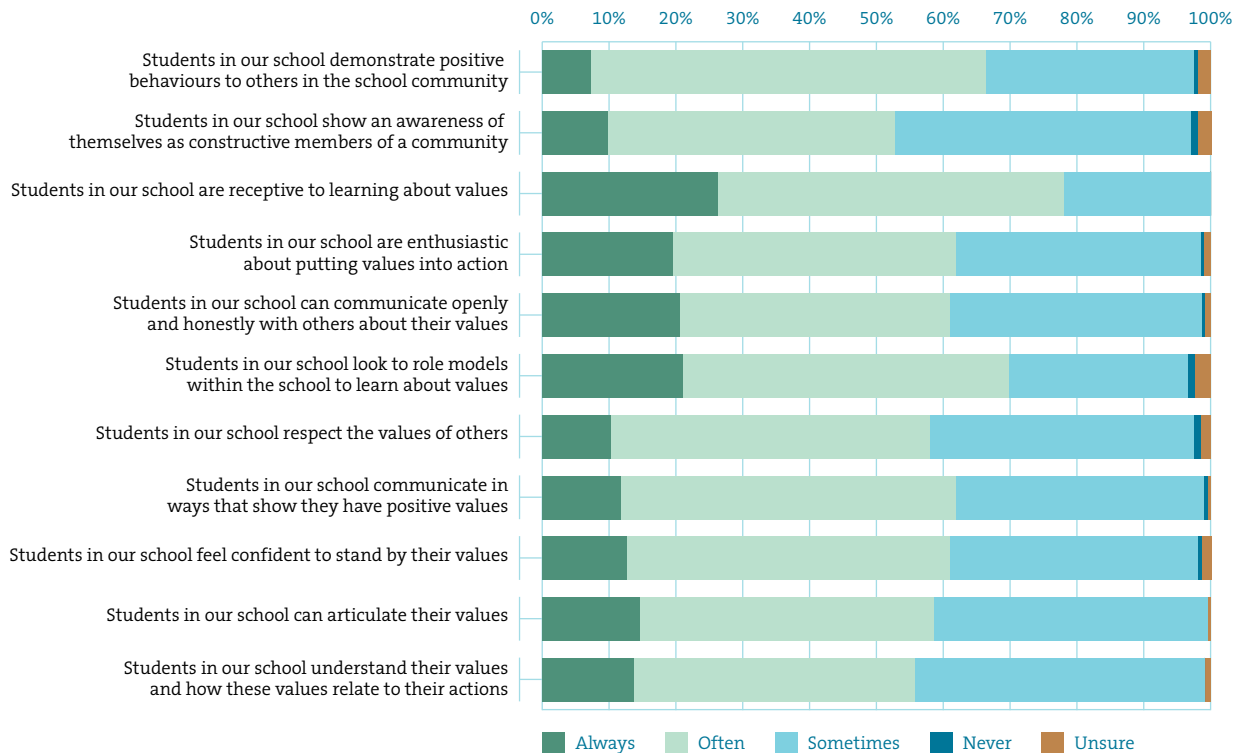
Figure 6: Results of teacher perception surveys

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This may suggest that teachers' perceptions of students' active engagement in values education have changed overall because of one or more of the following reasons:

- They have designed real-life experiences that have facilitated student agency.
- They have, as a result of their participation in the VASP, a deeper understanding of the significance of values learning in contexts that are meaningful to students.
- They have developed positive and open relationships with students, which allow them to more effectively 'notice' students and what they do.

This finding echoes other research that asserts that student agency is supported through a teacher agency developed and enhanced through professional learning programs such as the VASP (see Deakin Crick et al 2005). In recognising the significance of connecting values education to students' lives, it is important for teachers to reflect on how best the whole school community can facilitate this kind of learning. The findings relate to the case studies of student agency in Stage 2 of the VEGPSP (Curriculum Corporation 2008) and confirm that students need to feel safe and supported in their values learning, not least because of the emotional learning experiences they encounter.

This interrelationship between teacher agency and student agency in values education is reflected in a comment from one parent: '[The poverty project] brought home the point to me that it's nice to able to theorise these things (such as empathy, respect and compassion), but putting it into practice is a lot harder (Parent MSC story, Southern Highlands Schools).

Impact 4: Connectedness

The impact of the VASP on the connections made between teachers, students and parents extends the findings of the VEGPSP Stage 2 (Curriculum Corporation 2008) and identifies a clear and positive direction for schools. The relationships forged between students, teachers and parents in many of the clusters supported student engagement in learning; improved parent engagement in their children's learning; and allowed teachers to develop new relationships with their students, each other and the parents and families in their school community.

This impact of the VASP illustrates Wenger's (1998; 2006) concept of communities of practice. Wenger views communities of practice as groups of people who share a concern and passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. The elements of a community of practice include shared domains of interest (in this case, values in action); community, where members build relationships and learn from each other (students, teachers and parents); and practice, where members of the community share stories (eg MSC stories, wiki posts, online forums); resources (eg assessment rubrics, community displays, values-based language); and tools (eg web links).

A focus on relationship building was core to seven clusters; however, all clusters reported improved relationships (albeit to a varying extent) between students and teachers, and teachers and parents.

Cross Border Values Community	Through connecting learners via web 2.0 tools across States and Territories, systems and levels of schools, challenged students to develop capacities to reason about, discuss, reflect upon and respect different perspectives on 'big philosophical questions', and, in so doing, embed values in their daily lives.
Far North Queensland Cluster	Aimed to improve the explicit teaching and learning of values. The intention was to engage students to work with elders, family and community members to develop their understanding and practice of values. Integral to this project was the professional development of staff and parents.
Maroondah Education Coalition	Through classroom and curricular activities focusing on the development of intercultural understanding and Youth Voice, aimed to investigate the values that are important for the development of an inclusive community.
Palmerston Values Cluster	Through the focus on narrative storytelling, aimed to build relationships between students and members of the community, including Indigenous elders, and to share these stories with the broader community.
Reporting Values Cluster	Focused on the development of a shared values language between schools and parents, with the aim of reporting to parents about students' values learning.
Skoolaborate Cluster	Aimed to deliver values education around social and global issues via a blend of face-to-face and innovative virtual experiences in 'Skoolaborate', an island located in the Second Life virtual world.
Tasmanian Values Cluster	Aimed to develop a learning community of four schools, in which teachers, parents and students were actively involved in developing an explicit awareness of their own and others' values.

Evidence indicates that these enhanced connections between students, teachers and parents were developed through **shared goals and practices for values education; the development of mutual feelings of respect, trust and safety;** and **varied opportunities for collaboration**.

Shared goals and practices for values education

Many clusters reported on the power of the partnerships that had been developed through the VASP and the impetus for values education derived from goals and practices shared between the school and the home.

The model of leadership in Story 6 (Evaluation Summit, Section 2), outlining the conscious effort of a principal to create a shared values journey with the school community, illustrates how partnerships operate as a catalyst for change, which 'enrich[es] students' daily lives' (Teacher reflection, post-project survey). The sample newsletter included here highlights the community research initiated by this principal and the school council, and their genuine efforts to build a collaborative values project.

Student Council
Campbell Street Values

The story so far...

This year, the Student Council have begun research throughout our school to find out about what is important to us – what we hold dear.

The idea is to discover what's important to the Campbell Street School community, so that we can celebrate it. We also want to make sure that everything we do at Campbell Street reflects and supports our values.

Our findings...

We began by asking students (in Grades 2–6) what they thought made Campbell Street different from other schools. They identified things like our emphasis on families and our diverse nature.

Recently, we asked students to think of *'Someone I Admire'* and to write about why they admire that person – what qualities they value about them. Students wrote about family members, teachers, writers, sports stars and many other people. The Student Council have summarised the many responses into a more concise list:

Creative	Develop skills	Courageous
Respectful	Good leader	Give others a go
Confident	Clever	Good friend
Good ideas	Funny	Help our country
Management of anger	Tough	Care for the environment
Hard worker	Persistent	Fun to be with
Stick up for what's right	Generous	Kind
Being yourself	Teach about being a good person	Values diversity
Successful	Aiming for/reaching personal best	Helpful
Strong	Honest	Stand up for people
Selfless	Responsible	Care about people
Sensible	Calm	

The student work about *'Someone I Admire'* has been bound into a book, and is available in the foyer for you to admire too! It's really worth a look.

What now...

Teachers will soon share their ideas about what they think students at Campbell Street should be taught to value. Those ideas will be added to our growing collection of research information.

Shortly, students will do another activity in their classes, considering what they and other people value. They will bring home their thoughts about this, and we ask that families take a little time to discuss and write with their child or children about what they think is important, or what they value. Family input to our research is very important to us, and we'd love to have your say.

The responses of families, students, teachers and other members of the Campbell Street community will then be put together, and we'll have one last activity where we may try to rank or prioritise them.

We hope that this research will give us more of an idea about what makes Campbell Street School unique. As stated in our High Five Goals, this research should help us to teach everyone how they can **'Be Your Best'**.

School newsletter, Campbell Street Primary School, Tasmanian Values Cluster

Other examples of collaborative partnerships between schools and families include parent and community forums, storytelling by elders in the community, collaborative assessment tasks, surveys, interviews, community displays, celebration evenings and web links.

Opportunities for shared practices around values – in both school and home contexts – are also highlighted here, where two parents from the same cluster refer to the use of a shared values language as a powerful tool for learning:

So I just am grateful this, the values project, has made explicit a common shared language, that children, parents and teachers have all agreed on and are using in everyday sort of situations. (Parent MSC story, Reporting Values Cluster)

I think the most significant change for me is that, and my family unit, it's not just for me personally, is that the [VASP] project has given us a more concrete tool I suppose to discuss and develop values within our family. Although as parents I think we incidentally and implicitly talk about values as situations arise, and I know that the teachers have spoken about that happening in the classroom, I think the values project has given my children and my husband and I some more concrete language as a tool to discuss, you know, around the dinner table, what values are, what it is to be a kind and respectful member of our family and our community. (Parent MSC story, Reporting Values Cluster)

In light of efforts such as these to build improved connections across the school and wider community, some cluster reports and other evidence attested to parents being 'grateful' to support their child in values-based work at home (Teacher reflection, post-project survey) or of the 'huge enthusiasm and desire' of parents to be given the opportunity to be involved at a deeper level in their child's values education with the school (Teacher reflection, post-project survey). One parent described the partnerships established in her school as a 'triangle created from the community to the children, from the community to the teachers, to the teachers to the students, whatever way you want to see that' (Parent MSC story, Reporting Values Cluster).

This establishment of a shared commitment to, and involvement in, the values education of students/children was also seen to impact on the relationship developed between teachers in the cluster schools. As an example of this, one teacher described in detail the evolution of a sense of belonging and community not previously felt:

And for what this project has allowed me to do, it's provided the opportunity for me to be working with parents and students about something that I'm really excited about and that resonates very dearly with me, which is values education. I think it is central to a child's education and wellbeing, and being given the time to actually work, not only with fantastic teachers across two other schools, but also with parents who are coming to grips with similar issues that we were coming to grips with, I think with us all going through this, working out what is values, whose values are we teaching, what are community values, what are the school values, what are home values, where does all of this fit in. (Teacher MSC story, Reporting Values Cluster)

The development of mutual feelings of respect, trust and safety

The communities of practice (Wenger 1998; 2006) established around the VASP facilitated mutual feelings of respect, trust and safety (building on Curriculum Corporation 2008; see also Lovat et al 2009b). One teacher summed up the significance of this with the comment that values education is 'all about relationships and it underpins all we do as a successful school' (Teacher reflection, post-project survey). Comments such as: 'My teacher shows care and compassion when we are upset. He makes us happy again by making us laugh' (Student reflection, University Advisor's report, Catholic Schools of the Clarence); and 'I think they've become more caring and very supportive of me' (Teacher MSC story, Far North Queensland Cluster) illustrates a common concern.

There were many similar reports of improved and stronger relationships between teachers, students and parents. All spoke of improved relationships in the classroom, school and home; noticeable improvements in respectful behaviours; opportunities to share thoughts and feelings in environments that were safe and built on trust; greater understanding of others; and the support that comes for values education when everyone works together (see also the findings of Lovat et al 2009b). Stories, such as the ones included here, illuminate the power and influence of these changes:

Now, the most significant change I think would be in the teacher and the children in that class. The teacher now sits in the social circle, shares with the children, listens to the children and actually responds and follows up on what he hears on what is shared. There's a particular child in that class who has not been diagnosed as autistic, but may well be in the spectrum, and that child never used to share much at all. But now he actually talks, and when he's holding the talking piece, he actually shares his feelings and what he's thinking. And from then until now, the children in that class are actually all sharing and they, when they're holding the talking piece, they talk for quite a long time, and they share their feelings. And that teacher, the actual shift in that teacher, is amazing. He not only interacts with them, but he actually speaks at a level which can't be heard in the rest of the building...He actually speaks in a way that the children know that he can be trusted and that he's listening to them and responding to them. (Teacher MSC story, Melbourne Eastern Regions Cluster)

I was amazed at how mature and thoughtful the students were. There were times when students spoke openly about their feelings in front of others. This made me proud that they were so trusting. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey).

Since we have been doing this thing, the whole class has sort of gained trust in everyone and so out in the playground we wouldn't used to play with each other. The girls would do their handball and stuff and the boys would play touch football. But now since we have been doing the values, everybody has joined together and they know how to trust each other. (Student MSC story, Far North Queensland Cluster)

An important alternative perspective came from one teacher who underscored the significance of the relationships developed between students and people previously unknown to them:

Students have been provided with an opportunity to meet and develop relationships with people in the community that they would not normally do so in their everyday life. This has enabled them to develop a broader perspective and understanding of the community in which they live. (Teacher reflection, University Advisor's report, Greater Brisbane Cluster)

One reflective comment from a teacher stressed how the establishment of trust and an open approach was central to effective values education because 'talking values with parents is a very emotional subject...people [need to be] comfortable sharing' (Teacher reflection, post-project survey).

Varied opportunities for collaboration

In addition to the many and varied opportunities for clusters to develop connections between teachers, students and parents, as described above, innovative contexts for relationship building were also evident across two clusters. Here students communicated via web 2.0 technologies and explored values learning online, as shown in the samples included below.

Cross Border Values Community project

These clusters have demonstrated the potential of web 2.0 tools to facilitate and enhance connectedness around values learning and provide compelling evidence of the rich possibilities for relationship building and engagement within and across school and community sites. An interesting and important feature of the Cross Border Values Community project was the inclusion of parents in the virtual environment, where students engaged in 'big philosophical questions' around ethical and moral dilemmas.

The creation of virtual relationships in the Skoolaborate Cluster project also points to the challenging nature of values education in this medium. In assuming the roles of avatars in Second Life®, students faced dilemmas around the questions of 'Who are you in the virtual world?' and 'Whose values do you operate with?' These dilemmas arose because some students felt that values did not apply in this domain because the virtual world is not real.

Figure 7 provides further evidence of the perceived importance of school–community partnerships. In response to the question 'What is the nature and purpose of values education in schooling?', it is interesting to focus on the item 'Values education is the responsibility of parents', and, importantly, the movement away from strong agreement noted in the pre-project survey towards a more mixed response in the post-project survey. This trend may suggest that teachers appreciated the mutual responsibility for students' values learning, but were unable to indicate this clearly, given the response options available to them.

What is the nature and purpose of values education in schooling?

Pre-project teacher survey
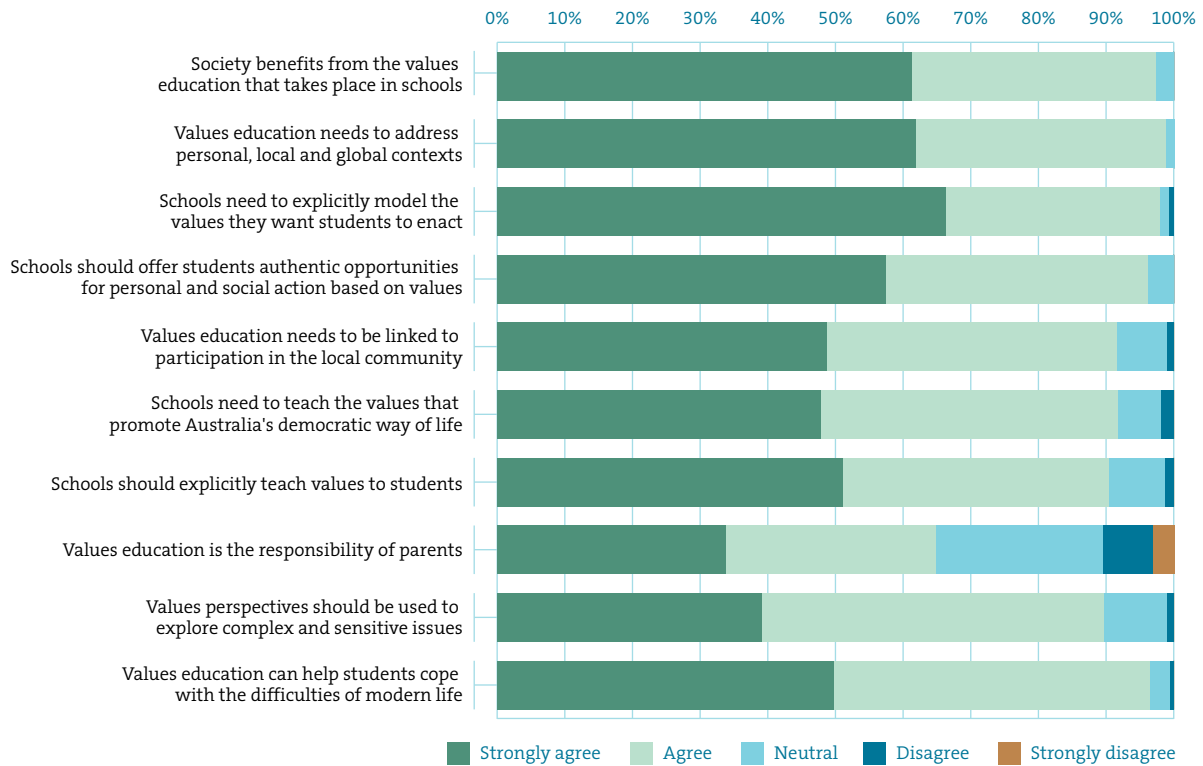
What is the nature and purpose of values education in schooling?

