The spiritual and moral dimension to the school curriculum: The role of school leadership in addressing the gap between rhetoric and reality

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The first line of the street bulletin board outside Annandale public school in Sydney read "Teaching values since 1886". This was the school's response to the public debate about values in education, and to the charge that Government schools took a values stance that was too neutral.

In September 2003, when launching the Federal Government's ongoing National Values Education Study, the Minister Dr. Brendan Nelson argued that "Schools must teach values". He stressed the need for a values-based framework for public education, and that the

> great challenge of education, and increasingly the expectation of parents, is for it to transfer to children not only the ability to learn and acquire skills for an increasingly complex world. It is also to assist in the building of character (Nelson, 2003).

The current Minister, Julie Bishop (2006), was concerned that Maoists, Marxists, Feminists and what are generally called 'faddish ideologues' were 'hijacking' the curriculum and were being protected in a refuge without sufficient accountability. She thought this could be remedied by a uniform national curriculum across all states.

On the contrary, Professor Stanley (2006) in the NSW Board of Studies said that "our curriculum is not dominated by a Maoist perspective". And state Minister Carmel Tebbutt (2006) rejected claims that left wing ideologues are distorting the curriculum in NSW.

In late 2006, The Federal Government allocated $90 million to put chaplains into state and independent schools to minister to the emotional and spiritual needs of pupils (Walsh, 2006).

But the Prime Minister's principal concerns about education appeared to be: "We don't have sufficiently high standards in relation to basic literacy and numeracy." (Howard, 2006).

In Catholic schools, mission and vision statements are explicit about the purpose of developing pupils' faith, spirituality and values. The schools are said to be "permeated with Gospel values". And programs were introduced specifically to ensure that Catholic values are taught across the curriculum (Sydney Catholic Education Office, 1999).

Meanwhile, there have been varied commentaries on the influence of schools on young people's personal development. For example, Professor Harry Messel, formerly of the University of Sydney and Bond University, lamented the lavishing of funds on schools which

> appear to be turning out an ever increasing number of undisciplined, irresponsible, greedy, often near-illiterate, lawless individuals who don't give a tinker's curse for the country, their mates or anyone else. It appears that Australia is on the road to turning its school system into poor-quality child minding as both parents, in thousands of households, have been forced to take up jobs in order to eke out an existence (Messel, 2006).

What are leaders within Catholic schools to make of this debate? In what direction should they try to direct the thinking of teachers and of parents? How do they address these concerns in ways that are consistent with the traditionally religious purposes of Catholic schooling? What are the implications for

curriculum? These are the questions addressed in this paper, while special attention will be given to the task of developing a conceptual scheme for the spiritual/moral dimension to the curriculum.

Leaders in schools are in a crucial possession as regards the spiritual and moral influence of the school. They are at the interface between the expectations of the school from the community outside and the work of teachers who are trying to do something about it.

Perspective on the debate about the spiritual/moral purposes of schooling

The concerns echoed in the comments noted above are not new; they have been evident in public discourse about Australian education for many years.

As regards 'teaching values': To the extent that there has always been a values basis to the work of public school teachers, the statement that 'public schools teach values' has always been true. However, the verb 'teach' when applied to values has a very different meaning from that when referring to knowledge, literacy and numeracy. The development of personal values is much more complex than the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and is influenced by many factors that have little to do with the school. Hence, since the time of Aristotle, the notion of 'teaching values' is intrinsically problematical and needs continuing clarification. It would do better to explain what is means to 'educate in values' rather than use ambiguous phrases like 'teaching or inculcating values'.

Some teachers in Catholic schools have complained that the 'permeation theory' of Gospel values and 'embedding' them across the curriculum comes across more as 'pious rhetoric' than as a realistic and practical guide that can win the widespread support of staff. There is a need to address the gap between the rhetoric and the reality as regards the spiritual/moral purposes of Catholic schools. A first step is to get the language right; to develop a modest but realistic account of how the school and its curriculum can be expected to contribute towards young people's spiritual and moral development.

As regards government policies, Catholic education should welcome and endorse the noble statements about the spiritual/moral purposes to education, and the programs set up to implement them. This applies particularly to the National Values Education Study and, more recently, to the National Chaplaincy program. While the chaplaincy program is intended to enhance the personal dimension to schooling, this initiative, principally concerned with pastoral counselling, does not address the spiritual/moral role of the curriculum. It does create concerns where churches and chaplains see it as a great state-funded opportunity for evangelism; the Pentecostal churches are said by some to be planning for an "onsite rep" in each state school (Horin, 2006). Catholic schools will have problems with the program because the Catholic understanding of 'chaplaincy' tends to focus more on priestly and liturgical ministry than on pastoral counselling.

While being responsive to these Government policies, at the same time, leaders in Catholic education need to be aware of the problems arising from current Government policy which regards school education primarily in terms of its national economic contribution – to enhance employment-oriented competencies, to increase economic efficiency and competitiveness in global markets. Such a dominant ideological motif makes Australian education instrumental to economic policy; it tends to regard pupils as resources for 'growing the economy' with the danger that activities and curriculum aimed at enhancing their personal and spiritual development will remain nominal, peripheral and insignificant.

This paper proposes a scheme for the spiritual/moral dimension to the curriculum based on an assessment of the relationships between teaching/learning activities and young people's personal development. The sequence to the argument is:

1. List of types of experience that catalyse personal change;

2. Selection from the list of personal change experiences that are ethically available for use in the classroom;
3. Links between personal change, personal learning and personal teaching;
4. A generic approach to teaching that can promote personal learning;
5. Articulating a scheme to show how education for personal learning can be addressed across the curriculum.

Familiarity with this sequence is proposed as a way forward for educational leaders to help teachers and parents develop an understanding of education for spiritual/moral development that will foster both realistic expectations of the school's role as well as appropriate classroom practice.

1. List of types of experience that catalyse personal change

Strictly speaking, new knowledge does itself constitute a *personal change*. However, the word is usually used to refer to change in one or more of the following:-

emotions: fundamental visceral feelings such as joy, zest, fear, guilt, anger, sexual feelings.
attitudes: abiding dispositions to think, feel and behave in particular ways with reference to an issue, person or thing.
values: beliefs or principles which the individual holds as important and which can have an orienting influence on motivation and behaviour.
beliefs: principles believed to be true; may or may not be inspired by religious faith; may be inspired by people, significant others, science.
virtues: habits of motivated thinking, valuing and behaviour that are regarded as 'good' for the individual and the community.
morals: moral values and moral code.
commitments: values or beliefs to which the individual adheres and to which he or she is prepared to be accountable.
imagination: the mental capacity to create new possibilities of what might be – a precursor to action and change.
intuition: judgment made on ideas and feelings about situations where a clear rational or evidence-based answer is not yet available.

Initially, the focus here is on *personal change*. Later, it will be argued that personal learning is *more* than personal change.

The list in Table 1 looks at the ways in which experience, events, people and cultural agencies can catalyse personal change in young people across their life experience. All of life experience can lead to personal change; it occurs in many and complex ways, influenced by a variety of personal, social and physical factors. This initial, brief list is useful for demonstrating a range of change processes only some of which are ethically appropriate for use in the classroom.

Table 1. A list of personal change processes

	Personal change process	Brief description
1	Absorbing beliefs/values/attitudes from human groups	Both unconsciously and consciously people can absorb beliefs/attitudes/values from their immediate human reference groups (often called socialisation). The values absorbed may be implicit in the ways individuals are treated by parents and others. Human relationships are a prime source of values. The ways individuals are treated by others may confirm certain values or may promote other values through a negative reaction.
2	Emulation of others	Individuals can emulate the values displayed by others who serve as role