Post-project teacher survey
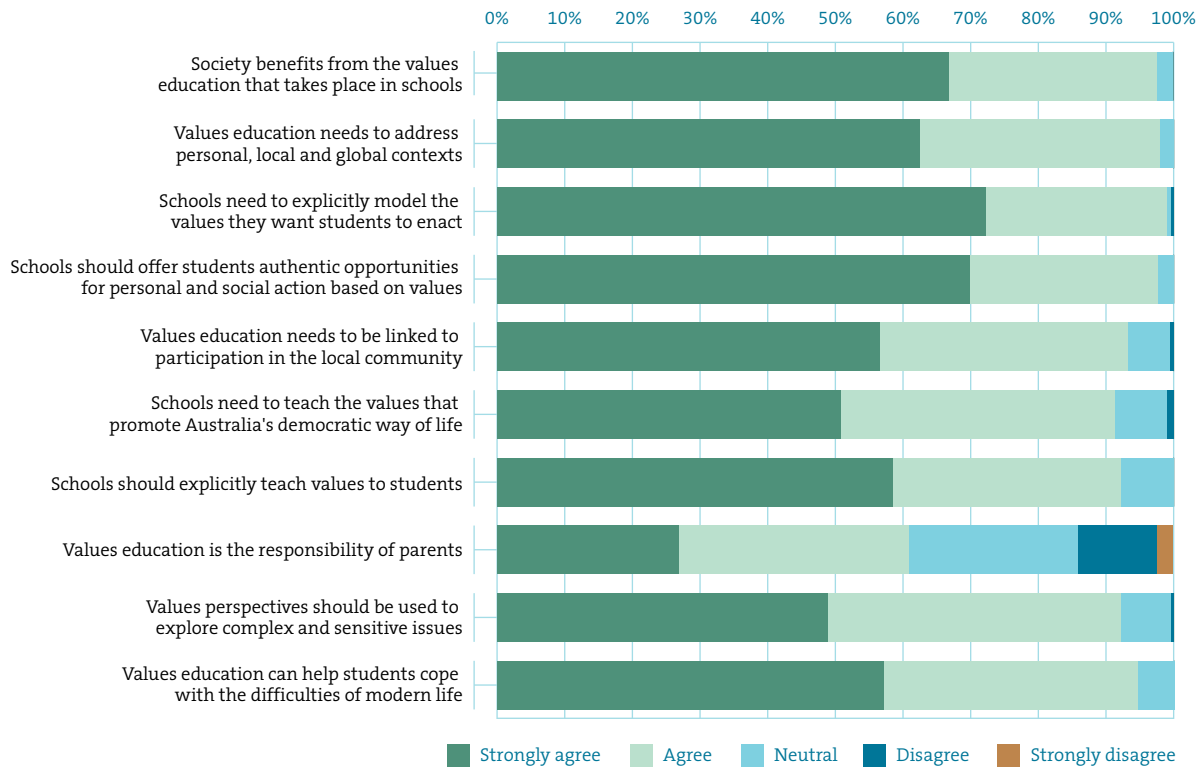
Figure 7: Results of teacher perception surveys

Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project

It is worth noting that the nature of the relationships established between members of the different communities of practice through the VASP, as revealed in both qualitative and quantitative data, both confirm and contrast with the findings of Lovat et al (2009b) in their report to the Australian Government on the impact of values education on student effects and school ambience. The connections built through many of the VASP projects exemplify the quality outcomes for students, teachers and parents that arise from community engagement. This is particularly the case for the relationships established between teachers and parents.

The following reflective comments from teachers on the post-project survey demonstrate this:

Confirmed: That students, parents and teachers have to work together in implicitly and explicitly teaching values. It is not the role of parents alone. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

I have realised the importance of involving parents at a deeper level. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

Partnership with parents STRENGTHENS values education. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

Impact 5: Transformation

Change and transformation was the heart of the VASP in that all clusters implemented their values projects using an action research cycle process and were encouraged to apply the principles of good practice in values education (Curriculum Corporation 2008). Teachers were encouraged to engage in continuous reflection on the action they implemented in their schools (Schön 1983).

This systematic reflection on action taken was incorporated into the VASP through the Most Significant Change stories and the Evaluation Summit; the briefing sessions; pre- and post-project surveys; mid-project and final VASP reports; and the analysis of different forms of evidence to illustrate impacts. It is worth emphasising the unique contribution of the VASP to reflective practice in values education through this range of activities and through the inclusion of the reflections of parents and students in the evaluation of project impacts.

Although reflective practice in values education was central to all the schools involved in the VASP, six clusters planned their action projects around teacher professional learning, teachers as researchers, or the evaluation of teacher practice.

Far North Queensland Cluster	Aimed to improve the explicit teaching and learning of core values based on faith values, cultural values and the National Framework. Professional learning for staff was central to this action.
Flinders Park–Whyalla Link Values Cluster	Aimed to evaluate current approaches to student transition across school settings with the intention of establishing supportive communities considerate of student wellbeing.
Lanyon Cluster of Schools	Focused on teachers as researchers, where an action research model was implemented to deepen teachers' understanding of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, to evaluate the impact of teaching values and to produce evidence of student learning in relation to both values and academic learning.
Melbourne Eastern Regions Values Cluster	Within the context of improved student learning outcomes, focused on the professional development of teachers and the development of positive teacher–student relationships.
Palmerston Values Cluster	As part of a longer-term initiative to prioritise values education in the cluster schools, this project aimed to establish a professional community of teachers around various approaches appropriate to the explicit teaching of values.
Reporting Values Cluster	The action research process was used to assist teachers to work with parents in developing appropriate assessment language and tasks to evaluate students' values learning and to report this clearly and accurately to parents.

The transformations reported by clusters centred around changes in professional practice as well as personal attitudes, behaviours, relationships and group dynamics. Transformations were experienced and observed by teachers, students and parents alike.

Evidence indicates that these transformations were supported through the **momentum and opportunities for change provided through the values projects.**

Momentum and opportunities for change provided through the values projects

There is widespread evidence across all the data sources of the 'ripple effect' of the values projects and the momentum created for widespread professional and personal change. In particular, the MSC stories and the reflective comments included with the post-project survey provide valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of this change, as shown here:

I am definitely more aware of the positive impact that the explicit teaching of values has to students. I feel it has a major impact on their lifelong learning as positive, productive citizens and to them as individuals acting and thinking effectively within society. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

[I am] new to the world of [values education] and I have been thoroughly converted to the idea of teaching values explicitly and creatively in our schools. The development of our teachers as well as the students who have participated has been astonishing. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

I [developed] a deeper resolve and commitment to pursue a very explicit approach to teaching values. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

[The VASP] has asked me to take a risk in my teaching and I have loved it. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

Some of the transformation for teachers was so comprehensive that it was described in terms of a 'cultural shift' (Teacher MSC story, Palmerston Cluster) or a 'paradigm shift' (Teacher MSC story, Palmerston Cluster). Three examples here illustrate the extent to which the focus on values transformed teachers, schools and communities:

An example of the increased evidence of explicit values teaching and a shared values language: One parent inquired about some perceived bullying saying, 'May I talk with you within a values context?' The teacher, who taught both students concerned, was able to provide evidence to the parent of work being undertaken through a friendship circles activity completed while focusing on kindness, care and compassion. (Teacher reflection, final VASP report, Tasmanian Values Cluster)

Teachers across the school are now teaching an activity/activities that ask the question, 'What do I value?' Students then take the work home and discuss it with their families. Seems to have taken on a self-stimulating momentum. Everywhere I go people are either talking to each other or to me about values. Teachers want to share activities with each other, and discuss family responses. Teachers are proud of what their students and families are saying about values. One teacher commented that she reckons she should send home good work more often, since her families have commented how good it is to share their child's learning. Support staff are discussing values during morning tea. Office staff have given me feedback forms within a couple of days of receiving them – lots of thoughtful ideas. (Teacher reflective journal, Tasmanian Values Cluster)

The pride that the project has inspired in the parents and community is outstanding. We had some of our most disconnected parents attend the combined performance day and comment how proud they were. We had a number of residents from the local retirement village attend our performance day and they ended up in tears as the children's affirmations were so powerful and moving. (Teacher reflection, University Advisor's report, Beenleigh Cluster)

Professional transformation was also highlighted in comments from teachers about the future directions for their schools: 'I believe that the next step for our school is to provide future opportunities for children to practise their values in action and to feel the inner "goodness" that comes from being a good person and treating others well' (Teacher reflection, post-project survey).

It is also necessary to emphasise that a number of reports from teachers stated that the VASP confirmed, rather than transformed, their practice or their perspectives on values education, as seen in these reflective comments:

VASP has once again confirmed my strong belief that values education, both explicit and implicit, must underpin all we do in our schools. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

It has confirmed for me that the teaching of values is important and valuable. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

Reflections from teachers also point 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'. Another reflected that:

[The VASP was an] absolutely fantastic experience for me both personally and professionally and to see the growth in student awareness, caring and acceptance of responsibility has just been the best thing. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

One teacher wrote that she now believes 'students benefit immensely from the teaching of values explicitly', and one commented that 'through involvement in real-life values projects, values learning occurs through purposeful projects that occur as a result of a genuine need or issue, not by learning values out of a book' (Teacher reflections, post-project survey).

As described and shown above, a number of teacher stories focused on the transformation in wellbeing, behaviours and academic learning of students assessed as 'at risk'. The moving story of Jack (Story 3, Evaluation Summit, Section 2) was but one of the many heartfelt recollections of the impact of the VASP on students. In sharing a story about a disaffected student, one teacher emphasised that 'behind this story of Henry is also the story of his two teachers' [transformation]':

For Kevin, in particular, an openness to identify and share feelings and interests seemed to open doors for him to establish new and positive relationships, both with his peers and teachers, and to actively problem solve with the support of his classmates and teachers. The amount of negative self-talk has decreased significantly. Now, Kevin arrives at school with a much more positive outlook to each day. In his learning, he settles to tasks more quickly, remains engaged and completes work to a higher standard. Resistance to participate in low interest tasks has decreased, and Kevin has begun to work towards his potential. He is much happier and is engaging more positively both in and outside the classroom. (Teacher MSC story, Melbourne Eastern Regions Cluster)

Students also told stories of personal change and shared their observations of noticeable changes in others. One student described how the class had 'evolved' and that values have 'helped us become more mature, adjusted kids and it's a great thing to have in your older life and it will help you make friends with people and get along (Student MSC story, Tasmanian Values Cluster). Another student said:

Before I did [values through] philosophy I was more 'believe what you can see'. Since doing philosophy... I've opened up more to my responses and to stuff and school and at home like listening to my mother's opinion on what I've done wrong...It's definitely made me see the world from different angles and perspectives. (Student MSC story, Cross Border Community)

Parents likewise related stories of change, among these, changes in their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours as a result of their involvement in the VASP; changes in their own children's understanding of values; and observed changes in the climate of the school:

Well I suppose just, it's made me question things about the way I bring up the girls with discipline or with encouraging their confidence and things like that. It makes me think more about it instead of focusing on the stuff that they do which isn't good, you know, trying to ignore that and just focusing on all the good things they do and encouraging that more by rewarding them with a kiss or hug or a little present or something like that even, depending on what it is. (Parent MSC story, Far North Queensland Cluster)

[My daughter] talked more. So I suppose the value of care and compassion was higher in her consciousness, so she talked more about what she perceived people needed. So there's a little fella in her class who really struggles at school, socially and academically actually. And she'd come home and say, 'Oh mum, I think this particular child needs a friend he can rely on, a friend who he can trust, a friend who's going to help him, a friend who understands that it's difficult at school'. I think it's always been in her to understand that, but the fact that she was articulating it was new. (Parent MSC story, Lanyon Cluster)

Well being a parent but also being a staff member you know I see things in the playground and all that sort of stuff. But I just noticed a whole change in the whole school. You know it's like a whole blanket has come over the whole school with just their attitude. It's just a calm place. It's just – it's got a real different feel I think this year than the last few years that I've worked here. You know like everyone's getting on. All the different grades are playing together. (Parent MSC story, Far North Queensland Cluster)

Figure 8 provides further evidence of the transformations that have taken place in the cluster schools. In response to the question 'How is values education addressed in your school community?', teachers have moved towards strong agreement/agreement on all items and away from the position of neutrality or disagreement evident in the results of the pre-project survey.

How is values education addressed in your school community?

Pre-project teacher survey

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
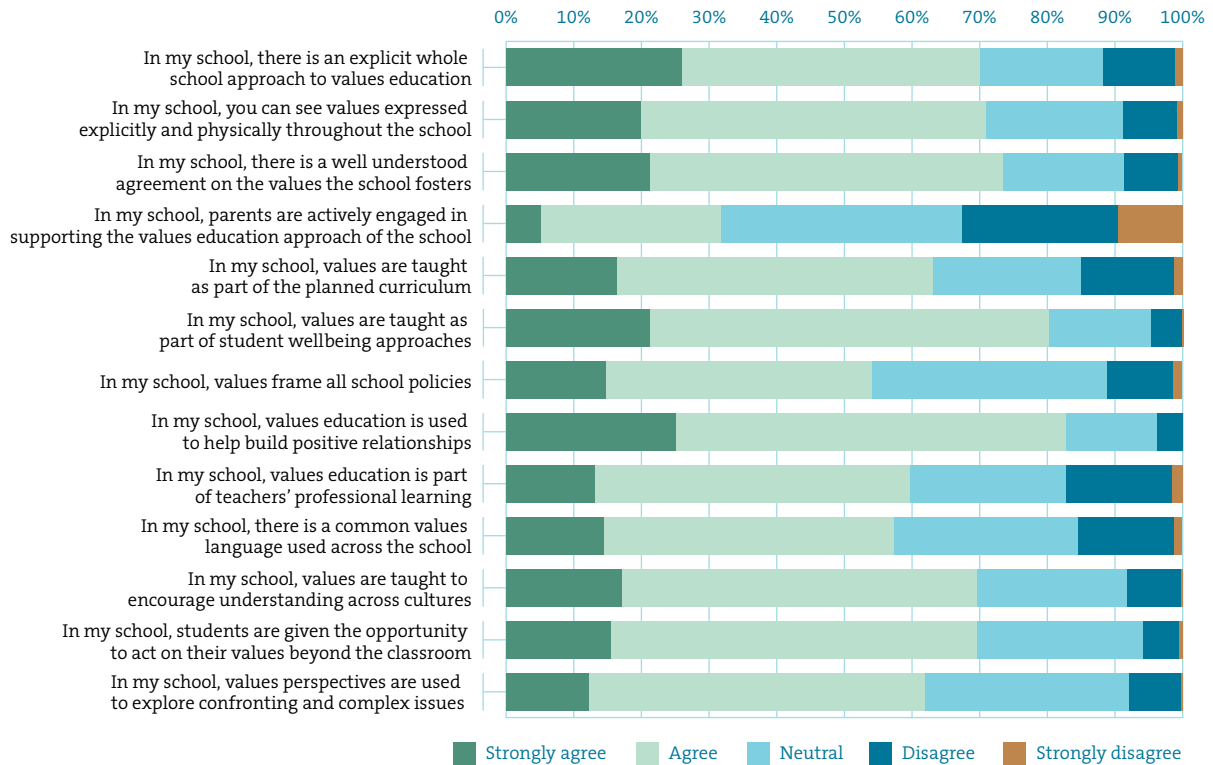
How is values education addressed in your school community?

Post-project teacher survey

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
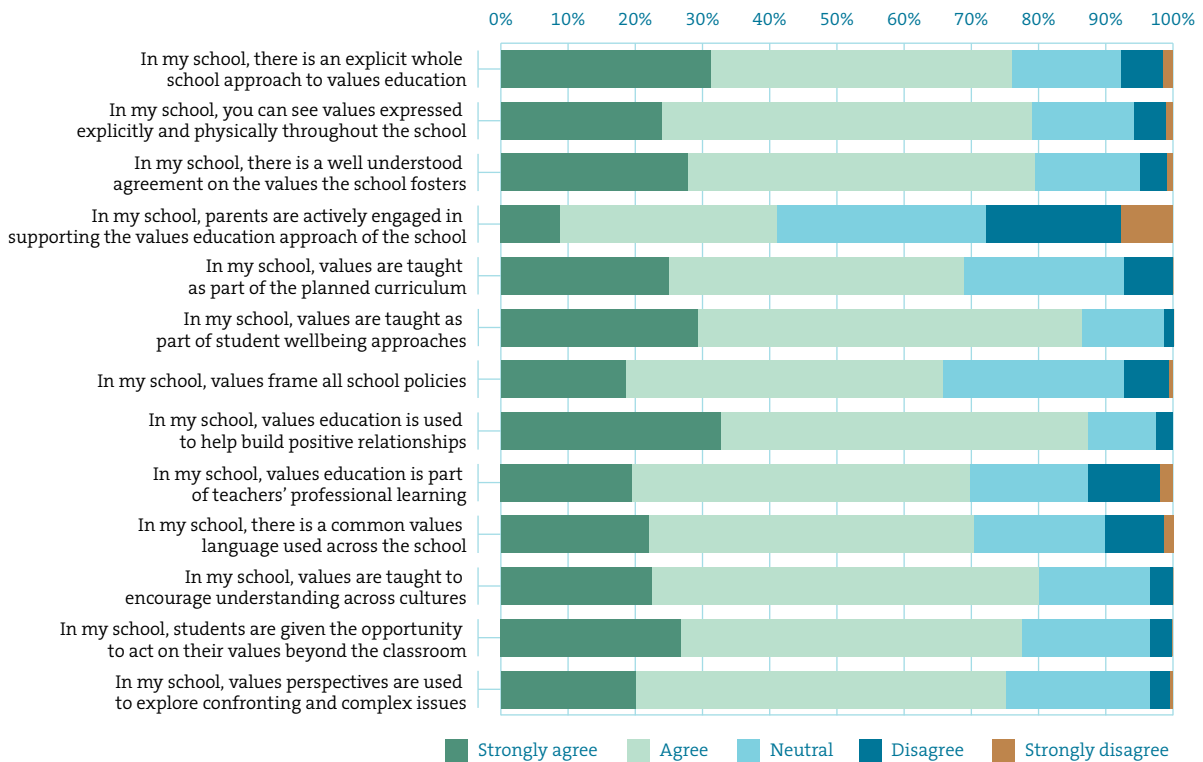
Figure 8: Results of teacher perception surveys

While this kind of trend could be assumed given the focus in the VASP on principles of good practice in values education, it may also point to teachers' increased understanding of what these principles mean in practice and how these can be addressed in school communities.

The findings described here in relation to the impact of transformation resonate with Fullan's (1999) argument that reform in schools must fundamentally involve making a difference to the lives of young people. Within his comprehensive research and scholarship on change in schools and systems, Fullan (2001) asks educators to reflect on what would happen if (teachers) valued students' opinions and what would happen if schools involved the parent community in students' learning. The VASP has shown that profound professional and personal transformation can result when these questions are addressed and that all stakeholders in values education may, as Fullan urges, find meaning in action and change.