	(role models)	models (both positive and negative).
3	Satisfaction of personal needs	Values can develop through the satisfaction of personal needs; patterns or regularities emerge in the ways individuals behave in satisfying wants and needs (for example altruism, kindness, selfishness).
4	Exhortation	Beliefs and values can be accepted from exhortation; people are told what is good and important for them and for the good of others (this will be influenced by the level of respect for, and perceived authority of, the source).
5	Coercion	Personal change can be brought about by coercion. Psychological pressure or threat can be brought to bear on the individual. It might be motivated by anxiety, fear, shame.
6	Idealism	Personal change may flow from idealism; the attraction of an ideal can facilitate the development of particular values. This can include values developing out of admiration for a role model or hero/heroine, values flowing from religious beliefs or values exhibited by reference groups.
7	Events and experience	Personal change can result from responses to events and experience; it includes long-term experience or shorter, critical (sometimes traumatic) events which trigger an appraisal of values. There may be a significant emotional component to the experience and the change. It can include what people describe as a spiritual or transcendent experience.
8	Reflection	Beliefs and values can change during and after reflection. The change may flow from new knowledge and understandings. It includes values derived from education in the broad sense (more than schooling). For example, from reading, travelling, watching film/television, school education, leisure and work.
9	Imagination	Through imaginative identification and imaginative rehearsal, individuals can test out in advance what it might be like to change personally. Hence the imagination is often a 'precursor' to personal change. This mechanism may work in conjunction with many of the other processes listed here.
10	Ethical instructional process	Personal change can be part of a response to an ethical instruction process. Through information, analysis, evaluation and making preliminary judgments about worth, individuals are persuaded, without coercion, to consider the desirability or importance of adopting particular values. Instruction can be one-to-one or in a group. Values can be learned from content and instructional process even when this was not the intention. Instruction does not always have to be 'instructor centred' – it can be 'learner centred' where the study initiative rests with the learner.
11	Indoctrination	Personal change can result from indoctrination, that is, through a supposedly educational process that is flawed in various ways as described in the concept of indoctrination. For example, the persuasion is not fully open to rational evaluation; or there is some form of deceit, even if it means that not all the relevant information is provided, or that some of it is concealed or misrepresented.
12	Other processes	Other types of experience and process that could occasion personal change.

2. Selection from the list of personal change experiences that are ethically available for use in the classroom

It is likely that the most significant personal change brought about in pupils by their school has to do with interpersonal relationships and the community environment. This involves processes 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8.

By contrast, the classroom curriculum is much more limited in its scope for change experiences, being more or less confined to an ethical instructional process (10), with the hope that it will stimulate some personal reflection (8) and imagined possibilities for change (9). This is the case even though the curriculum can include excursions and educational visits beyond the school.

It would not be ethical to plan traumatic events for children in the classroom for any purpose, let alone as an intended learning process. Care needs to be exercised in choosing activities that are likely to trigger emotional responses from pupils. It would be unethical for teachers to use coercion, humiliation, guilt or fear.

Thus it is more appropriate and realistic to regard the classroom as not so directly concerned with bringing about personal change; rather, its role is to *inform* pupils about personal change – what they need to *know* to be able to better negotiate personal change when the opportunity arises. Because learning in the classroom has a natural cognitive or intellectual contextual emphasis, it makes process 10, instruction, the normal channel or pathway towards personal change in that particular context.

The limited scope for catalysing personal change the classroom is normal. It is not because of any deficiency in that context or because of any deficiency in the pedagogy; the classroom is a *public place* where a community of learners meets for educational purposes. This judgment is the basis for working out both the real possibilities and limitations of the classroom for promoting spiritual and moral change in pupils. In this sense, the classroom does not actually *effect* spiritual and moral change in young people; rather, it provides '*helpful infrastructure' for personal change*; the appeal for personal change is through reason and relevant information. The classroom can *affect* the personal change process in pupils, primarily through input to the rational parts of the process. But whether or not, and when, personal change might occur are matters that depend on the pupils and not on the teacher or the pedagogy; and if change does occur, it will usually not be a dramatic event and it will probably not be noticed by the teachers; it will not be a sudden and radical reconfiguration of the young person's values. A desire to observe or assess personal change in pupils is not a legitimate concern of teachers, even though at times they may have the privilege of seeing that education has contributed to healthy personal change in some of their students.

The sort of personal change occasioned in young people by their education is not usually something sudden or immediate, but slow and drawn out across their schooling; it may not become evident until after they leave school. Also, such change is usually driven by other factors, so it is difficult to ascribe any particular change exclusively to schooling. A good schooling gradually enhances young people's *capacity to learn personal lessons from life experience*; education can help them to consider personal change issues and to think about implications; it can *favourably dispose* them towards the possibility of being open to the lifelong enhancement of their personal lives through education.

This interpretation conflicts with views that claim or imply a more significant role for the school. It puts the educational intention of promoting pupils' spiritual and moral development into better perspective. It can show how both particular 'personal' subjects, as well as across-the-curriculum studies, can make valuable contributions, even if limited. In addition, it points to the desirability of using less inflated language for talking about education and personal change. As long as there are unrealistic assumptions about what the school can do in 'teaching values' or in 'developing faith', real progress in promoting what schools can do best in this regard will be hampered.

3. Links between personal change, personal learning and personal teaching

Discussing personal change, for all its complexity, is relatively easy when it involves making a list of personal characteristics and then linking these with different sorts of experience that can influence them. But when there is a progression to talk about *personal learning* resulting from the change, new problems and complexities emerge; the difficulties are compounded if it is proposed that there is a *personal teaching* (or personal pedagogy) that can bring about both of the above. The passage from teaching to learning to personal change in pupils (or even a pathway from teaching to personal change and then to learning) is by no means as straightforward as it is in, say, knowledge of mathematics (although mathematics educators would justifiably qualify the statement). And the difficulties are not

just to do with increased uncertainty in the causal pathway – taking into account factors outside the educational process that affect young people such as home environment, peers, popular culture, or television. There are fundamental questions about the meaning of the terms 'personal learning' and 'personal teaching' that need to be clarified.

Personal learning is more than personal change; in addition, it requires some continuity and level of personal integration that dispose pupils to think and behave in a particular way. It is not just having a 'personal experience'; it also includes some *understanding* and *contextualisation* of that personal change that *reverberates* internally; it is not ephemeral but lasting, even if not permanent. For example, the death of a parent can be an emotional experience but it can also change the way individuals perceive and value things from then on; it can prompt the development of a new perspective that enters into thinking and behaviour for a long time afterwards. There has been a change in outlook and in meanings. Something very personal has been learnt through the experience.

When the meaning of *change* and *development* is teased out, the complexity of personal learning becomes more evident. For example, personal learning may be primarily rooted in new knowledge and meanings that precede changes in emotions, values and behaviour; it is like a new *disposition*. Personal learning can be acquired by rational inquiry as well as through direct experience. Individuals can 'learn' by studying the personal experience of others – like vicarious personal learning without having to go through the actual experience themselves. However, it may be that the more common instances of personal learning flow from the contextualisation of people's own experiences – as a follow-up to emotion, exciting and important experiences, trauma and personal interaction. This interpretation shows how it is difficult to conceptualise a logical sequence in personal learning because knowledge, feelings, beliefs, values and attitudes are intimately related within people and are closely connected with their experience. It is possible to refer to these separate components of the person in an analytical sense while recognising that no such 'separateness' actually exists within the individual.

Take *emotional learning* as a particular example of personal learning. One could suggest that the following are required for emotional learning to occur.

- An *understanding* of emotions and of one's emotional experience, which means getting them into some *perspective* – being able to make sense of it all; sometimes this learning can come through reflection on past experience or on some educational input, without there being any emotional experience as such at the time; the understanding of emotion becomes a part of the individual's *meaning* – it becomes an interpretive principle that can be brought to bear on new experiences;
- Healthy *integration* of emotion within the personality; a healthy place for emotions becomes part of self-understanding;
- Some movement towards *emotional maturity*, involving the two points above, as well as appreciation of the appropriateness of particular emotional responses in particular contexts;
- A capacity to *express emotional responses* appropriately;
- After having learned, the emotional response to a situation that occurs again will be somewhat *different* or *moderated* in the light of past experience and reflection (for example there will be learning from past successes and mistakes);
- Sensitivity to and respect for the *emotions of others*.