Perhaps the depth of this transformation in the VASP can be best portrayed with samples of collaborative artwork produced by students from schools around Australia at the Evaluation Summit. In reflecting on what they and other students have learnt about values, these students represented their understanding, thoughts and feelings.

Collaborative student artwork – Evaluation Summit

Story description: On our painting we have a flower, which represents new life and a new beginning. (Transcript, Evaluation Summit)

Collaborative student artwork — Evaluation Summit

Story description: This painting represents cooperation and teamwork and it is based on other people's values journey. The hands represent cooperation [and how this helps people] to form a group. It also shows older people helping younger people. (Transcript, Evaluation Summit)

Accounts of the VASP cluster projects
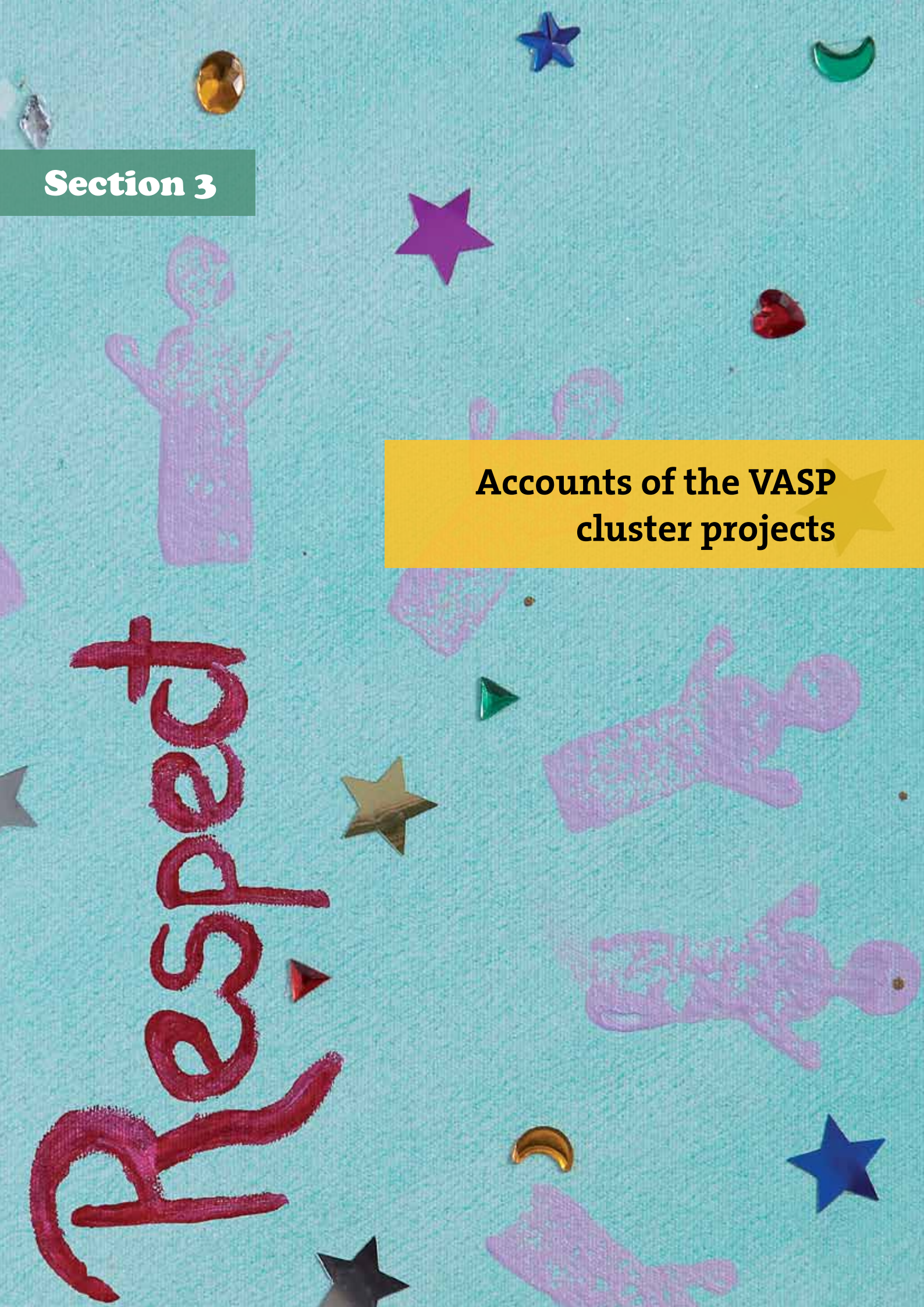
Accounts of the VASP cluster projects

Introduction

Section 3 provides an account of the projects undertaken in the 15 clusters involved in the Values in Action Schools Project (VASP). Each account is unique, reflecting the local design of each project and the data made available from each project. The action research methodology also gave cluster communities the opportunity to make adjustments to their projects in response to local circumstances and lessons learned along the way. These accounts have been constructed from the cluster project plans, the cluster interim and final reports, University Advisor reports, Curriculum Corporation Project Manager observations and the Most Significant Change (MSC) story collections.

The voices of significant change captured during the project evaluation process are a key feature of the VASP project work. In a further development from the work in Stages 1 and 2 of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) participants reported on project impacts is well as describing their experiences in enacting their projects. The MSC story technique captured teachers', parents' and students' perceptions of project impacts in a participatory process that gave the data back to school communities to feed directly into their further values work. Importantly, parents contributed impact stories about their children's behaviours outside school. As parents were engaged in the project from the outset, in the best of cases there was an ongoing dialogue about values both in classrooms and at home. As project staff moved across all 15 clusters speaking with groups of parents, there was a strong sense that the VASP had engaged parents in a new and important way. Many parents expressed their great pleasure that teachers were addressing important social and emotional learning aspects of their children's development. Discussions with parents about the impacts of the VASP were also notable for the emotion they evoked. It was not uncommon for parents to become teary, such was the importance to them of the stories they told.

The précis accounts from the 15 VASP clusters that follow provide an overview of the cluster project activity and the range of the project impact responses.

The 15 VASP clusters were:

Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster
Engaging the Disengaged

Beenleigh Believe, Achieve, Succeed Cluster
Out of Apathy

Catholic Schools of the Clarence
Resilience, Wellbeing and Learning

Cross Border Values Community
Values through ICT and Philosophy

Far North Queensland Cluster
Living Values, Living Relationships

Flinders Park–Whyalla Link Values Cluster
Transitions: Values-based Approaches

Greater Brisbane Schools – Values Education through Service Learning
Embedding Values Education through Service Learning

Lanyon Cluster of Schools
Values Investigators: Teachers and Students Researching Values Together

Maroondah Education Coalition
Youth Voice: Fostering Inclusiveness, Respect and Tolerance

Melbourne Eastern Region Values Cluster
Improving Teacher Practice through Values Education

Palmerston Values Cluster
Living and Growing Our Values

Reporting Values Cluster
Values in Action: Building Resilience and Inclusion

Skoolaborate Cluster
The Values Exchange

Southern Highlands Schools of NSW
Learning and Acting for Poverty

Tasmanian Values Cluster
Connecting Communities

Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster
Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania

Engaging the Disengaged

Participating schools

- Ashley School, Tasmania
- Brisbane Youth Education and Training Centre, Queensland
- Cleveland Education and Training Centre, Queensland
- Dorchester Education and Training Unit, New South Wales
- George Anderson Walpole Education and Training Unit, New South Wales
- Girrakool Education and Training Unit, New South Wales
- Induna Education and Training Unit, New South Wales
- Murrumbidgee Education and Training, Australian Capital Territory
- Putland Education and Training Unit, New South Wales
- Youth Education Centre, South Australia

Cluster Coordinator: Ms Gerri Walker, Youth Education Centre, South Australia

Deputy Coordinator: Mr Richard Manning, Murrumbidgee Education and Training, Australian Capital Territory

University Advisor: Dr Thomas Nielsen, University of Canberra

The project

The Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster drew together ten schools in juvenile detention centres across Australia, including both primary and secondary aged students, in an ambitious project with a unique student population. The overall objective was to increase student resilience and wellbeing by exposing students to explicit values education in a whole school learning environment. This included teachers, students and their primary caregivers – that is, the residential workers who supervised the students in their living units.

This unique cluster adopted a multi-pronged approach to embedding values education. A number of teacher professional development sessions were held with the University Advisor, Dr Thomas Nielsen, to scope the project, develop a shared understanding of the objectives and promote a common values language. The cluster considered how the ten principles from the

VEGPSP Stage 2 work could be incorporated into this project, which centred on activities that required students to give to others and through that to reflect on and interrogate the nature of values for themselves. The aim was for students to develop an understanding of values, translate these into actions within the school context and then apply them more broadly in the context of their own lives.

The cluster organised three national teacher gatherings for professional development, two of which were facilitated by the University Advisor. These included interactive sessions around the themes of:

- values in context
- positive psychology – theory, workshop and the application of this methodology
- research tools – qualitative and quantitative.

The national gatherings proved an invaluable forum for professional development around values understanding and the creation of a shared vision for participating teachers. These gatherings also promoted a whole centre approach. Youth workers joined teachers for two of the gatherings, enabling useful exploration of the relationship between the educational and correctional aspects of the juvenile detention centres.

As one of the youth workers observed:

When staff sit down with the kids in the unit and are able to actively supervise and interact...then... the kids [want] to be involved a lot more, and what I could see in some of the sessions...was...kids at all different levels of education and, I guess, personal experiences, were able to disclose to some of those that were perhaps a bit younger, maybe not exposed to quite as much, and put it in...their own terms, what a specific value actually...meant for them. And then how other younger kids could then relate to that value, whether it was...very much a family orientated type value or whether it was... talking about tolerance and that's when...mum's had a gutful and she doesn't want to do anything more or the other kids are screaming and to make the other group understand...so...that's been...quite a good journey. And one that I think should continue.

The cluster also completed two pre-, mid- and post-project surveys. The first was a Personal Wellbeing Index, which sought responses to the question 'How happy are you?', for seven domains. The second tool was developed by the cluster itself, and asked participants to rate the importance of each of the nine Values for Australian Schooling from the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (DEST 2005) in order to better understand the students' relationship to values, and to observe changes in these relationships over the life of the project.

In addition to these tools, the cluster collected 'impact stories' from the students, in which the students reflected on what they felt they had gained from the project. The following student excerpt exemplifies the comments in the impact stories:

The most important value...at the moment for me is respect. Because you get some of these other values, *like a fair go and freedom, if you show respect in the first place. Because some of these things don't just come, you have to be good to others, and then good things will happen. So, yeah...respect is the most important one for me...If you want to change...it's all up to the person. Nothing else can make them change. But I suppose...the VASP project has...helped in a way...for me to see things in a different point of view, and just start giving back to the community instead of taking from them.*

The greatest challenges for this cluster arose from its unique context. The student population was transient, parents could not be included and the community referred mostly to the correctional facility. It was challenging to maintain focus on a whole centre approach given the competing educational and correctional objectives of the centres. Further, the profile of the student population – generally the most disengaged and disaffected students – posed a real challenge in terms of developing socially shared values. The cluster focused on using thinking, feeling, doing and discussing as the best method of sustaining the values work beyond each student's stay in a centre. Each school implemented the 'giving' project according to its local needs. The variety of projects included artistic performance, community projects, service projects (such as creating an artwork for a women's refuge), building and construction, and development of innovative curriculum. Overall, the staff involved in the project felt that it had a significant impact on their teaching and provided opportunities to enable young people to understand and respect values, and to look within themselves at how they could use values to effect positive change. This extended account from a teacher in one centre illustrates how the project worked in one context:

Prior to the VASP project...because of our predominantly short-term remand context, we really considered values education to be something that wasn't highly relevant to us... Participation in this project...was a catalyst for us to focus on...what can we do...and as a result of joining in this project we really embarked on quite an exciting and different journey as a school community. We commenced with brainstorming as to how we, as a whole school staff, could facilitate values education.

We had the focus on giving to others...One staff member embedded it in every aspect of her curriculum. She did have a stable cohort of students for about a four-week period, which for us is really quite significant and exciting. She used explicit teaching of values, the core values, each day with her students...the young people [had] to come up with a good thing that they were grateful for every day while they were at school, and within the context of young people facing court, young people who were dealing with, you know, horrific life circumstances. Initially that was very difficult...but in the end they would come out with some fairly profound insight into their own condition, and the changes that [were] occurring in their thinking... They were able to actually sit back and reflect that, despite being in a sea of trouble, there was always something positive that they could focus on, and that was very, very powerful.

The teacher and her class were discussing ways of giving and they...decided to focus on the Grafton Women's Refuge as a fantastic avenue to not only engage in some healing of some of the issues early in their life, but a way of giving to mums and kids in distress. So they thought, 'Well how can we give? How can we, locked up in secure care with no money, no resources, give to mums and kids in distress?', and they...made Anzacs and gingerbread men and gave them to the women's refuge to give to mums and kids when they'd arrive in the refuge. And they engaged in a very, very large artwork, into which went a lot of thought...as to what they would represent in their artwork and the way of giving to mums and kids when they arrive...It is based on an ocean theme because they thought the ocean gave an automatic calming feel to mums and kids. It is also filled with symbolism and it's filled with Aboriginal artistic designs. It's a stunning piece of work...

Arising out of our most significant change is the realisation...that there is...a fundamental place for values education in our schools, irrespective of whether it's a short-term remand of a few days, or in fact for longer periods, and there are so many unique and creative ways for us to give, and for our students to give, and to feel good about it.

Key outcomes

- Participants reported that the detention centres felt more humane and normalised as a result of the positive values education work.

- The whole of centre approach, where the youth workers and teachers attended the national gatherings and worked together on the project, is a model that other centres want to implement because of the unifying effects of the collaboration.

- Teachers noted calmer classrooms and improvements in the quality of student work.

- The place of values education as a pedagogical as well as moral imperative and the possibilities this created for developing exciting, innovative curriculum, quality teaching and service learning reinforced the 'troika' principle.

- The project enhanced relationships between staff and students, and between centres and their surrounding communities, which broke down stereotypes and improved harmony within the centres and with outsiders and improved students' perception of their own value to the outside community.

- Participants and cluster leaders reported evidence of improvements in multiracial relations and a reduction in behavioural problems and racial abuse.

- Students who positively engaged in role modelling and peer mentoring appeared to have a stronger sense of now and the future, and a shift from the egocentricity and self-centredness that generally characterises this cohort.

Beenleigh Believe, Achieve, Succeed Cluster
Queensland

Out of Apathy

The project

The Beenleigh Cluster project, *Out of Apathy*, drew together one high school and three primary schools in southern metropolitan Brisbane. The schools identified apathy as a major issue in the cluster's four low socioeconomic school communities. Many believed this apathy was rooted in a large number of students' (and in many cases staff and parents') lack of self-belief in their ability to change their own life circumstances or to positively impact on the world around them. The project proposition was based around Habermas's theory that 'there is no knowing without the knower…and the knower is oneself', and aimed to address this issue of deep-rooted lack of self-belief and self-knowing.

In all four schools, selected staff and students participated in a series of self-discovery workshops where performing and visual arts provided the vehicle for self-expression. Importantly, the designers of the program realised that it was vital for the teachers involved in the project to experience the workshop and values-rich activities that they were expected to deliver to their selected classes. Many commented on the transforming nature of their experience, and of the deep emotions that were stirred up as a result

of their participation in the project. Following the cascading implementation of self-discovery workshops, first with students in the secondary school and then with primary-aged students, participating schools worked on projects that were designed to make their local community a better place to be. The project design also placed students in mentoring and leadership positions to further model the values being explored.

Parents and school staff became the audience for students to emerge and tell the world 'who they are', 'what they stand for', 'what they are capable of' and 'how they relate to the world around them' as part of a multi-arts presentation. The culminating activity involved students reflecting on their learning through a multi-arts presentation to the wider community.

A range of project impacts were observed. One teacher shared a perception that changes could be tracked to both herself and her students:

The most significant change I've noticed is confidence in the kids and myself. Back at [the Performing and Visual Arts workshop] I was completely terrified of doing absolutely anything they made me do. But by the end of it I was…I don't

know if it's the group of people I was with, or it was just that the activities got me out of my shell a bit more, but I became a bit more confident...to join in the activities...rather than sit back. And I've seen that with my kids too. Through the activities we've done, they've become more confident. The girl I've got outside she was never like me, terrified to do these 'get up in public things' but she's gone above and beyond now.

Another teacher observed the strong connection between pedagogy, teacher commitment and student engagement:

I found the children in my class were actually the most committed to the project, which reinforced... the philosophy of teaching and the philosophy of education – if the teacher's into it, the kids are into it.

Yet another teacher commented on the changes she observed in herself and in her students, typifying the increased self-confidence and self-reliance that has emerged for individuals involved in the project:

From my own point of view, I guess, the use of a different approach in my own teaching...has actually helped to revolutionise my teaching... And I'm very conservative, generally. [I] could be perceived as a little bit rigid and inflexible in the way that I would like to do things and I would like the students to behave. So it's given me other avenues to actually allow students the opportunity for greater self-expression, self-exploration.

Students were also deeply affected by the immersion in values-based self-exploration, and many offered stories of often painful but positive change. One student shared her growing sense of agency and control over her own life:

It's been really hard on me because, like, me and my family just don't get along and so I think this values thing's really worked because, without it, I wouldn't have made friends and I wouldn't be here. I would be sitting back just looking at the things I

could be doing, without this values project. But it's a really big thing now because it's helped me a lot through hard times and it's just, it's good because you come out with all the things like friends. And even though family things still need patching, I just think it is working and it's helping me through my schooling and the real world and without it I would be really lost. And I think it's helped a lot of people through it as well.

Another student reflected on her increasing self-confidence resulting from the project:

The values program has changed me because I used to be really, really shy and I've come out of my shell. And I used to do things alone and now I do stuff with other people, and I've met a lot of people to share things with, and share my ideas.

Parents also commented on their children's increasing engagement with learning and taking action where they previously would have remained passive:

...but one thing that I've felt was more significant about her changes in this year was very recently she said she noticed some kids teasing other kids in the playground and it was a girl in the special ed class, and she didn't stand back and say 'That's not very nice is it?' She actually went over and put a stop to it and took the girl away from the situation.

Key outcomes

- Students demonstrated increased confidence and leadership through mentoring primary school students in activities encouraging self-discovery and creative expression.
- There was broad evidence of personal growth in the students who performed for others through dance, drama and music.
- The teachers developed a deep appreciation of the arts as a context for values-based work.
- A strong connection developed between secondary and primary students.
- Students applied their increased self-knowledge and creative expression into service learning projects shared through YouTube video clips, collages, singing, acting and dance performances, mural painting at a local shopping centre, postcards and calendars.
- Strong and respectful relationships were built between students, and between teachers and students.
- There was broad evidence of teacher change in terms of pedagogy and the perceived value of values education.
- Authentic connections have been established between the schools and the wider community, with strong connections made with parents.

Resilience, Wellbeing and Learning

The project

The Catholic Schools of the Clarence cluster comprised ten primary schools on the northern New South Wales coast. Although geographically dispersed over 200 kilometres, the cluster schools have a partnership relationship built around an established Diocesan structure. Promoting student resilience, wellbeing and learning are clearly articulated goals in all ten of the schools in this cluster. Many have a high proportion of students in lower socioeconomic status bands and one school has a 96% enrolment of Indigenous students.

This project aimed to build student resilience and wellbeing, and improve academic and social outcomes, through the implicit and explicit teaching of values. This teaching incorporated a three-tiered approach addressing content, process and application, which ensured that values were embedded in school units of work, particularly in the human society and its environment learning area. In addition, the cluster schools aimed to embed cooperative and higher-order thinking strategies across all key learning areas. This included the key elements of effective learning gleaned from the Project for Enhanced Effective Learning (PEEL), (Baird & Mitchell 1997), and structured, developmentally appropriate curriculum in social and emotional learning using the Bounce Back! program model (McGrath & Noble 2003).

One of the main initiatives of the cluster project was the establishment of collaborative curriculum writing teams. These teams, drawn from each school, worked together to audit current curriculum, plan values-rich units of work and participate in a residential writing

weekend to draft the new units of work. The units were then made accessible to all staff via the Catholic Education Office Online Learning Centre. Alongside this curriculum development aspect of the project, most schools in the cluster adopted a whole school approach to explicitly teach all or some of the nine values from the National Framework. The strategies they employed to teach the values included defining and describing each of the values using Y charts (looks like, sounds like, feels like) displaying the values in pictures; text and photos around the school and in newsletters to parents; enacting a 'value of the week'; and dedicating specific class and homework activities to values education.

This explicit teaching of values and use of a shared values language led to a number of positive impacts in the cluster schools. One teacher in a school with a predominantly Indigenous population described how students had benefited from concentrating on just two values – respect and responsibility – and how exploring the meaning of these two values allowed students to 'own' their behaviours, leading to improved relationships and behaviours:

What we're finding is the children have a much greater awareness of where they have gone wrong or where their mate might have gone wrong, and they can verbalise it now which is great because before they would have just got angry and hit each other.

Another teacher reflected on the power of the nine core values when they are used by teachers in a consistent and coherent way to reward student behaviour and engage student interest:

While Kids Matter and Bounce Back! literature has been issue specific, eg bullying, anger, sadness etc, the nine core values have been far-reaching and versatile in their application...The succinct description of each value has facilitated teachers talking the talk of values education and highlighting children who are walking the walk in using those values much better than before.

Children have been noticeably attentive during Monday morning exclamations of each value and during awards ceremonies for children being rewarded for utilising the values. They appear to show genuine interest in what value is going to be delineated next, and related to what were otherwise confusing concepts because they have been put into the context of the school.

Echoing a key finding in both Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP, parents commented on what their children brought home from school-based values education approaches. They noted that once values are explicitly established within a school, the whole school community 'implicitly model values and explicitly foster the modelling of values' (Curriculum Corporation 2008, p 11). One parent commented on discussions around the family dinner table, where children conducted a dialogue around the relative merits of 'random acts of kindness':

But the other really good thing that's come about in my mind is that at dinner we've talked about who's got the [values] award and what they got it for, and they pass a value judgement on, 'Well I don't think it was that big a deal, just opening a rubbish bin lid'...But then you can say, 'How do you think it made the other person feel though?' So it's actually given us an opportunity to explore and we've also had a bit of a thing where they've said 'I was a bit disappointed because I did something really good and I wasn't noticed'. And so we've had a chance at home to talk about the intrinsic value of doing something kind for people...not just for what they get out of it, but how it should make you feel to help somebody out.

Key outcomes

- Whole staff commitment across the cluster (200 staff) to values education was built through professional development focusing on resilience, self-confidence, self-esteem and optimism.
- In all schools, leadership teams were established to take responsibility for values education.
- There was evidence of the explicit teaching and modelling of values across the cluster, which included strategies for defining and describing values; reinforcing values in spontaneous interactions with students ('catch them if they are good'); symbolising values through illustrations, text and visual images; written reflections; student role-plays; problem-solving scenarios; random acts of kindness boards; and 'mini Vinnies'.
- There was an increased student awareness, articulation and demonstration of what values mean in real-life contexts.
- In all schools, collaborative writing teams designed and developed four units of work embedding values and specific strategies fostering resilience, self-confidence, self-esteem and optimism. The units were trialled across four schools.
- All members of the school community began sharing the same values language and understanding of what values mean.
- A collaborative student learning community was established across the cluster schools using Moodle.™
- The cluster reported some evidence of positive change in student behaviour, increased student wellbeing, resilience and improved academic outcomes.
- There was broad appreciation of the MSC technique as an important research tool for future projects.

Cross Border Values Community
Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia

Values through ICT and Philosophy

Participating schools

- Victor Harbor R7 School, South Australia
- Spearwood Primary School, Western Australia
- Mataranka Primary School, Northern Territory
- Peregrine School, Tasmania
- Birdwood High School, Western Australia
- Yankalilla School, South Australia

Cluster Coordinator: Mr Mark Sparvell , Kadina Primary School, South Australia (on behalf of the lead school, Victor Harbor R7 School, Victor Harbor, South Australia)

Deputy Coordinator: Mrs Judith McLean, Mataranka Primary School, Mataranka, Northern Territory

University Advisor: Emeritus Professor Robert Crotty, University of South Australia

The project

Linking primary and high school students across four states through virtual and real-time information technology, the Cross Border Values Community cluster set out to engage their school communities in an online philosophy project to develop students as deep reflective thinkers capable of making moral and ethical decisions. This cluster had previously participated in Stage 2 of the VEGPSP, exploring the use of ICT to develop student thinking skills and encourage values discussions. The *Values through ICT and Philosophy* project aimed to engage with the whole school community – including parents – at a deeper level than had been achieved in the earlier work. The leading questions for the project were:

- How do we develop students as deep reflective thinkers?

- Could philosophy be a mechanism to explore the ethical frameworks that underpin the behaviours we identify as values based?

The cluster established an online tool (Moodle™) to explore 'big issues', such as 'Is it ever right to kill?' Through this network, students had the opportunity to explore, discuss, debate and defend a position they hold that is shaped by their own moral and ethical framework. Rules of conduct were established to ensure that discussions modelled values of respect, consideration, tolerance and fairness. As the project progressed, student interest increased and parents also became involved. This varied across the sites. In some sites students were given philosophical challenges to take home and work through with parents before reporting back to class. Other schools set up a philosophy lesson in school with parents. Some sites invited parents to join in the online conversations. This included a specific parent event where students took on the role of mentor and supported their parents to contribute to the online discussion. Parents reported a 'ripple effect' that resonated in their home environment:

We've put the big questions up on our notice board at home which sits near our dining room table so we've not only discussed them with the kids as they bring them home but anyone new who comes into the house…[and] we end up in another discussion and another point of view…that's been interesting…

Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project

It's been a bit of an eye opener for the kids and for ourselves...some of the other opinions and points of view that have come in...And I think we have seen as a family a greater ability to share ideas and think about the different dimensions of a problem and question things, the kids feel safe to question things as well...What's been important to us with the values education?...I think on the whole the kids have gained an ability to speak confidently about what they believe in and to question what they believe and what other people believe.

In preparation for the online discussions teachers organised a range of classroom activities that focused on developing student thinking skills and explicit values language. Teachers who had been in the earlier project mentored colleagues who were not familiar with philosophy. Each site contributed professional learning materials to the online network, creating a rich pedagogy:

I think there's been a significant change in the way teachers have thought about...getting values across to kids...it's pretty hard sometimes for us to let go of our positions and say, 'Well, we'll let the kids do some stuff which we're not going to direct and control'...The other...effect that it had [was that]... the kids actually grew into positions of valuing and respecting each other's opinions and not feeling threatened by others' opinions. And that was a really important change of mindset.... it's opened

up their idea[s] to other people and the video link-up events were really very significant in helping kids understand that as well.

The key strengths of the project were the freedom it gave to students to express themselves, explore their ideas, deal with differing views and develop a skill set to identify, explain and defend their personal values. The project also enabled students to look at their behaviours:

Before I did philosophy I was more, 'believe what you can see'...doing philosophy lessons, we started off with easier type questions and over time got harder and made me open up more to stuff at home and school. Like listening to my mother's opinion about stuff that I do wrong. I think this project has made me think more before I act at home and school. It's helped me see the world differently than what I did before...It's definitely made me see the world from different angles and perspectives. The people in my class have also helped me learn with their different opinions.

While the formal project ended in October 2009, the cluster work continues. The project has made a significant contribution to learning technologies, safe cyberspace learning and development of ICT pedagogy. It also demonstrated that collaborative learning in values education can take place over distance, and that a sense of community can be created within a virtual environment.

Key outcomes

- Schools that were tentative about the contribution values education might make to student engagement have embraced the use of philosophy as a tool for examining values. While the VASP started with 11 participants, by project end, 113 participants had registered online.

- A number of ongoing professional learning teams have been established and existing structures within the schools (such as class meetings) have been re-purposed to explore values through philosophy.

- Students and parents developed a shared values vocabulary that reinforces the values work within the school.

- The development of a Moodle™ network as an effective online tool to support the use of philosophy in developing values.

- The project confirms that schools can work effectively through technology to engage the school community in values conversations, and that dialogue between primary and secondary students, and between students, parents and teachers, can be effective.

Living Values, Living Relationships

- **Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School**
- **St Augustine's Primary**
- **Mount St Bernard Secondary School**

Cluster Coordinator: Ms Helen Kett, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Thursday Island

Deputy Coordinator: Ms Gayle Hohn, St Augustine's Primary, Mossman, and Ms Janet King, Mount St Bernard Secondary School, Herberton

University Advisor: Dr Grace Sarra, Queensland University of Technology

The project

In three remote locations in Far North Queensland, the *Living Values, Living Relationships* cluster project set out to engage students to work with elders, family and community members to develop their understanding and practice of values. The project sought to develop improvements in positive school climate and community centredness through cultural and values-based understanding. To achieve this aim, the three Catholic schools (two primary and one secondary school) in this cluster implemented targeted teacher professional learning to assist in making implicit values in the curriculum explicit. While the Catholic ethos in the three project schools strongly supported the values agenda in all curriculum areas, the schools identified a need to strengthen students' understanding of what

lived values looked like in family and community contexts. The explicit teaching and learning of core values based on faith values, cultural values and the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (DEST 2005) was at the heart of the work.

Building on one of the principles from Stage 2 of the VEGPSP work – 'Establish and consistently use a common and shared values language across the school' – teachers from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and St Augustine's Primary attended professional development delivered by the cluster's University Advisor, Dr Grace Sarra from Queensland University of Technology. The core values and sub-values comprising Dr Sarra's schema included:

RIGHT CONDUCT	PEACE	TRUTH	LOVE	NON-VIOLENCE
Manners	Patience	Truthfulness	Kindness	Consideration
Living skills	Concentration	Optimism	Friendship	Cooperation
Helpfulness	Self-acceptance	Honesty	Forgiveness	Global awareness
Responsibility	Self-discipline	Determination	Generosity	Loyalty
Independence	Happiness	Fairness	Compassion	Citizenship
Perseverance	Thankfulness	Trust	Tolerance	Justice
Courage	Contentment	Reflection	Service	Respect

Seven teaching techniques supported the enactment of explicit values-centred teaching in identified classrooms. These techniques included the use of quotes, mindmaps, story, music, activities that reinforced values learning using games, creative visualisation and silent sitting. Opportunities were provided for teachers to discuss, reflect and demonstrate an understanding of cultural difference and a focus on shared values, and for the school community, students, staff and families to articulate an understanding and knowledge of their shared values. The professional development for staff, and strong and ongoing communication with parents and the school community, were integral to the success of the project.

Teachers at St Augustine's Primary identified a 'value of the week', and explicitly taught the value using the seven teaching techniques. Teachers reported that the variety of the techniques supported students with a range of learning styles to develop new understandings of values concepts. Importantly, teachers reported that the shared values meta-language encouraged consistent and powerful teaching and learning as the process unfolded. As one teacher put it:

My experience of using values education, [and]... the activities we used to reinforce the value, has been very powerful...so many times you have a class of 25–30 people...young people...all with different values, all with different socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, religious backgrounds even – and to try and find a common ground from which to work with values; by teaching values explicitly gives you that common ground.

...Girls are now playing with boys, and they're going between games...And you can see...an acceptance... knowing that they can play this and next lunch go and play a different game with different people and not feel they're going to be scorned or scoffed at or put down.

Another teacher reflected on the need to 'break down' or 'unpack' the meaning of values and bring them back to students' lives:

I have realised the necessity of explicitly teaching the values. You may expect your students to show kindness towards others or use their manners – but you must be able to break it down so that the students create a deep understanding. I found the seven teaching strategies by Grace Sarra beneficial...in the explicit...values lessons. At the beginning of our unit, my students exhibited a shallow perception of the value and what it meant...but by the end of our unit, they were using the language, [and] had a deeper understanding... and perception of the value.

Students also reflected on what was different about their learning environment as a result of changed teacher practice, and made interesting observations about the transforming nature of the values approaches, both on themselves and their teachers. One student reflected:

The values project has helped lots of kids...in our behaviour because there used to be some...fights like with language and with physical [violence]. But...since we've learned the values there's not been physical fights, well not as serious. And I also think the way I've been acting towards other people has helped my friendship[s]...I used to just stay in this little bunch of girls in Grade 6 and now I'm like friends with girls from Grade 4 and...Grade 7. And I like the value courage because you're knowing that you can always say what you want to say...we used to just do what the schedule was...but now...we also do values which is actually – sometimes it can be boring but sometimes it can be really fun. And our teachers...seem more happy and we do...a bit too...I used to wake up and think I don't really want to go to school today. And now I say, 'Oh yeah, I'm really excited about school'.

The reach of the values work into communities and homes was commented on by parents in the cluster. At St Augustine's Primary, parents were involved and engaged in the project both in the classroom and as part of a strong communication strategy using newsletters, forums and after school activities. One parent observed:

I think the fact that [values education has] been taught – and like the other ladies [I] have experienced personal growth with…children

themselves – I think that's been a big part of it because…they're thinking about that as they're playing and…relating to other people and putting those skills and the teachings into action.

The 'values in action' aspect of the work saw students transferring their new learning into personal actions.

Key outcomes

- A deep commitment to values education was built through professional development focusing on five core and sub-values with specific classroom activities engaging all participating students. A 'ripple effect' was observed as the improved atmosphere in the classrooms and throughout whole schools invited interest from teachers across the schools.

- The development of a whole school approach to values education in these schools gave support to teachers, students and parents. In particular, the identification of social and emotional learning as a key learning focus provided a ready 'home' and high priority for the values work in the schools.

- Relationships were built across local communities through the establishment of student action teams (for example, the Community Project with Elders).

- There was a gradual development of student awareness and ownership of core and sub-values. This awareness was transferred into changed classroom and playground behaviours as students demonstrated that, by using a shared values language, they could express their feelings in a way that improved relationships with peers, teachers and other members of the community.

- The projects resulted in increased community engagement, as demonstrated by the creation of a school mural and pathway that reflects the sub-values of the school, and the shared liturgy conducted by secondary students for primary students celebrating their values journey.

- Evidence suggests that the development of students' inner strength, confidence, motivation and responsibility emerged from the explicit teaching of values techniques.

- A shared values language for teachers, parents and students developed as a result of the project.

Flinders Park–Whyalla Link Values Cluster
South Australia

Transitions: Values-based Approaches

The project

The *Transitions: Values-based Approaches* project set out to link three very different South Australian government schools in an examination of the impact values education has on transition from preschool into Reception and from Year 7 into the first year of high school. An additional layer of the project was the intention to investigate whether geographical location influences the transition process – that is, whether the remote area experience differs from suburban metropolitan transition. An important aspect of the project was identifying students at high risk and looking at areas where a values education approach could provide them with further support in transition. The values education focus of the project was on developing consistent practices between feeder and transition sites to create a supportive community enabling student wellbeing and smooth transition from one site to another.

The cluster initially set out to test how supportive programs (such as 'circle time') linked to values education would lead to successful transition. With support from the University Advisor, Professor Robert Crotty, the research design was refined and reshaped to focus on the contribution values education makes to successful transition. As an exemplar for the cluster, Professor Crotty drew on his earlier work with two South Australian clusters in the VEGPSP Stage 2 projects.

He also provided theoretical and practical advice on data collection. As a result of Professor Crotty's input, the cluster revised its initial project plan and developed key objectives with a sharper focus on values education. These included:

- auditing and evaluating current transition practices
- developing rubrics of consistent practices in values education used throughout the feeder sites
- using data to produce findings that enhance transition programs and support for students.

The cluster collected a body of data through surveys, letters from students who were about to transition, responses from students in the transition site, and a body of artefacts from classroom work at the two primary sites. A number of targeted activities around circle time and explicit teaching of values were introduced into classes and the cluster established liaison between feeder schools and transition sites. Parents were invited to participate online and there was also a parent forum conducted at one of the schools. Student peer mentoring was introduced to link primary and secondary students, and the Cluster Coordinator set up several visits to feeder kindergartens.

The project touched participants differently. One student reflected:

I think that the project's changed my class…since we've been studying the values in circle time…In term one our class used to be really separate and didn't really work together, but now we seem to be closer together and all work cooperatively… Miss [has] been talking more about the values because of the project.

One of the secondary teachers in the project recognised that part of the transition process included working out how to transfer the values education model from the primary setting to the secondary setting and the inherent differences between the way the two school sectors worked. She noted:

In terms of values education and the connection between primary…and secondary school, that's something that needs to be looked at…on a systemic level… It's very easy to say…that you need to deliver values education across the schooling system, but that link between primary school and secondary school, there's a big jump there. And there's a lot of work to be done there because… students aren't exposed to the same teacher all day that they can build a relationship with and develop those skills and how to resolve issues, and the circle time. That doesn't happen in a secondary school every lesson…there has to be other ways to manage that, so values education in a primary school can have one model, in a secondary school…it's going to look different and I think…out of this project has come a need for myself and the staff within the school to look at how we can implement values education in a real way.