Emotional experience is not necessarily emotional *learning*. When one or more of these developments takes place, the experience can be 'converted' or 'enhanced' to the status of learning. In other words, it becomes emotional learning when it makes some contribution to emotional maturity. Because of the complexity, it is unlikely that any lesson would be likely to show that observable emotional learning has taken place. There may be evidence of emotion, but that is not the complete picture.

Also, what emerges as significant is the centrality of *understanding* – the rational dimension – in emotional learning. This will have important consequences when education is conceptually linked with personal change and personal learning.

What then of *personal pedagogy*? Are there distinctive pedagogies that are geared specifically to personal learning? For example, is there a distinctive emotional pedagogy?

It is considered both undesirable and unethical for teachers to set out with pupil's emotions as their pedagogical targets. To do so is manipulative. Rather, the objectives always need to be principally within the domain of open inquiry, knowledge and understanding. If emotions are triggered as a by-product of such study, because of the sensitivity of the subject matter, and if the emotion is expressed by pupils in a way that can be comfortably accommodated in the classroom, it can be a natural and healthy part of the educational process. But safeguards need to be in place. Teachers need to judge whether particular expressions of emotion in the classroom are appropriate both for the individual and the class; and if emotions are expressed, the teacher needs to address the situation in a way that tries to bring balance. Pupils' emotional vulnerability needs to be protected. Teachers need to consider in advance the potential in particular content/resources/classroom experiences for stimulating emotion, and if there is a danger that it cannot be handled comfortably, then the plan should be changed. This is not trying to eliminate emotion from the classroom; indeed, more controversial and emotional issues need to be considered than is currently the case. But the generation of emotion is not a desirable goal for teaching even though it can be a valuable component of holistic learning because it is a natural concomitant of some investigations. Teachers and classes need to be respectful of individuals' emotions when these are exposed in the classroom; and all in the class need to learn about the appropriateness of particular emotional expressions in that public context, respecting people's sensitivities. What is also important is care about the questions asked of pupils; there should never be psychological pressure to reveal their own feelings or personal views.

Is there then a distinctive emotional pedagogy that is appropriate in the classroom? There may well be for voluntary therapy groups, and for contexts like the Jerry Springer Show, but for the classroom I think not. No classroom pedagogy will automatically stimulate emotion; similarly, all pedagogies are capable of touching pupils' emotions – it depends a lot on the content. Emotive topics are more likely to arouse emotions and discussion formats are more likely to provide scope for the expression of emotional responses.

In the light of this application to emotional learning, I propose that there is educational value in the generic notion of personal learning. But I think that the terms 'personal teaching' and 'personal pedagogy' should be avoided because of the problematic assumption that there is a distinctive pedagogical style that is effective in generating emotions – and that the resultant emotions constitute learning. There is also concern that an interest in personal pedagogy can lead to manipulative practice. Rather, it is more appropriate to consider generic links between *any* pedagogy and personal learning. It takes the focus off personal experience itself as an objective for teaching, and it handles emotion (and other aspects like personal values and faith) respectfully when and where they enter naturally into student responses. It also focuses on what classroom teaching and learning can do best for personal change, helping students understand themselves better, with the aim of learning to see how they might integrate personal change within the personality in a healthy way.

A classroom activity becomes *personal* when it engages with these dimensions of the person; but it only becomes *learning* when personal change is *understood*, and when this understanding furthers the integration of personality. Personal learning is a new understanding – a new *meaning*, or disposition – that has 'reverberations' throughout the personality both at the time and into the future. Whether or not personal learning occurs depends on the *response of the learner and not on the intention and pedagogy of the teacher*. The intention to educate young people spiritually and morally requires built-in acknowledgment that ultimately a free personal response from the student is essential.