However, the project experienced a number of setbacks disrupting data collection and deeper analysis.

Despite the challenges, valuable data was collected in the project. Parents were appreciative of the opportunity to develop a closer sense of community through the activities and looked forward to more interaction. Some parents did notice a change at home resulting from the circle time and values conversations taking place at school. The following parent was supporting the program by constructing a website to link new parents to the school:

I think the values, if you're talking about your confidence and…if they've got that instilled into them…it gives them…confidence to say, 'Right I can deal with this', and they're better prepared when they go to high school to say, 'Right I've got this tool, this one…and I know if I can draw on them, and look for those resources…[it will] give me that strength to get through it as well'.

Two further elements reinforce some of the key principles from the VEGPSP Stage 2 project. Each of the cluster schools reported an increased awareness of a common values language across the sites: 'Establish and consistently use a common and shared values language across the school' (Curriculum Corporation 2008, p 9).

Teachers who engaged with the project were keen for further involvement and professional learning, which highlights one of the principles of success identified in the VEGPSP Stage 2 project work: 'Provide teachers with informed, sustained and targeted professional learning and foster their professional collaborations' (Curriculum Corporation 2008, p 11).

Key outcomes

- The development of research models that can be used across education sectors from kindergarten to high school.
- Personal and professional development of the teachers involved in the project and a commitment to continuing the work.
- A recognition of the importance of engaging the whole school community, including parents, in values education practices and sharing experiences across the community.
- Development of a shared values language for teachers across the sites and disseminating this language to parents and students within and beyond the classroom.

Embedding Values Education through Service Learning

Participating schools

- Everton Park State High School
- Everton Park State School
- Corinda State High School
- Aspley State School
- Craigslea State High School
- Milpera State High School
- Ferny Grove State High School
- Aspley State High School
- Ironside State School
- Bracken Ridge State High School

Cluster Coordinator: Ms Susan Wallace, Everton Park State High School, Brisbane

Deputy Coordinator: Ms Judy Scotney, Everton Park State School, Brisbane

University Advisor: Dr Marian Lewis, University of Southern Queensland

The project

Ten government schools – comprising small primary schools, state high schools, a school for newly-arrived refugees and an alternative school in the Greater Brisbane area – came together to build a values education project based on a range of service-learning programs in their schools. A distinguishing characteristic of this cluster was its diversity, both in terms of the schools and the way in which the project was implemented. Another distinguishing characteristic of this project was that it received direct support from Education Queensland (EQ), through the involvement of Ms Judi Robinson, EQ support officer.

The project aimed to engender a sense of civic responsibility in young people and build on values work that had already commenced in some of the schools. The *Embedding Values Education through Service Learning* project focused on a whole school ethos through which students would have the opportunity to recognise, examine and develop their own values and how they aligned to the values of their school and community.

At an orientation meeting the cluster developed the project objectives. These took into account that the ten schools were at different stages in understanding and implementing values education. The key objectives identified by the cluster were: embedding values into the school ethos; developing student skills, abilities and resilience; and deepening school–student–community relationships through the active engagement of parents. While the project included a focused element of teacher professional development, the main thrust was creating an opportunity for students to practise their values in action beyond the classroom through a specific service-learning project, which would enable students to develop their self-awareness and connection to their school, community and parents.

The service-learning projects were implemented across all ten schools, and to varying degrees a link was established between the projects and students' exploration of values. Some schools used service learning as a way of exploring their values. Others took existing projects and sought to engage students in a way that related to the values of the school. Some schools focused more on teacher professional development as the starting point for discussions about values. Teachers reported that they appreciated the professional development opportunity, which clarified the common values language. Teachers commented that service learning had engaged students, reaffirmed school values and often resulted in unforeseen benefits for students, which became evident as the project developed. For schools where the values were already explicit, the service learning provided a way of experiencing these values in action. As one teacher noted:

The service-learning project has made a real connection for students between our school values and the students' own implicit values. [It] has provided a way...for our students that develops a culture of thinking. It has enabled authentic learning that connects [them to] the world beyond the classroom...it allowed the students to put theory into practice, [to] see how they could actually help. It also helped the students build a sense of integrity – performing a task without the need of a tangible or material benefit.

The key achievement is the students communicating the school values though their dialogue about the project and also their actions. When talking about their feelings about participating [in] Meals on Wheels and the activities they were involved in, the students reflect a greater understanding of our school values. Their understanding and [desire] to reflect these values in their everyday school life is clearly apparent.

One teacher felt that the project had a transformational impact on his students, because of the sense of self it gave them:

Our young people would rarely get to feel like this, like they were important contributors to the community and other people's lives.

Students commented on how profoundly moved they were by the project and how it shifted their thinking and attitudes to a different level. As this student reflects:

When I first went out to Meals on Wheels I was thinking oh yeah, here's some more cooking and I've done this kind of stuff before. I can cook, I'll put it in the box and give it to someone – yeah, yeah. And then by the time I'd finished it...I'd matured to the point where okay, not all of it was interesting – stacking cans on a shelf is not interesting – but you get through that. You...appreciate...the fact that some people do need help and [that] people do need to go and give them help or they don't have that stuff done. And...there's been a real positive change in everyone that I've seen who's done this program. They've always come back happier and knowing that, 'Oh I went out and talked to someone and we had the conversation...they were a bit unhappy when we first came...bored or...sad or angry. But then when I left...we were both smiling.

It's really come down to the values respect and responsibility, getting there on time...and then actually learning to understand and include the other people and...getting in a car with a stranger... you deliver the meals, people that you would not normally go to...you would try to...be polite as you can, try to make conversation, maybe bring in their mail or stop their dog from getting out when you open the gate. And every time you come back it just feels better and better and you get this positive feeling.

Parent engagement in this cluster was limited as the focus of the project was on linking students with not-for-profit service organisations. However, those parents who did connect with the project felt that it was significant, as this parent reflects:

The...program...has made them sit back and look back at people who are giving and helping others unconditionally...and have a look at what's happening outside their own little insular world. It's provided numerous opportunities for us as a family to discuss...things that are happening in his...world and relate it to our own values, and it teaches me an amazing amount of respect for my child as well when they can reflect those values

that they are learning at school. So it is a very, very positive program that they have done looking at other care organisations and then implementing it themselves...For me to see my child actually implement the values and use them...as a parent that is massive, and I am really proud that he has actually taken that on board.

...The...children...do have to make some choices, but it...all just interacts with one another because it is the kind of basket that is woven in together between the families, the school and the community.

Key outcomes

- The development of a defined set of values in each school, which are espoused and referred to in all documents and interactions with parents and the community. With this comes a common values language across the school in assemblies, speeches and whole school identification of the values.

- Student dialogue and communication about their participation in the service-learning activities and their understanding of the values in their everyday school life.

- Building relationships and partnerships with the community through student interaction with people they would otherwise not encounter. Together with this is a recognition by the school community of the worth of the service-learning projects.

- Students developing a strong sense of ownership, which in turn enabled them to feel that they were important contributors to others' lives. The impact of this has developed student self-esteem, decision-making skills and working as a team to facilitate a common goal.

Values Investigators: Teachers and Students Researching Values Together

Participating schools

- Lanyon High School
- Bonython Primary School
- Charles Conder Primary School
- Gordon Primary School
- Birrigai Outdoor School

Cluster Coordinator: Ms Rita van Haren, Lanyon High School, Canberra

Deputy Coordinator: Ms Lesley Crawford, Gordon Primary School, Canberra

University Advisor: Dr Thomas Nielsen, University of Canberra

The project

The Canberra-based Lanyon Cluster of schools comprised one government high school, three primary schools and the Birrigai Outdoor School. The cluster group had previously worked together in Stage 2 of the VEGPSP. The *Values Investigators: Teachers and Students Researching Values Together* project focused on teachers as designers and implementers of high quality curriculum that is values-based, engaging and connected to students' life worlds. The project saw teachers and students as action researchers: collecting, analysing and presenting evidence of learning, particularly learning about values. The five cluster schools built upon the values work they began in 2007, in which they integrated values across the curriculum using the Learning by Design approach (see Curriculum Corporation 2008, pp 50–52).

The VASP project designed curriculum to establish continuum in values education from preschool to Year 10. In the design of specific learning elements (see Kalantzis, Cope & LDPG 2005), teachers in the cluster developed students' deep understanding of values and sense of agency through the creation of a 'culture of giving'.

Central to this project was the focus on teachers as scholars, where an action research model was implemented to deepen teachers' understanding of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, to evaluate the impact of teaching values and to produce evidence of student learning in relation to both values and academic learning.

To further develop their resilience and wellbeing, students also acted as co-researchers with their teachers. Mirroring the research practice of their teachers, students collected and documented their own evidence of how they had been transformed in relation to the values being studied.

A feature of the Lanyon Cluster values work was a strong sense of collaboration and sharing. The professional learning community extended across all schools and was strongly supported by school leaders in sustained and practical ways. Cluster-wide whole staff professional development events held after school hours built a strong professional learning community. Teachers routinely shared the outcomes of action research projects, and careful documentation of outcomes encouraged and facilitated uptake of successful approaches by others.

Lanyon Cluster also focused strongly on values and Indigenous culture in its curriculum unit development. By doing this, teachers fostered intercultural understanding and social cohesion across the schools.

Teachers in the cluster commented on the transformative impact of the values education work. One noted '...the project has allowed me to examine my own thoughts about being caring and compassionate'. Another commented on the increased student engagement and improved literacy outcomes that resulted from incorporating explicit values approaches across the curriculum:

I have discovered that teaching values in no way 'takes away' from literacy or numeracy time; if anything it makes literacy and numeracy more meaningful and thus engages the students more, which means that their learning is increased.

Consistent with this perception of improved literacy outcomes, another teacher observed that students were treating one another better because of their increased understanding and tolerance of difference:

There is no doubt that D's writing skills improved due to the literacy component of the unit. However, I also believe that without the focus on tolerance and understanding, the improvement would not have been so great...It was clear that the focus on tolerance and understanding in the classroom gave the children opportunity to express their own opinions in their writing...the values component of the unit enabled the students to understand that they all have strengths and weaknesses...My students learnt to value each other's differences instead of teasing each other.

Students also remarked on improved relationships resulting from explicit values teaching and learning. In this instance, deep self-reflection allowed the student to comment on his changed understandings and behaviours that resulted from an investigation of integrity and its meaning in his life:

In Grade 6 I was, I guess, a bully...I used to bully an overweight kid...and I only did it 'cause my friends were doing it. And it didn't really feel right, but I did it anyway 'cause I didn't know what respect was, I didn't know what integrity was. So once we had a semester on...learning about respect...[I] learned what it was and pretty much just stopped. [I] stopped hanging out with the mean kids. And now I'm friends with [the kid I bullied].

This courageous and powerful story attests to the supportive values-based climate at schools within the cluster. It shows the power of explicit values education to give students the language and opportunity to connect their inner feelings with their actions.

Teachers across the cluster also commented on the incremental improvements resulting from sustained values teaching and learning. A common observation from teachers was that many students did not understand what some values concepts meant, or why they might be useful and applicable in their lives. Teachers needed to consistently model, discuss and refer to behaviours to build students' understanding. As one teacher put it:

In my class I've got a couple of [students with] really big challenges in their behaviour and...one of them...his behaviour was...triggered adversely by students within the class who would not value him, not show him the care and compassion which he obviously...needed. As part of doing this values unit...our focus was care and compassion [and] something that was really significant to me was at the beginning of the year, even though my class were fairly cohesive, what really stood out was that they didn't really have a deep understanding of what care and compassion actually was. And at the beginning of the unit, their responses were very materialistic, very much about self.

As the unit developed, the children were starting to give each other compliments, initially when they thought I was listening to it, because they were obviously expecting me to notice and [say] 'well

done, great, that's fantastic'. But as the six months have gone on, what's really stood out is that children are doing it, showing that depth of care and that depth of acceptance and that compassion within the class and within the whole school, to the extent that they're doing it without me being there. So children are actually saying, teachers are actually saying, colleagues are saying 'We've noticed that your children are so supportive of each other'. And as a result, these particular students, these challenging students, are a lot happier. They're often being complimented by their peers on their successes, naturally. And as a result, they are a lot more settled within the classroom. But also for me a significant change was the fact that we had a common language within the whole five-teacher team, within the students and within the teachers.

The Lanyon Cluster's focus on both the explicit teaching of values as well as a whole of cluster focus on 'giving' led to perceived improvements in students' leadership and mentoring abilities. One parent noted a change in her daughter's ability to describe her actions in a values-centred way:

I suppose the value of care and compassion was higher in her consciousness, so she talked more about what she perceived people needed...There's a little fella in her class who really struggles at school, socially and academically actually. And she'd come home and say, 'Oh Mum, I think this particular child needs a friend he can rely on, a friend who he can trust, a friend who's going to help him, a friend who understands that it's difficult at school'. I think it's always been in her to understand that, but the fact that she was articulating it was new. And I figured if she's articulating it with me, she probably is articulating it with the people around her as well, and that can only be a good thing, you know?

Key outcomes

- There was broad evidence of sustained teacher reflective practice and ongoing transformation through, for example, the online posting of wiki responses and discussion forums; the collaborative design and implementation of nine learning elements incorporating a focus on 'giving'; the redesign of student learning in light of reflection on action; and interviews with students.

- There was broad evidence of students reflecting and acting on their values, for example, outreach to elderly members of the community, making books for the library and undertaking community service.

- There was a noticeable increase in student-directed learning and students acting as researchers (46 overall, including 9 Indigenous). Teachers across the cluster also observed improvements in student writing skills as a result of students connecting with values concepts and language to describe their feelings.

- There was an increased focus on Indigenous culture and values in the curriculum.

- Strong relationships were established between the students and members of the local community.

Youth Voice: Fostering Inclusiveness, Respect and Tolerance

Participating schools

- **Ringwood Secondary College**
- **Parkwood Secondary College**
- **Maroondah Secondary College**

Cluster Coordinator: Mrs Lyn McGoldrick, Ringwood Secondary College, Melbourne

Deputy Coordinator: Mrs Val Morelli, Parkwood Secondary College, Melbourne

University Advisor: Dr Libby Tudball, Monash University

The project

The Maroondah Education Coalition comprises a subset of a well-established network of government secondary schools in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs that have been working together since 2005. The three schools that participated in the *Youth Voice: Fostering Inclusiveness, Respect and Tolerance* project are situated approximately three kilometres apart, and their students access common community and cultural amenities. The schools are, nonetheless, characterised by very different student cohorts. Many Burmese, Sudanese and Liberian refugee families have recently come to live in the area, which previously had a largely monocultural community. Staff at the three schools believed there was a growing need to develop students' understanding of refugees and build positive relationships between members of different cultures. The project was recognised as a meaningful way to support student wellbeing and facilitate students' awareness, development and practice of their personal values. A key objective of the project was to establish a sense of community that embraced the whole school, parents and the local neighbourhood.

The project drew on the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (DEST 2005) in addition to other national and Victorian initiatives focused on action research, social inclusion, tolerance and student wellbeing.

The cluster embedded values education across the three school communities using a multi-layered approach. Teacher pedagogy and practice was developed through a common values language and explicit projects, including excursions and group work around the themes of inclusiveness, respect, tolerance and empowerment of the voice of youth. One school ran a radio program with an emphasis on tolerance and intercultural understanding. A second school produced a student run magazine, *Youth Voice*, which featured artistic and written contributions from students that described how the project had changed their attitudes to cultural and racial difference.

The teacher pedagogy and practice was underpinned by a substantial professional learning program for all participants. The cluster ran a pilot program for parents, teachers and students, facilitated by Dr Karen Hansen (Swinburne University), which had a particular emphasis on focused emotional intelligence. This program aimed to enhance teacher effectiveness in the classroom in order to improve student outcomes, both academically and socially, and to encourage students to challenge their own and others' preconceptions about refugees.

In addition to the professional learning around emotional intelligence, the cluster organised three targeted, cross-school and community activities.

The first of these was a forum where volunteers participated in an exploration of multiculturalism and difference. Parents were included in these events. One parent commented:

What I absolutely love about those [activities is] the way our children are learning to embrace other cultures and to move on and just live their life with [others]...You know, just get the best out of all of it.

The cluster also organised a multicultural day, which culminated in a student-organised and led celebration evening. Participants reported on the profound effect of the activities, which engendered discussion, debate and thoughtful consideration of what it means to be an Australian in the 21st century. These shifts in attitude were particularly evident for parents, as the following comment illustrates:

I also went to the multicultural day...and I was really impressed with the Sudanese couple that spoke...what really impressed me was just...sharing their culture with the kids and with the adults there, and just realising that their culture is so incredibly different to ours...yet...you look around the room and so many of us are from migrant backgrounds as well, and we've all started off with a different culture, and we now all consider ourselves...Australians...it just seemed to me really important to be tolerant and accepting.

The University Advisor helped with research design and the development of tools to monitor and evaluate student, staff and parent reactions to unfamiliar cultures. A key characteristic of the cluster was the endorsement and support of the three school leadership teams, including the school principals. They recognised the power of the project in stimulating thinking and discussion about identity and belonging, and in increasing the students' autonomy and sense of responsibility toward themselves and their community. The commitment of the school leadership was due in part to teachers' belief in the project's importance. Comments from teachers highlighted the transformational potential of the project:

It was wonderful to see, our students...not renowned for communicating with adults...very active...I watched them actually grow from being fairly parochial, fairly self-centred, to...a sudden understanding there's a whole world out there... that they could make a difference, that they had a role to play and that was very, very rewarding... I think our students have made that transition now from being fairly egocentric...I can still feel them and see them as they...negotiated empowering and trust...their acceptance of one another...and there was one young lad...I [was]...most impressed when I heard him speaking in the group and then...the report came back that he was a bit of a harum scarum back here on his own turf but to me I was seeing 'wow' his potential leadership...they can break their stereotype.

Key outcomes

- The successful production of the *Youth Voice* magazine and the celebration day organised by students reflected the empowering capacity that an embedded values program can have for students.
- Relationships between the school and its local community have been strengthened, which has led to further collaboration beyond the life of the project.
- The development of a shared values language for teachers and students has been extended to include parents.
- The commitment of school leadership to ongoing values education embedded across the whole curriculum.
- Students engaged in the project report greater confidence, responsibility, awareness of others and a willingness to engage with difference, which were not characteristic of their behaviours and attitudes before the project.
- There is evidence of the positive role of emotional intelligence as a pedagogical tool for developing student awareness and voice.

Melbourne Eastern Region Values Cluster
Victoria

Improving Teacher Practice through Values Education

Participating schools

- St Charles Borromeo Primary School
- Sts Peter and Paul's Primary School
- Our Lady of the Pines Primary School
- St Kevin's Primary School
- St Gregory the Great Primary School
- St Anne's Primary School
- Holy Spirit Primary School
- Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Cluster Coordinator: Mrs Sue Cahill, St Charles Borromeo Primary School

Deputy Coordinator: Mrs Judy Harris, Sts Peter and Paul's Primary School

University Advisor: Professor Judith Chapman, Australian Catholic University

The project

Comprising eight Catholic primary schools in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, the Melbourne Eastern Region Values Cluster project, *Improving Teacher Practice through Values Education,* built on the successful values education work of the Manningham Catholic primary schools cluster in the earlier VEGPSP. In Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP the Manningham Cluster focused on fostering student action teams and student voice through values education. The Stage 1 and 2 work identified that improvement in teaching practice was necessary to impact on student learning, and this became the focus of the VASP work.

The cluster's participation in the VASP provided an opportunity for a longitudinal study through VEGPSP Stages 1 and 2 to VASP. The cluster believed that student learning, both academic and social–emotional, would improve if the relationship between teacher and student was strong, respectful and trusting – that is, was values-laden. The project set about identifying a core team from each of the participating schools

to attend master classes on Quality Teaching and Values Education, and Student Engagement and Student Learning, facilitated by Professor Terry Lovat and Ms Lyn Watts. These master classes provided strategies for all schools to implement values education through their four-yearly review process in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Leadership and Management and Student Wellbeing. Student surveys were conducted to assist teachers in targeting their interventions to perceived student needs.

The main focus of the VASP project was the impact of positive relationships – fostered through values education – on teaching and learning. The key objective was to disseminate and implement values-centred quality teaching with teachers in all eight schools so as to engage students more effectively in their learning.

A cascading model saw lead teachers mentoring other staff members in each of the schools. A cluster-wide online communication tool allowed

the Cluster Coordinator to keep all participants informed about the work, to share outcomes, and to provide all participants with ongoing support and key research documents. This communication protocol kept the project 'alive' for all and maintained the impetus for ongoing professional learning. Emphasis was placed on the development of a common language and understanding of values education, as well as on teachers modelling strategies to one another in classrooms.

'Circle time', a group activity in which the class sits down together with the purpose of furthering understanding of themselves and one another, was used across the cluster to foster values-based discussions between students and teachers. The activity increased trust among students, and between students and teachers. Importantly, the circle time process respected each individual as they made a contribution to the group without being interrupted by anyone. Parents (or carers), teachers and students in the Melbourne Eastern Region Values Cluster commented on the success of circle time in creating a more respectful, positive and inclusive classroom culture. Students seemed to value the power of a safe place outside the classroom as well. While on a school excursion, a teacher observed the following event:

All of a sudden they just...formed a circle by themselves...we were watching them, 'cause we didn't know what they were doing...then they started playing 'duck duck goose'. And the whole class, everyone, was involved. There wasn't one person left out...and they all just had fun. There was no arguing, no nothing. And when we called them up, they were really disappointed because they...didn't have time to finish their game. So for me, that was my most significant change. The whole class getting along and organising themselves...It was just fantastic for me to see, and also for the parent [attending the excursion]. She was pretty blown away by what she saw.

As teachers across the cluster observed the power of circle time to create a more engaged and happier class environment, they began to use the tool at different times of the day in a more flexible and creative way. Rather than use circle time only at the end of the day, or to deal with a particular issue, one teacher now uses it at the beginning of the day, noting, 'I had no idea it was going to be such a great settling tool, it really sets the climate for the day'.

One of the interesting outcomes of teachers looking closely at their practice through a values lens was the genuine sense of transformation many reported. This often related to taking risks in their practice. For example, one teacher in the cluster commented on a colleague's decision to talk about his own feelings and insecurities as a way of creating a safe and trusting environment for students to talk about their feelings:

The way he chooses to do it is to either tell a story at the beginning...or use a book that's highlighting feelings, and then he starts with how he is feeling... [and] the sharing has been so much deeper. For example, the teacher saying, 'I've felt disappointed when I used to be always chosen last for the sporting team'...you could see the kids just look and think, 'Wow! That's something he's sharing that we didn't know and wouldn't have thought he would have'. So the teachers themselves...in sharing more deeply [have] made a great impact on the kids sharing deeply too.

Students also spoke about circle time in a very positive manner. The circle time process has clearly allowed students to take control of classroom issues such as bullying and discuss them in a solution-oriented way. This increased student agency was an impact reported across the clusters. As one student put it:

Well, at my school, since we pretty much did the circle time, social circles, more often, the teachers have known their students better. Like there was this incident where we were having social circle and some girls came up to us and said that they had been bullied by one boy constantly. So we decided that the social circle would just be about

bullying. And I think everyone got things off their chest and...their teacher didn't even realise this was happening...'cause they didn't mention it at all. And I suppose since...the teachers know their students better, the students could trust the teachers more, in a way. I think social circles [have] been a big part of that. I think it's better to let things out than to cage them up.

Another student reflected on her increased sense of self-confidence and of finding her voice:

Yeah I think I'm much more confident now, like, telling other people about how I feel...'cause sometimes we have situations and you have to say what would you do, or something like that...[and] I feel like more confident to say what I think.

Perhaps some of the most powerful testimony to positive outcomes from the values interventions in the cluster comes from parents and carers. Many parents and carers commented on the coherence and consistency the school-based values work has given to family-based values modelling:

With...three children at the school and one in particular as part of the values team this year, I feel the values [are] portrayed as part of everyday life, not a task that needs to be completed like homework. It is an expectation that the values

follow through via action, words, etc from the children and at home...But as a result of this whole student-driven focus, the discussions at home are no longer like pulling teeth. You know? It's a lot easier to have meaningful discussions about what's happening at school, because he's the one that raises it. And because he raises it, it's his conversation and he's more inclined to sit at the table after dinner's finished, to continue having that discussion. And because he raises it, it helps me then...take that to the next level and talk about other things.

The importance of values education as a core component of school curriculum was central to this parent's reflection about values and community action-taking:

I think...[values education] is significant for our community because I think children who have the example of people who are prepared to get up and have a go and get involved are more likely to do it, you know? And let's face it, we can't have a community unless we have people who are prepared to get up and actually have a go, to do something. We can't have a community without dialogue. And I guess what I'm seeing is here's a child who was never really big on dialogue all of a sudden is coming up with words like 'compassion' and 'tolerance'.

Key outcomes

- Increased expertise in values education approaches was shared and built upon through master classes on values education and quality teaching (Professor Terry Lovat) and student engagement (Ms Lyn Watts) and through regular, timetabled meetings with project coordinators from each school.
- The professional development of teachers was informed and shaped by data from student surveys.
- There was broad evidence in all schools of increased sharing of professional practice and positive relationship building between teachers and students.
- Strategies supporting values education were embedded across all schools.
- There was an increased awareness by teachers of the need for explicit values teaching and a shared values language.
- There were reported improvements across all schools in students' engagement, self-control, responsibility for learning and self-awareness.

Palmerston Values Cluster
Northern Territory

Living and Growing Our Values

Participating schools

- **Durack Primary School**
- **Gray Primary School**
- **Moulden Park Primary**
- **Bakewell Primary School**

Cluster Coordinator: Ms Sue Beynon, Gray Primary School, Darwin

Deputy Coordinator: Ms Jo Wynn, Durack Primary School, Darwin

University Advisor: Ms Ruth Wallace, Charles Darwin University

The project

The Palmerston Values Cluster includes four diverse primary schools in Palmerston City, twenty kilometres south of Darwin. The schools comprise significant populations of Indigenous students, students from non-English speaking backgrounds and children of Defence and other service personnel. All schools identified values education as a priority in their school improvement plans, and there are a range of programs in use in schools such as Restorative Justice, Friendly Schools and Families, You Can Do It, and the Families and Schools Together program.

The cluster sought to establish a professional learning community of teachers to implement and explicitly embed values into literacy curriculum, with a specific emphasis on narrative storytelling. Sixteen teachers attended a values education professional learning day to inform their teaching practices. Dr Grace Sarra (Queensland University of Technology) delivered the session, which focused on seven techniques for teaching human values. These techniques included the use of quotes, mindmaps, story, music, activities that reinforced values learning using games, creative visualisation and silent sitting. Dr Sarra continued to provide support to the cluster throughout the life of the project. Dr Sarra also worked with the Far North Queensland Cluster.

The Palmerston Values Cluster decided to focus on the values of respect and responsibility, and to build values-rich pedagogies using the seven teaching techniques. Students undertook interschool and intraschool experiences and activities designed to develop their understanding of these values and how to enact them in their lives. Their understanding was strengthened and extended through class-based projects with real outcomes within the school community. The activities involved members of the wider community through storytelling and other activities. Parents were invited into the schools more often and more purposefully as a result of the values project. Indigenous perspectives became a focus through storytelling by Indigenous parents.

Teachers across the cluster observed a range of positive impacts from the explicit teaching of values. Once students had a deeper understanding of the chosen values, they began to self-manage, self-monitor and self-modify their behaviours over time. Teachers felt that the sustained and consistent use of the seven teaching techniques allowed students vital reflection time. They needed this time to see the connections between their new understanding of values concepts and how to connect that new knowledge to their

actions. Interestingly, teachers in the cluster self-disclosed instances of personal challenge or insecurity to students as a way of introducing values-based discussions in the classrooms. Students responded to these examples and saw the stories as evidence of the trust teachers placed in them, and as models of strong and resilient behaviours. One student relayed a story his teacher had told the class and linked it to personal learning about courage and confidence:

My teacher...was at university for five years so she could become a teacher. It was, I believe, one week from graduation...but she was...really nervous and she was saying, 'I can't do this', and her friends were saying, 'But you went through five years of university and we know you can do this', and then she got most of her confidence back and she became a teacher...

When asked why this story was significant for him, the student clarified that:

In the future I want to go in the army and she told us all, whatever we want to become, we may have to go to university, and so she gave us really good confidence and told us how we could really do it.

Another student reflected on the power of a teacher story acting as a signpost for courage in the students' life:

There was a teacher [name withheld] and [when] she was about probably 18 and she was about to get her driver's licence but she was not quite confident. One of her friends died in a car crash so she thought it might be bad for her, so when the years went past she thought to herself I can do this, I can do this now and that's how she got her driver's licence.

Another student reflected on the classroom environment prior to the values interventions:

Well I think it's good to like listen to each other more...because we were a bit disrespectful in a way [before the values education project]. At the start of the year we didn't know each other that well and I think we've learnt a lot...I suppose [respect is] important to me because I like it when people

listen...when they're listening to me and respect what I think.

Across the cluster, students, teachers and parents reported improved classroom ambience as a result of sustained values teaching. There are also instances of improved personal wellbeing resulting from the work. As one student put it:

Well at the beginning of the year there's this boy in my class. He gets upset really easily and now that we're learning about kindness he's calming down a lot and we're all helping him to calm down. When he gets mad he just tells the teacher, 'Can I please go outside and get a drink and come back in after?' Well, there was this person being really mean to him so we all started helping him and he went and got a drink and calmed down really, really quickly.

When asked what 'respect' felt like to her, one student offered:

Respect feels like being kind and considerate to me, and to me it looks like build ups... A build up is how instead of like leaving someone out, like excluding them, you can go to them and ask them come play with us, if you've got nobody to play with, using build ups.

One teacher reflected on the paradigm shift in her teaching as a result of the purposeful introduction of parental involvement in the classroom:

...upwards of half my class are of an Indigenous background and my values program has deliberately included as many parents as I can... I've had six parents come and visit...to put into the program and give their views on the program itself and to get their input, and I think I've, I feel like I've made a paradigm shift in my teaching in a sense that I didn't always deliberately include parents in my program. You might try and include them in some peripheral thing you're doing, some fun activity or some other small thing, but I didn't always deliberately include them...Deliberately making that choice...it's valuing the kids' backgrounds that bit more.

Another teacher commented on how individual students were able to examine their fears and

anxieties through a values prism, using the new language to express how they felt, thus overcoming sometimes irrational anxieties:

A little girl in my class...is incredibly shy and lacks self-confidence, and coming up to the time of NAP testing her mother had approached me and asked if she could be exempt from NAP testing. Because she was just so stressed and concerned about taking a test and failing, even though she's, you know, quite a bright little button. So I looked into it and unfortunately she couldn't be exempt from the NAP testing. So she worked her way up to taking the test without any sort of challenges. She didn't cry. She wasn't stressed, and afterwards she felt an immense state of self-confidence and self-appreciation and she actually offered this story to us during our values lesson. Even though she was incredibly shy she wanted to share this story of how she'd found her own self-respect by challenging herself and talked about her feeling afterwards, about how...her self-esteem levels rose. And her mum, I told her mum afterwards.

Mirroring the experience of many teachers across the VASP, one teacher reflected on her profound experience working in the values space:

...I mean as a teacher I went through uni, my mum was a teacher, and often the idea of a teacher is someone that stands at the front of the classroom, you know, lacks emotion, yells and screams to get the work done. And over the years, and especially since I had a child myself, I've grown to understand that it's, you know, empathy, it's about the individuals, it's about personal growth, and to see that coming out of these students – and also by sharing my own personal stories – has made such an impact on these kids. It's been so nice to see these kids say, 'Well, you know, I don't have to pass everything...there is to pass, but I try my...personal best, and you know, that's good enough for me'. So they're not out to impress me as their teacher. They're out to achieve for their own personal success and...self-worth. It's been quite profound.

Key outcomes

- The broad commitment of staff in the four cluster schools to values education was built through professional development focusing on five core and sub-values, and techniques for values education.

- Professional learning communities were developed around values education across all schools in the cluster.

- Collaborative student sharing of stories across all schools shows evidence of impact on their behaviour and wellbeing.

- There was increased teacher commitment to explicit values teaching and modelling values, and evidence of teacher transformation due to the success of the program.

- There was evidence of students' deep understanding of values and the development of skills and strategies to support the application of these values in their lives.

- There was an increased use of a shared values language within and outside the classroom, and within the students' homes.

- Strong connections and relationships were built with the parent community, which highlight the cultural backgrounds of students and enable Indigenous perspectives to be brought to the classroom.

Values in Action: Building Resilience and Inclusion

Participating schools

- Davallia Primary School
- Glengarry Primary School
- Duncraig Primary School

Cluster Coordinator: Mrs Veronica Morcom, Davallia Primary School, Perth

Deputy Coordinator: Mrs Pam Algar, Glengarry Primary School, Perth

University Advisor: Professor Judith MacCallum, Murdoch University

The project

The Reporting Values Cluster *Values in Action: Building Resilience and Inclusion* project was framed around reporting values to parents in accordance with the Western Australian Department of Education requirement that teachers report on 'attitude', 'behaviour' and 'effort'. The WA report format includes a list of seventeen capability descriptors. The project aimed to review and make recommendations for amending that list; it also aimed to support teachers in making evidence-based, rather than subjective, judgements about student behaviours and attitudes.

This project specifically built on the ten principles of good practice in values education from the VEGPSP Stage 2 work. In particular, planning for project activities concentrated on developing a shared vocabulary, using values-focused pedagogies, and teachers implicitly and explicitly modelling and teaching values. A key element of the project was 'the informed, sustained and targeted professional learning and professional collaborations', implemented by regular mentoring and coaching from the cluster leaders. Teachers were encouraged to take risks and be innovative; and also to monitor and record what was happening throughout the project so that quantitative data could be collected for evaluation.

The three government primary schools involved in the project are geographically and demographically proximate. They are in an upper socioeconomic, predominantly white anglo-saxon area of Perth. Parents are aspirational with a strong focus on academic outcomes. Many children from these primary schools transition into the independent sector for the last years of primary school and a high proportion of the cohort moves into independent schools for high school. Parental involvement in the schools has generally been limited to parent–teacher meetings, school council, and support projects such as building works. It is uncommon for parents to engage with the school in delivering curriculum. There was an assumption that the values of home and school were similar and that values education was not a separate topic for discussion at school. A significant change resulting from the VASP was the sense of increased connection and collaboration between home and school. As one teacher put it:

The most significant impact this project has had on me, I think, has been developing a feeling of being part of a community...I'm an experienced teacher and I feel I've got a lot to offer, but where do you fit in, in a school where everything seems to be humming along very nicely...I think with us

all going through this, working out what is values, whose values are we teaching, what are community values, what are the school values, what are home values, where does all of this fit in, in going through that process with the parents, students and teachers, I think that for myself, I've developed a sense of where I'm at with this school, with the school that I currently work in, and where this sense of community comes from, and it comes from talking about things that are really important to each other, and that's about being human, and the parents are as interested in this as what the teachers are. And we have found common ground through the project that's helped us set the ground work for where we are going to be going in the future and I'm very, very excited about that.

The project set about developing a common values language. The Cluster Coordinator was an experienced values educator who ran professional learning workshops for teachers across two of the schools, while the Deputy Coordinator did the same in her own school. This professional development was intended to build cohesion for the teachers to work as a team as well as building their confidence to explicitly teach values education. Two participating teachers were invited from each school site to provide professional partnerships. The Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator acted as mentors and coaches in this process. Cohort teachers developed criteria for assessment with students to make links with their knowledge about values during the first stage and collected and analysed the resulting data for the project. One site implemented student values diaries as part of the project data collection.

Once teachers and students had experienced the process of developing a rubric with assessment criteria for values and developed some confidence, parents were then invited to join the project to be a part of the process for the next rubric. Parents developed an awareness of the values work being done in class with their children by working with teachers and students at the school. The school

leadership at each site was also encouraged to participate.

The cluster was very focused on bringing parents into the core of the values education work. A regular values education newsletter was disseminated through the schools and a parent survey was forwarded to parents for their responses. The focus of the project remained the explicit teaching of values as a process of engagement and reflection set in authentic activities. Teachers were encouraged to be innovative and have 'courageous conversations' with students and parents. Cohort teachers shifted in their thinking about values education from 'pencil and paper' assessment activities to a more holistic approach embedded in curriculum and developing parents as partners in the process. The involvement of parents across three schools in this way would not have been likely without VASP funding.

In addition to parent and teacher meetings, the project held a number of events outside the classroom which were designed to engage students in the exploration of values and model to parents the complexity of issues when addressing values education. The activities led to both students and parents becoming deeply aware of values language, attitudes and behaviours. One student noted:

I think that before the values project came to our school, we weren't really practising them that much...it's really made it a lot easier for people to practise our values and it's important because we can use them in the real world...for one thing it taught me how to make friends, and also have your good audience and make sure everyone gets a fair share at whatever we're doing.