4. A generic approach to teaching that can promote personal learning

The perceived freedom on the part of students is central to education for personal change. In most learning areas, students take for granted freedom to explore different viewpoints and various explanations; they are accustomed to offering diverse theories to account for psychological and social data. But if they sense that a study has a spiritual/moral agenda, their 'antennae are up'. That is, if they feel that the exercise is concerned with communicating particular values and beliefs, they may immediately disengage and be on their guard; they know that the freedom they had to think about and discuss interpretations in their literature studies is not evident here. This subtlety about freedom of inquiry is often missed by teachers, and it is unfortunate, because the question of student freedom can often be the single most important factor in making the activity one of personal learning – or not! It has significant pedagogical implications. The problem with perceived freedom is a natural one that a church school has to negotiate in its religion program; the committed religious position of the school can be perceived by students as a condition that precludes the possibility of ever having a fully open, free, inquiring study. And the only way they can be convinced that this is not the case is an educational experience of the contrary. The same problem looms for values education programs in public education. Even the naming of topics as 'desired values' can give young people a scent of the problem. Sensitivity to their freedom of inquiry is behind students' wariness about the mandate of schools to 'teach values'. Care is also needed to ensure that this freedom is present in across-the-curriculum approaches to values; otherwise, students can feel that the freedom they usually have in these learning areas is being eliminated by the purpose of making the studies instrumental to values education.

A 'contextual emphasis' on rational inquiry is proposed as a necessary condition for creating and sustaining this freedom for students. A more 'issue-oriented' approach to studying beliefs and values helps create a *zone of freedom* in and around the student inquiry. It is not focused on their personal lives, but on issues that are 'out there', but that often have personal implications. It is not perceived as invasive, and it gives them the freedom needed to consider personal implications in their own time and in their own terms. While anchored in rational inquiry, the activity allows scope for pupils to reflect on issues, and to 'feel in empathy' or to 'feel angry'; it can even allow them to 'try on' particular views and values. But all the time there is an overarching respect for their personal space and freedom. Much of the 'personalising' of the study is done privately and students should feel no pressure to make this known to the class. Such an information or research focus on values harmonises with the style of critical inquiry they are accustomed to in the rest of the curriculum.

This emphasis on a zone of freedom in classroom inquiry, this does not mean a *zone of escape*. Respect for students' freedom does not mean that anything that is likely to challenge or confront their thinking and values should be avoided; that would result in an 'antiseptic' curriculum, shielding them from any evaluation that might question their own views. A healthy personal education needs the dimension of personal challenge, but it needs to be respectful and not manipulative. It may well generate some internal dissonance, and this may or may not lead towards healthy personal change; but students will not be pressured to display any such dissonance. While their zone of freedom should always be respected, it is not a good idea for teachers to keep referring to their freedom (especially freedom of choice), because this can be misinterpreted as an 'escape clause' from adopting any moral stance and from evaluating stances with integrity and honesty. Overemphasising their freedom can also play into the hands of moral relativism – that morality is just a matter of opinion and that 'because this is my own opinion it is therefore valid'.

At the end of a unit of work that tapped into controversial issues, and that generated vigorous discussion, a teacher may surmise that some students have retained, perhaps even reinforced, their simplistic and bigoted views. The challenge to consider the implications that common values would propose seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. Perhaps the study exacerbated negative student attitudes in some, rather than challenging them. However, these indications have little to do with the 'real' success

of the study. It may have been as successful as it could be; rather than failing, the teacher did a good job, and needs reassurance for so doing. The study challenged pupils' thinking in a positive way. An accepting or an antagonistic response is not a matter over which the teacher has control. Hence the significance of being careful in determining what is to count as 'effective' teaching in a situation like this.

Whenever sex education or values education is reported on television, almost invariably it shows a student discussion. These images reinforce the stereotype that personal learning occurs best in such interactions. It is easy to get the impression that 'exchange of opinions' is the most important personal learning activity and that any critical appraisal of information has a minor place, if any. In turn, this view can overrate the significance of discussions and underrate student research and reflection. It would be more helpful to make discussions into an 'informed debate' and not just an 'exchange of opinions'; the former is a more accurate description of the component of critical inquiry and it helps avoid the impression that classroom discussion is just about swapping opinions. This approach should also help counter student concerns that the educational process is just an exhortation – telling them that 'these are the values we want you to adopt'.