A parent summed up her experience as follows:

When I think about the journey that we have gone on, as a parent body and as a school community... I think the most significant change for me...is that the [VASP cluster project] has given us a more concrete tool I suppose to discuss and develop

values within our family. Although as parents I think we incidentally and implicitly talk about values as situations arise, and I know that the teachers have spoken about that happening in the classroom...the values project has given my children and my husband and I some more concrete language as a tool to discuss around the dinner table, what values are, what it is to be a kind and respectful member of our family and our community. And the major...moment for me was watching my son...during the heroes activity, because I have to be honest, prior to that when he would tell me around the dinner table, you know, we all talk about what we did in our day, he would kind of roll his eyes and go '[the teacher] did values, more values stuff today'. And really he found that very difficult to grasp. I think it was very airy fairy and intangible for him, but we...came to the heroes project, and it was concrete for him and he could clearly identify the characteristics of his hero, why

they were important, what they meant to him, and it really was a light bulb switching on for him. Which in turn made it extremely rewarding for me.

While each site implemented the approach to values education differently, all three schools maintained a commitment to the work beyond the formal life of the project. One significant contributing factor to this was the unanticipated positive response from parents across the three schools. Initially parents were not convinced that values education was the domain of school and they were sceptical about teaching values explicitly; however, by the end of the project as participants developed shared knowledge, skills and understandings, there was a significant shift in the perception that values education is the sole domain of parents.

Key outcomes

- Teachers reported that the collaborative experiences of the project had deepened their understanding about values education in their classrooms and they appreciated the time to engage and discuss.
- Students became more confident and articulate and took more responsibility for themselves and other students.
- Parent engagement with their school communities shifted and increased. Parents incorporated the school conversations at home where they encouraged debate and discussion about values.
- Students were deeply affected: their understanding of tolerance, respect, care and compassion became embedded in actions and reflection.

Skoolaborate Cluster
New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria
The Values Exchange

Participating schools

- Methodist Ladies College, Sydney, New South Wales
- Melbourne Grammar School, Melbourne, Victoria
- Debney Park Secondary College, Melbourne, Victoria
- King's Christian College, Brisbane, Queensland
- Distance Education Centre, Victoria

Cluster Coordinator: Mr Westley Field, Methodist Ladies College, Sydney

Deputy Coordinator: Ms Paula Ransom, Melbourne Grammar School, Melbourne

University Advisor: Professor Susan Groundwater-Smith, University of Sydney

The project

Skoolaborate is a global collaboration between schools and educational organisations. Broadly, Skoolaborate aims to discover activities that can be used to promote educational outcomes through the use of emerging technologies such as online units, videoconferencing and virtual worlds. Building a project space within this Skoolaborate environment, *The Values Exchange* project brought together five schools from across three states: New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. The schools represented Catholic, independent and state systems. The project aimed to deliver values education around social and global issues via a blend of face-to-face and innovative virtual experiences.

The project also aimed to increase understanding and skills in the use of virtual technologies to deliver values-based education among teachers, students and the broader community. An island located in the Skoolaborate Second Life® virtual world provided the vehicle for delivering the educational outcomes.

As a core project activity, students were nurtured into student leadership teams and assisted in the identification and clarification of values that might be applicable to them as they interacted in online environments. Student leadership teams were created and online discussions led to the drafting of an agreed set of values appropriate for the virtual world.

Due to the global nature of the Skoolaborate community, these values discussions drew in students from other countries, giving the values discussions an intercultural context.

For example, when discussing freedom of speech and ideals, a Japanese student made a valuable contribution:

A Japanese student...came in and suggested that there was a difference between Western ideals and Eastern ideals (and the big focus of the Western ideal is freedom of speech and that's where this debate's coming from) and so they said, 'As Western people you hold freedom of speech as your number one focus so of course you'd be upset when anyone's limiting freedom of speech. But in the Eastern countries we actually hold social cohesion as the number one focus and sometimes...you have to lose a little bit of freedom of speech in order to gain the

cohesion'. And this was quite enlightening for just about everybody, I think. It was an amazing outcome.

Agreed values were communicated and disseminated in the Second Life® island. Participating teachers also used the Second Life® space to develop units of work built around students interacting with the agreed values.

While the management of an online project across five school sites and multiple sectors proved challenging, the action research methodology of the project allowed for responding to these challenges flexibly and creatively. For example, one approach was to build a collaborative online unit on risky behaviours. The unit, built in the Skoolaborate Second Life® environment, invited students to the 'party house' where they were faced with a range of situations and were asked their opinions about risk-taking behaviours such as binge drinking, carrying knives and sexual practices. Students were also asked to engage with the agreed Skoolaborate values when discussing the scenarios online.

One interesting finding from *The Values Exchange* work was that many students felt that when they went online, they could be 'whoever they wanted to be', as many did not view the online interaction as 'real'. As one of the student leaders in the project put it when asked why so many felt comfortable to be 'bad' or 'abusive' online:

Because it's like, it's not real, you know, they think it's not real. And it's like...they can do whatever they want because that wall is there and no-one will find out and, even if they do, what can they do?

Similarly, another student interacting online appealed to the values when confronted with antisocial behaviour from unwelcome visitors. The agreed values gave this student a framework around which to structure her complaints to the offending visitors:

He and I were talking, and then some new students came on and started swearing at each other. And

then we were like, 'Hold on, hold on. What are you doing?' And then one of them said, 'Yeah I guess we probably shouldn't do that around here'. And we were like, 'No, probably not'. And we gave them the values to read, and they're like, 'Okay, I guess I can see how...that might offend...' And then one of them turned around and said, 'So you have to treat this like real life?' 'Yeah, that's exactly how you should see it'. So my friend and I were really glad that they got out that you should use Second Life as real life, and not just treat it like the gaming world where you can do anything...Through the values you can see how it relates to life and it can show you how you should talk to your peers.

A teacher in the project also noted this as an issue, making a link to cyber-bullying and an absence of 'real life' values in online interaction:

One other thing that I have found particularly interesting is the dichotomy of values in the real world as opposed to the values that students use in somewhere like Second Life...Facebook...I guess it links in with that whole idea of cyber-bullying as well...how kids can have one set of values in a face-to-face type situation which is really rather different to what you would see in a virtual world or that sort of thing. That's probably what I've learnt the most.

Similarly, a second teacher reflected on this complex issue in the following way:

My story involves a...class discussion...[about] the need for values in a virtual world...I think it was respect that we were talking about and one student put up his hand and said, 'Well why do you need to have respect in Second Life? It's like being in a computer game you don't have to respect people'. ...Quite a few boys agreed with him, quite a few disagreed, and the resulting discussion was quite interesting and...a few boys' minds got changed...

The subsequent lessons where we were involved in Skoolaborate...they got to interact with people, real people, but through their avatar in Second Life got to interact with them [online]...they realised

that, yes, maybe interacting in a virtual world you do need to have values rather than it being just a computer game...They saw that their actions did impact on what other people did and how they felt.

When asked to comment on the most significant changes since the implementation of the values in Skoolaborate, one student commented on an emerging understanding that rules attach to particular behaviours and values, and that when students began to see these connections, their online behaviours changed:

Okay, well I think when we started Skoolaborate, before we had the values...we just had rules. Like 'don't litter', 'don't leave stuff lying around in the sandbox' and things like that. And people sort of ignored them, because it didn't really seem important then. But now that we have the values, like we have respect, and under that we have that it's disrespectful to leave your things around... people can kind of connect the rules to a value and see why it's important. And so I think people are more likely to obey the rules now than they were before.

Key outcomes

- Deep and sustained explorations of values were evident in two of the participating schools.
- Opportunities for the development of student voice and leadership in the virtual world were demonstrated, for example, in the World Youth Leader model.
- Important signposts were established regarding ways for young people to interact and act upon their values in an online environment.
- There was collaboration between schools in the development of online units of work that have transferability and sustainability.

Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project

Southern Highlands Schools of NSW
New South Wales

Learning and Acting for Poverty

The project

The *Learning and Acting for Poverty* project brought together one government high school and six government primary schools in the Bowral and Mittagong district of southern New South Wales. In their project submission, the schools in the cluster identified 'parochialism' as an issue. In order to highlight the values of empathy and compassion, among other values, the schools targeted students in Years 5 to 8 and set out to undertake an investigation into poverty and its causes and consequences. By seeking to understand these values more deeply, the project hoped to develop student awareness and positive behaviours for a socially inclusive community, and to develop an ethos of service and learning through service to others.

To launch the project, the secondary school invited students from the six primary schools to participate in a Big Day In. Students participated in a dialogue with young people who had worked in overseas settings characterised by economic poverty alongside community resilience. The first-person accounts and visual material showing aspects of poverty created a powerful experience for many of the Big Day In participants.

Teachers worked with colleagues across the cluster and shared teaching strategies. Each school then identified a project and undertook an investigation into an aspect of poverty, its causes and its consequences in the contemporary world, and worked toward developing a solution to that problem. The issues they chose ranged from an examination of the rights of the child to meeting the nutritional needs of diverse communities. Central to all the project work was the notion that students have agency and can make a positive contribution to addressing issues relating to poverty in places beyond their own immediate worlds. Through the Moodle™ online learning tool, students shared their learning with others in the cluster. Teachers embarked upon a shared professional learning journey to develop knowledge, expertise and pedagogical skills relevant to the project.

The project delivered significant outcomes for the participating school communities. One teacher expressed the change in students in the following manner:

I believe the most significant change has been students being able to now take a stand on a position, to realise their own uniqueness in society...and the ownership of their own learning... Personally I believe that's what learning is: when they become empowered and take things on themselves, rather than what was happening at the beginning, where the teacher was providing everything for them.

Students were also able to reflect growing understandings about poverty, and articulate ways that they might be able to assist practically. As one student put it:

This term [our school] has been privileged to sponsor and host two Cambodian students...They are in Australia for three months and are being billeted by students and teachers who went to Cambodia. I have been lucky enough to meet them and my family is going to be billeting them in early September. Chamnun and Vetna brought from Cambodia letters that their students had written to the students who visited them earlier in this year. My sister Jess got a few of the letters and I was able to read them. In the letters they wrote about themselves, their families and what they wanted to do when they grow up. I found reading the letters very inspiring. Learning about poverty this year, I have seen that if we want to, we can help. I realised anyone who hasn't experienced poverty first hand, including me...can understand just how much these poor people are suffering. I have decided that I would like to travel to Cambodia with my school, and maybe overseas again to help those people who are less fortunate.

Another student reflected on his sense of powerlessness before undertaking the poverty study. Through the Big Day In experience and follow up school projects, he had moved from a sense that he had no practical part to play in working towards solutions to having a real sense of agency:

Before our school started doing activities on poverty, I knew it was there, but I thought it would be a matter that would be fixed by others, and I sort of ignored it. But then our school started learning about poverty and we went to...the Big Day In. And I heard a lady do a...presentation on the slums in India and I saw how bad their living conditions were, and how they didn't have things they needed to survive. And I took most — as a society, we usually take most — things for granted. Like, if I didn't get a toy I wanted, I would get probably bitterly disappointed. But these people don't have the things they really need. And I thought that if the matter was going to be resolved, everybody had to chip in, including me. So I've started doing charity events like the 40 Hour Famine and other things to raise money for poverty. The school activities [have] widened my knowledge on poverty, and I want to...help fix the problem.

Key outcomes

- Big Day In, collaborative community project, was established across all schools but one. It featured stories and accounts of poverty, disadvantage and community resilience.

- There was an increase in student agency, which was demonstrated in a variety of ways (eg fundraising for local and international people in need).

- There was some evidence of a broadening of students' world views.

- There was a noticeable increase in students' capacity to share thoughts and feelings, and in the ways they act upon their values.

- Collaborative professional networks were established between teachers in the cluster.

- There was a heightened community awareness of values approaches in cluster schools.

- The establishment of an online communication network using Moodle™ has facilitated communication between teachers and students, and sharing of student work.

Tasmanian Values Cluster
Tasmania

Connecting Communities

Participating schools

- **Waimea Heights Primary School**
- **Albuera Street Primary School**
- **Campbell Street Primary School**
- **Blackmans Bay Primary School**

Cluster Coordinator: Mrs Maria Leaver, Waimea Heights Primary School, Hobart

Deputy Coordinator: Mrs Cathy Franz, Blackmans Bay Primary School, Hobart

University Advisor: Dr Sharon Pittaway, University of Tasmania

The project

The Tasmanian Values Cluster had the advantage that all four government primary schools are geographically close and that the leaders of the project in each school are experienced lead teachers. This strength proved invaluable to the cluster, which initially faced some challenges in creating a cohesive and coherent values education project. The schools that formed the cluster to engage in the VASP had limited experience in explicit values education pedagogy. The cluster's objectives – to develop in students an explicit awareness of their own and others' values, and their capacity to enact those values – changed as the project unfolded. The planned approach initially comprised an *Asialink* focus, student volunteer work, student leadership and leading school community in a values-rich environment. The cluster recognised that a strong pedagogical foundation should underpin the values work in each school. The cluster had a 'start small within classrooms' approach, which was intended to eventually spread to the whole school community, including parents. This 'start small' approach reflected the advice that had emerged from the previous projects in Stages 1 and 2 of the VEGPSP.

This pedagogical foundation for the project came from the University Advisor, Dr Sharon Pittaway, who helped the teachers to find ways of extending the projects beyond the classroom into other aspects of school life. Dr Pittaway recommended a selection of children's literature that could be used in the classrooms as a way of introducing values to students. Teachers were able to begin a values inquiry, to involve parents, and to maintain enough flexibility for the work to take a range of directions within and beyond the classroom.

Professional development in the form of a forum at an early stage of the project used pedagogical approaches to develop a shared language for the explicit articulation of values. Two books – Colin Thompson's *The Short and Incredibly Happy Life of Riley* and Mark Ludy's *The Flowerman* – were selected as texts for use across the cluster. A second forum was planned towards the end of the project. During the course of the project each site developed a range of activities to engage students and parents in explicit values exploration, allowing opportunities for enacting values in everyday life as well as in classroom interactions. One school also undertook a staff audit of values. All sites collected student artefacts, reflecting

students' responses and development over the course of the project. A blog was set up for teacher discussion and reflection. Teachers also kept a journal to collect evidence of the impact the project work had on their teaching practice, and on student learning and behaviours. One teacher observed:

I particularly have been impressed by the way the children have started to use the vocabulary in the classrooms, in normal day to day occurrence...if students don't agree with another student they are able to verbalise in a very polite and kind way, [which] shows tolerance and understanding...The one that really got to me was when we talked about diversity...[our school] is quite...culturally diverse...There was a written activity to be done... about diversity, what they got out of the lesson and so on. And there was this particular kid, who's not...a very good writer, and then I could see his face drop and I thought, you know, I'm going to sit next to him and see what he is thinking and he said, 'You know, I can't write. I'm not very smart'. And I said, 'You tell me what you're thinking'...So he told me that he was good at drawing, and I said, 'Maybe your drawing will show it'...and he goes, 'Yeah, when I actually think about it, I am smart, I'm smart in drawing. You know, I can draw and I'm smarter than the other person who said he was not smart'. And he smiled and since then...his outlook... is changed.

Over time, the project gathered its own momentum to such a degree that the school councils became involved at two of the sites. The other two schools adopted a whole school approach to values, incorporating the language into newsletters and the school's strategic plan. The project reach was well beyond the modest objectives initially envisaged. Parents who were initially sceptical about non-academic curriculum saw positive changes in their children:

I guess through the participation in this values program what I've seen with my son...is...his behaviours changed in such a way that he's questioning the world a bit more...he's contributing to the conversation more...particularly...when... challenging matters relating to the values that they've been examining have come up, he's...looked at them in a different way. There's this program on television, Compass, every Sunday night. He'll actually sit down now on a Sunday night... and watch that show. Because part of the values program they've been doing [concerns] big beliefs where they've been looking at different religions of the world...we sat down and we watched it together and he was sort of talking to me just quietly about the various things that they'd be doing through the school in terms of examining different religions...I've always struggled as a parent to know...what direction I should point my child in, in terms of religion, and I guess through values...he's... making his own mind up. I mean that's the best thing that could ever happen...make his own mind up...He takes the newspaper with him and he reads the paper, and that's because he's really keen to understand more about the world, and that's...been quite...amazing.

The cluster noted the overall impact the values project had on its students. Students were engaged, responsible, and able to analyse and clearly articulate their values. In many instances students spoke of changed attitudes and behaviours:

My story is based on the changes I've seen in my friends and classmates. At the beginning of the year before we started the values project, there [were] a lot of people being teased and bullied. But as we've done the values project, it has got to be something very uncommon because in class we've had times when people, if they've had a problem... can say it out loud and not be afraid that whoever has been bullying them and has made them upset is going to be able to hear them. They will be able to talk to the teacher and express the problem and therefore have it solved or dealt with in the appropriate manner...as people are learning more about the values, they are learning more about how to show them...and I found that people have been a lot nicer to everyone else.

This project exemplifies a number of the principles noted in the VEGPSP Stage 2 project work:

- the importance of values-focused, student-centred pedagogies in the curriculum
- developing values education as an integrated curriculum concept
- explicitly teaching values so that students develop an understanding and capacity to practise and test their values
- the importance of providing teachers with targeted professional development to support values education teaching.

Key outcomes

- Students acquired a deeper understanding of their own values, took responsibility for their values and developed agency in articulating them.
- Teachers developed more confidence in teaching values explicitly and in designing curricular and co-curricular projects around values education.
- The project was expanded to a whole school approach, which included parents and school leadership in further project work.
- The importance of values conversations in the development of student leadership skills, resilience and confidence has encouraged the schools to develop innovative strategic plans for future collaboration on values education.
- There is evidence that the way the project enabled parents to become involved in the work in an authentic way – discussing values with their children at home and also reflecting on ways values might shape future directions at school – has had positive impacts for students, families and the schools.
- The project established a collaborative ethos within the cluster, which will be sustained into the future.

Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education: The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project

Section 4

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 1: Background to the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project

The Values in Action Schools Project (VASP) formed part of the Values Education Program (2008–09), through which the Australian Government committed over $5.9 million to a range of values education activities. These activities included a third round of projects for selected clusters of schools to implement good practice approaches; an ongoing values education website; a National Values Education Conference; national partnership projects with parents, principals, teachers and teacher educators; and support for state and territory values education professional learning and school grant activities.

The VASP constitutes Stage 3 of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project. It builds upon the work previously undertaken by schools since the launch of the Values Education Initiative in 2002, namely:

- the *Values Education Study* undertaken in 2002–03
- the release in 2005 of the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools*
- the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project, Stages 1 and 2 (2005–08).