A student-centred investigation of issues is the most realistic and effective way of studying beliefs and values in the classroom. Often, talk about 'teaching to communicate beliefs and values' is unrealistic; it does not adequately take into account the complexities of belief or value development, the significance of student freedom, the natural limitations to educational processes for engendering beliefs or values, or the valuable contribution that education can make to understanding beliefs or values.

5. Articulating a scheme to show how education for personal learning can be addressed across the curriculum.

The spiritual and moral dimension to the school curriculum can be conceptualised through a combination of three strategies. The first two are concerned with spiritual-moral content. The third is about the ways in which ordinary teaching and learning processes across the curriculum can contribute towards the development of personal learning skills.

Strategy 1: Explicit approach: Here, spiritual and moral questions are the explicit, formal content of study. The aim is to help students become well informed, critical thinkers about spiritual-moral areas. The approach takes two forms:

1A *Whole subjects*: Particular spiritual-moral subjects where most of the content is in one or more of the areas of philosophy, ethics, spirituality, religion, personal development, social justice, contemporary spiritual-moral issues.

1B *Parts of study units*: Particular parts of subjects or units of work where spiritual or moral or justice issues are specified as content for exploration, for example ethical issues for science; values issues in economics; issues related to the environment, globalisation and quality of life in various subjects.

Strategy 2: Contextual approach: This can be used within any Key Learning Area (KLA) where spiritual and moral issues arise naturally in relationship with the substantive content of a unit of work (the spiritual-moral issues are not the formal unit content). Here, issues can be addressed briefly in a way that acknowledges their importance and is informative, while not compromising the integrity of the principal subject matter. For example, personal development issues may arise in the study of literature (as illustrated in chapter 1); questions about the ethics of business practice, political and ideological issues, and ecological sustainability may emerge in various subjects. In addition, students may ask questions spontaneously about contemporary spiritual and moral issues.

Strategy 3: General skills and consciousness-raising: The regular teaching and learning processes in all KLAs can contribute in some way to the 'personal' learning of students. Educationally enhanced cognitive skills have a carryover into personal learning skills that can be applied to life, for example skills in self-directed study, research, problem-posing, data collection and analysis, interpretation, evaluation, appraisal of arguments, historical perspective and ecological perspective. Personal learning skills or life skills are a basic part of a lifelong education; they may contribute to young people's becoming more critically aware of spiritual and moral dimensions; in turn, they may dispose them towards responsible, committed action.

Strategy 1. Explicit approach to the spiritual-moral dimension of the school curriculum

Here, spiritual-moral questions are the *primary* content for study, and not just secondary interests that emerge intentionally or accidentally within some other investigation. They stress the need for a formal subject and for parts of units of work in various other subjects, where spiritual-moral issues can be critically examined. However, it does not imply that attention given to values issues as secondary content in other subjects is an insignificant or unimportant part of values education. The investigation of spiritual-moral questions should be accorded a philosophically central position in the curriculum – even though this proposal conflicts with the current dominance of status subjects and employment-oriented competencies.

1A *Whole subject mode*: The need for a school subject for direct study of spiritual-moral questions

If the school curriculum is to take seriously a responsibility for educating young people in the spiritual and moral dimension to life, then it needs to include a credible subject in which such questions can be studied directly as its principal content. This would provide an appropriate forum for studying such matters and its existence would express the value position that 'what it means to be human' merits serious subject attention in the curriculum. In Catholic schools, this is the place for religious education as a core subject in the curriculum. Elsewhere, I have elaborated on the possibilities and problems with the place of religion in the Catholic school curriculum (Crawford and Rossiter, 2006, pp. 304-321.)