The Values Education Study (2002–03)

This study was conducted by the then Curriculum Corporation and involved work with a selected group of schools that were funded by the Australian Government to develop and demonstrate current practice projects in values education. From this work emerged a set of principles and a framework for strengthening values education in all Australian schools.

The qualitative study comprised three interrelated components:

- a review of relevant national and international research in values education
- action research with 69 schools across Australia documenting effective practice in values education
- research with parents, students and teachers to ascertain different views on the values the community expected Australian schools to build upon and develop.

Recommendations from the report on the *Values Education Study* informed the development of a *Draft Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools.* After extensive consultation within the Australian education community, the draft was further refined and the final document – the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (the National Framework) – was endorsed by MCEETYA, and published and distributed to all Australian schools in June 2005. The document was designed to promote improved values education in Australian schools by:

- articulating a vision
- providing an agreed set of Values for Australian Schooling to foster
- describing some guiding principles and key elements to inform school practice.

The National Framework laid the foundation and defined the direction for the subsequent Australian Government Values Education Initiative of 2004–08.

The National Framework helps schools in providing values education in a planned and systematic way, and as a core part of schooling. It is available at the *Values Education* website, www.valueseducation.edu.au.

The Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stages 1 and 2 (2005–08)

The Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) was designed to operate in two stages. In each stage, selected clusters of school communities were to design and implement their own local projects and explore ways of improving approaches to values education using the National Framework as a guide. Experience from the clusters' activities was then to be used to identify and demonstrate, from the ground up, evidence of good practice in values education, which could be disseminated to all Australian schools. In this way both stages of the VEGPSP would support the broader implementation of the National Framework. The goals of the VEGPSP were built upon those national goals outlined in the *Adelaide Declaration* (MCEETYA 1999).

In 2005 Curriculum Corporation was engaged to manage Stage 1 of the project. All Australian schools were invited to establish clusters and apply for grants to design and implement values education projects that would meet their local needs and apply the National Framework. Stage 1 commenced in May 2005: 26 selected clusters, involving 166 schools from across the breadth of Australian school contexts, were funded to pursue projects that employed many different approaches to values education. The Stage 1 clusters concluded their projects in April 2006 after approximately ten months of activity. They submitted project reports and other documentation to Curriculum Corporation, which then proceeded to analyse the data to formulate a set of findings about good practice in values education.

The Final Report for Stage 1, *Implementing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools: Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1,* argued that the Stage 1 cluster projects 'presented evidence of the impacts on many aspects of the school life, including student learning, student behaviours, teacher professional practice, relationships in school and school culture change' (Curriculum Corporation 2006, p 1).

After examining the projects and exploring them through four thematic organisers that broadly reflected different categories of cluster approaches to values education, the Final Report identified a set of inferences about good practice (Curriculum Corporation 2006, pp 12–19).

The aim of Stage 2 of the VEGPSP (2006–08) was to create values education projects in a range of additional school settings and to support a particular focus on exploring values education in intercultural and global contexts. Stage 2 involved 25 clusters encompassing 143 schools across Australia. Key findings from this stage of the project included confirming the inferences of Stage 1 and defining **the ten principles of good values education:**

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.

The VASP is distinguished from these previous projects by its smaller scope and remit, its operation in another set of school contexts and its focus on gathering more evidence on the impacts of effective values education.

Additionally, during 2008, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations funded a research project to test the findings of earlier projects, especially the VEGPSP. This study (Lovat et al 2009b) confirmed earlier findings that values education has potential to impact positively on a number of indicators, including teacher–student relationships, school ambience, student wellbeing and student academic diligence.

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Appendix 2: The management and operation of the Values in Action Schools Project

The VASP was managed by Curriculum Corporation on behalf of DEEWR. Curriculum Corporation appointed a Project Director, Mr David Brown, and two designated Project Managers, Dr Jenny Wajsenberg and Ms Jane Weston, to manage the project and provide support directly to the clusters. An academic advisor and research consultant, Dr Julie Hamston, was engaged to advise on the research, analyse project data and to synthesise the project findings.

The Project Managers worked directly with clusters to plan an achievable values project, to refine their project plan through the process of continued reflection, and to evaluate the impact of the values project. In addition, the Project Managers provided:

- a variety of tools and templates for use in clusters to capture accounts of project activity
- appointment of and liaison with a designated University Advisor to support each cluster
- liason with State and Territory Values Education Contact Officers to promote local networks
- continuous offsite support to clusters through regular formal and informal communication through phone and email
- written feedback on interim reports and inter- and intra-teleconferencing with the University Advisors
- onsite visits to various cluster sites.

Values Education Project Advisory Committee

An advisory committee was established to provide consultative advice and support to Curriculum Corporation in managing and administering the VASP on behalf of DEEWR. The role of the Values Education Project Advisory Committee (VEPAC) was to:

- oversee the VASP
- participate in the selection of clusters and advise of new clusters to be included in the VASP
- provide input and advice on issues arising in the VASP
- assist in promoting and supporting the project among constituents

- provide advice and feedback on the VASP Final Report.

The membership of the VEPAC included:

- representatives of DEEWR
- two academic values education experts, one nominated by DEEWR
- representatives of

    the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee

    the National Catholic Education Commission

    the Independent Schools of Australia

    the Australian Joint Council of Professional Teacher Associations

    the Australian Primary Principals Association

    the Australian Secondary Principals Association

    Principals Australia

    the Australian Council of State Schools Organisations

    the Australian Parents Council

    the Australian Council of Deans of Education

    The Australian Parents Council.

Three meetings were held between members of the VEPAC throughout the 12-month duration of the VASP and out-of-meeting consultations were also conducted via teleconferences and ongoing phone and email contact.

Cluster selection for the VASP

One hundred and forty compliant VASP applications were received from around Australia. Curriculum Corporation worked with State and Territory education authorities to identify a short-list of 30 applications.

A National Selection Panel, comprising key jurisdictional stakeholders, parent organisations, principals and values education academic experts met to recommend 15 applications to DEEWR. The final 15 successful cluster projects were selected and announced by DEEWR on 28 November 2008.

Cluster Support Group

At cluster level, the VASP was managed by a Cluster Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator, in conjunction with the Cluster Support Group (CSG) established by each cluster. The role of the CSG was to steer the cluster throughout the course of the project and to ensure accountability in the form of completed mid-project and final reports for DEEWR on the outcomes and impact of their values project.

Additional members of each CSG were the Curriculum Corporation Project Managers, the University Advisor and the State and Territory Values Education Contact Officers.

University Advisors

A University Advisor was identified and matched to each cluster as an additional form of support in conducting the VASP. The role of the University Advisor included:

- support to the cluster in the initial design of their project
- expert advice on gathering and analysing data as a means of evaluating project impact and reporting on project outcomes
- support in maintaining focus on project objectives and outcomes
- advice on pedagogy and professional learning.

The University Advisors completed a report for DEEWR on the outcomes and impact of the cluster's values project.

National briefing sessions

Two national briefing sessions were convened at key points in the VASP as a means of supporting Cluster Coordinators and Deputy Coordinators, University Advisors and the State and Territory Values Education Contact Officers. The first briefing session was held in Melbourne in December 2008 to assist clusters in identifying the focus of their values projects and to commence the planning process. The second briefing session was held in Canberra in April 2009 at the point where the clusters were expected to have commenced their projects and the process of reflecting on next steps. This second session was conducted prior to the National Values Education Conference.

Evaluation Summit

An Evaluation Summit was held in Melbourne in October 2009. The purposes of this summit were for participants to:

- share, through a poster presentation, the activities of their cluster projects
- evaluate the outcomes of the cluster using the Most Significant Change technique
- discuss future directions for their schools and communities in relation to values education
- consider what to include in their final reports for DEEWR.

The Evaluation Summit involved teacher, student and parent participants from each cluster who were invited to read through the stories of change from each cluster (14 in total) selected for evaluation; to discuss and identify the key themes of these stories; and to select one story from the corpus which to them represented the most significant change to have emerged from the VASP.

Online support

Online support to clusters was provided via the *Values Education for Australian Schooling* website (www.valueseducation.edu.au/values) managed by Curriculum Corporation and coordinated by Ms Maureen Gustus. This website acted as a major portal for the provision of news, information and advice to clusters. The website also provided an e-library of tools, archives, templates and other materials to support cross-project interaction and dissemination of professional learning during the VASP. The online *Values Education Newsletter* was distributed to clusters for the purpose of ongoing communication. A closed online forum site for all project participants fostered discussion, interaction and exchange.

A designated forum was also provided for the University Advisors to communicate with each other.

Appendix 3: The Values in Action Schools Project clusters

Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster ACT, NSW, Qld, SA, Tas	**Engaging the Disengaged** This project drew together schools in juvenile detention centres across Australia. The focus of the project was to explore and implement values education approaches with an emphasis on student resilience and wellbeing within a positive and engaging whole school learning environment.
Beenleigh Believe, Achieve, Succeed Cluster Qld	**Out of Apathy** This project sought to improve self-belief and community esteem by implementing a series of self-discovery workshops built around the performing and visual arts.
Catholic Schools of the Clarence NSW	**Resilience, Wellbeing and Learning** This project aimed to build student resilience and wellbeing and improve academic and social outcomes through explicit and implicit teaching of values.
Cross Border Values Community NT, SA, Tas, WA	**Values through ICT and Philosophy** This project built a virtual community of learners and explored the role of philosophical inquiry in unpacking values and exploring the ways in which moral and ethical frameworks inform actions.
Far North Queensland Cluster Qld	**Living Values, Living Relationships** This project aimed to improve the explicit teaching and learning of core values by engaging teachers and students in working with elders, family and community members to develop their understanding and practice of these values.
Flinders Park–Whyalla Link Values Cluster SA	**Transitions: Values-based Approaches** Successful transition from one class/school to another is crucial to student wellbeing and success. Through the use of supportive programs such as circle time, this project sought to create a supportive community that enabled students to transition smoothly and confidently throughout all levels of schooling.
Greater Brisbane Schools – Values Education through Service Learning Qld	**Embedding Values Education through Service Learning** This project aimed to engender a sense of civic responsibility in young people. It builds on the values education programs the cluster schools were enacting and created unique values projects for each school setting.
Lanyon Cluster of Schools ACT	**Values Investigators: Teachers and Students Researching Values Together** This project sought to integrate values into the curriculum. Teachers and students established a preschool to Year 10 values education continuum and integrated service learning as an opportunity for students to apply their values learning.

Maroondah Education Coalition Vic	**Youth Voice: Fostering Inclusiveness, Respect and Tolerance** In this project, students worked together to produce a unique student voice magazine that aimed to promote positive self-image, inclusiveness, tolerance and respect for others.
Melbourne Eastern Region Values Cluster Vic	**Improving Teacher Practice through Values Education** Student learning, both academic and social–emotional, will improve if the relationship between teacher and student is strong, respectful and trusting. This project was based on the premise that improved teaching practice impacts positively on student learning. Teacher master classes focused on building teacher skill and commitment to values education.
Palmerston Values Cluster NT	**Living and Growing Our Values** The Palmerston Values Cluster sought to identify a professional learning community of teachers to implement an action learning project focusing on explicitly embedding values into literacy with a specific emphasis on narrative storytelling. Teachers focused on the values of respect and responsibility, both within school and more broadly in the community.
Reporting Values Cluster WA	**Values in Action: Building Resilience and Inclusion** This innovative project sought to improve the way schools report to parents and the community about the behaviours and attitudes of students by developing tools to assess values in the naturalistic setting of everyday activities at school.
Skoolaborate Cluster NSW, Qld, Vic	**The Values Exchange** This project explored values education through social and global issues via a blend of face-to-face and innovative virtual experiences.
Southern Highlands Schools of NSW NSW	**Learning and Acting for Poverty** In this project, Year 5 to 8 students undertook an investigation into poverty, its causes and consequences in the contemporary world. The project focus provided a meaningful and authentic conduit for the explicit teaching and modelling of values.
Tasmanian Values Cluster Tas	**Connecting Communities** Students need a shared values-base and social and negotiation skills to navigate an increasingly complicated world. This project deployed a variety of student-centred inquiries connecting in real and meaningful ways with their communities.

Appendix 4: The Values in Action Schools Project University Advisors

Cluster name	University Advisor Contacts
Australian Juvenile Detention Centres School Cluster	Dr Thomas Nielsen University of Canberra
Beenleigh Believe, Achieve, Succeed Cluster	Dr Marian Lewis University of Southern Queensland
Catholic Schools of the Clarence	Dr Kerry Dally University of Newcastle
Cross Border Values Community	Emeritus Professor Robert Crotty University of South Australia
Far North Queensland Cluster	Dr Grace Sarra Queensland University of Technology
Flinders Park–Whyalla Link Values Cluster	Emeritus Professor Robert Crotty University of South Australia
Greater Brisbane Schools – Values Education through Service Learning	Dr Marian Lewis University of Southern Queensland
Lanyon Cluster of Schools	Dr Thomas Nielsen University of Canberra
Maroondah Education Coalition	Dr Libby Tudball Monash University
Melbourne Eastern Region Values Cluster	Professor Judith Chapman Australian Catholic University
Palmerston Values Cluster	Ms Ruth Wallace Charles Darwin University
Reporting Values Cluster	Professor Judith MacCallum Murdoch University
Skoolaborate Cluster	Professor Susan Groundwater-Smith University of Sydney
Southern Highlands Schools of NSW	Professor Susan Groundwater-Smith University of Sydney
Tasmanian Values Cluster	Dr Sharon Pittaway University of Tasmania

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Appendix 5: Values Education Project Advisory Committee

Academic Advisor	**Professor Judith Chapman AM** Professor of Education & Director of Centre for Lifelong Learning Australian Catholic University Limited
Academic Advisor	**Dr Thomas Nielsen** Lecturer in Education Studies University of Canberra
Australian Parents Council	**Mr Ian Dalton** Executive Director Australian Parents Council
Australian Education Systems Officials Committee	**Dr Thelma Perso** Executive Director Central Australia NT Department of Education and Training
Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations	**Ms Anne Tumak** President Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations
Independent Schools Council of Australia	**Ms Libby Burns** C/O Special Learning Needs Coordinator Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
Australian Primary Principals Association	**Ms Anne McGowan** C/O Principal St Margaret Mary's School
Principals Australia	**Ms Susan Boucher** Executive Officer Principals Australia
Australian Secondary Principals Association	**Mr Andrew Blair** President Australian Secondary Principals Association
Australian Council of State School Organisations	**Mr Rupert Macgregor** Projects Manager Australian Council of State School Organisations
Australian Council of Deans Education	**Professor Terry Lovat** Pro Vice-Chancellor Faculty of Education & Arts University of Newcastle
National Catholic Education Council	**Ms Philippa Lovell** Education Officer Catholic Education Commission of Victoria
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	**Mr Richard Smith** Director, Student Engagement, Inclusive Education Branch
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	**Ms Catherine Simmons** Assistant Director, Student Engagement, Inclusive Education Branch

Appendix 6: Teacher survey demographic data

Gender	Pre-project			Post-project		
	Per cent	Count	Answered	Per cent	Count	Answered
Female	71.2%	222	312	73.2%	150	205
Male	28.8%	90	312	26.8%	55	205

State or Territory	Pre-project			Post-project		
	Per cent	Count	Answered	Per cent	Count	Answered
ACT	7.7%	24	312	11.7%	24	205
NSW	27.2%	85	312	28.8%	59	205
NT	4.8%	15	312	3.4%	7	205
Qld	24.4%	76	312	15.1%	31	205
SA	5.1%	16	312	8.3%	17	205
Tas	5.8%	18	312	6.3%	13	205
Vic	22.1%	69	312	22.9%	47	205
WA	2.9%	9	312	3.4%	7	205

Location	Pre-project			Post-project		
	Per cent	Count	Answered	Per cent	Count	Answered
Metropolitan	70.5%	220	312	69.8%	143	205
Regional	19.6%	61	312	17.1%	35	205
Rural	8.7%	27	312	12.2%	25	205
Remote	1.3%	4	312	1.0%	2	205

Which of the following best describes your role in education?

Role	Pre-project			Post-project		
	Per cent	Count	Answered	Per cent	Count	Answered
Teacher	78.8%	246	312	83.4%	171	205
Student support	6.7%	21	312	3.4%	7	205
Other	14.4%	45	312	13.2%	27	205

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In which type of school do you mainly work?

Type of school	Pre-project			Post-project		
	Per cent	Count	Answered	Per cent	Count	Answered
Primary school	47.8%	149	312	52.2%	107	205
Secondary school	25.0%	78	312	23.9%	49	205
Combined Primary/Secondary school	9.3%	29	312	8.8%	18	205
Other	17.9%	56	312	15.1%	31	205

In which educational sector are you employed?

Sector	Pre-project			Post-project		
	Per cent	Count	Answered	Per cent	Count	Answered
Government	73.4%	229	312	73.2%	150	205
Catholic	22.4%	70	312	23.4%	48	205
Independent	1.0%	3	312	2.9%	6	205
Other	3.2%	10	312	0.5%	1	205

In which Learning Areas are you involved?

Learning areas	Pre-project			Post-project		
	Per cent	Count	Answered	Per cent	Count	Answered
Primary generalist	52.6%	164	312	57.6%	118	205
Primary specialist	5.8%	18	312	4.4%	9	205
Arts	16.0%	50	312	13.2%	27	205
English	26.3%	82	312	21.0%	43	205
ESL	5.8%	18	312	2.9%	6	205
Health and Physical Education	17.9%	56	312	11.2%	23	205
LOTE	3.5%	11	312	1.0%	2	205
Mathematics	23.1%	72	312	17.1%	35	205
Religious Education	6.1%	19	312	4.4%	9	205
Science	13.5%	42	312	9.8%	20	205
SOSE/HSIE (including History, Geography, Environmental Education, Economics)	24.4%	76	312	19.5%	40	205
Technology	18.9%	59	312	17.1%	35	205
Other	17.9%	56	312	16.1%	33	205

How long have you worked in an education-related job?

Years in education	Pre-project			Post-project		
	Per cent	Count	Answered	Per cent	Count	Answered
Less than 5 years	16.0%	50	312	17.6%	36	205
5–10 years	23.1%	72	312	22.0%	45	205
10–20 years	19.2%	60	312	20.0%	41	205
More than 20 years	41.7%	130	312	40.5%	83	205

What formal teacher training have you had in values education?

Formal training in values education	Pre-project			Post-project		
	Per cent	Count	Answered	Per cent	Count	Answered
Pre-service	12.8%	40	312	9.8%	20	205
In-service	53.2%	166	312	57.6%	118	205
Post-graduate	9.6%	30	312	13.7%	28	205
None	33.3%	104	312	25.9%	53	205

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