1B *Parts of study units*: Studying spiritual and moral questions as parts of units of work

A judicious selection of spiritual and moral questions should be written into units in subjects across the curriculum as an appropriate part of their content; how extensively will depend on the topic. Good examples were documented in the National Values Education Study (Curriculum Corporation, 2004). Others could be:- ethical issues related to bio-technology (such as in vitro fertilisation, surrogate motherhood, genetic engineering); ethical issues in business practice; the moral implications in globalisation policies; young people's search for meaning; identity issues for youth; the religious dimension to multiculturalism; conflicts between religion and science; issues concerning work and quality of life. It is a matter of seeing where it was appropriate to add specific values-related content that fitted within particular units of work.

As with all attempts at integration in the curriculum, this strategy will work well only if it is properly organised and if there is good cooperation between teachers working in different KLAs. A number of practical questions have to be resolved. What issues should be covered? In which subjects and at what year levels and in what detail? What methods need to be specified for handling issues, especially controversial ones? Are there useful resources for particular topics? How can spiritual-moral issues be explored while maintaining the integrity of the primary subject matter in the host subject? Some of these questions, particularly the last, are also relevant to the contextual strategy.

Strategy 2. Contextual approach: Acknowledging and addressing spiritual-moral issues where they arise in across-the-curriculum studies

The structure and content of the general curriculum itself are not value-free. Also, there is great scope for the treatment of spiritual-moral issues where they arise naturally in various subjects. While the approach described here does not have such questions formally written into the unit content, the study may well have a natural personal dimension; values questions can surface both in classroom interactions and in student research.

The approach requires sensitivity and wisdom in the teacher. An appropriate and balanced position avoids the extremes of excluding all values questions on the one hand, and raising too many issues on the other. The ideal is to acknowledge, and draw students' attention to, the spiritual-moral issues that inhere within the various topics being investigated. This may be all that can be done. In some instances, teachers can give more attention to the issues with relevant information and resources as well as through discussion, while not compromising the integrity of the principal subject matter. At times, the attention may take the form of probing teacher questions that show pupils something of the complexity of the problem, suggesting directions for further clarifying thought and study.

There are some similarities with explicit strategy 1B, the difference being that in the contextual approach, the spiritual-moral dimension is not formally identified as content, even though it can be an integral part of the study.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the strategy is to *register* the spiritual and moral issues that are often there in topics being studied, but just beneath the surface. Not too much should be expected; however, the strategy should not carry principal responsibility for the spiritual-moral dimension to the curriculum. While unplanned and informal discussion of these issues can be valuable educationally, this is not an adequate substitute for a systematic, well-resourced study as envisaged in strategies 1A and 1B.

Strategy.3 General skills and consciousness-raising: The overall contribution of the curriculum to personal learning skills

Strategies 1 and 2 are concerned with handling spiritual and moral questions in the classroom – in particular spiritual-moral subjects, in parts of units of work, and more generally where issues arise in various subjects across the curriculum. The focus of this third strategy is different. It interprets the ways in which ordinary teaching and learning activities in all KLAs make some contribution to pupils' personal development. It is not as tangible as the explicit and contextual strategies. Some may think this is just putting a nice 'spin' on ordinary teaching by saying it has personal relevance; to some extent it is a 'spin', but if there are real links to personal learning skills, no matter how slender, then this needs to be acknowledged for the positive contribution it can make. This interpretation is about the overall impact of twelve years of school curriculum on the life capacities of young people.

The general skills strategy is also a good starting point for conceptualising the spiritual and moral dimension of across-the-curriculum studies. It is the basis on which the first two strategies rest. If this is what teachers have been doing in best practice, it needs to be articulated to give them a better understanding of what is their appropriate role in young people's spiritual and moral education.

It is presumed that all subjects in the curriculum were included because they were considered to make a distinctive contribution to young people's education. Particular subjects represent traditional academic disciplines; they impart specific knowledge and skills and help develop employment-related competencies. But this is not enough. In addition, pupil-centred curriculum theory and the prominence of personal aims for education require that all KLAs show how they can contribute to the overall personal development and wellbeing of students in both distinctive and general ways.

This spiritual-moral role can be interpreted as the ordinary teaching and learning activities not only achieving their intended subject outcomes, but also contributing a flow-on effect in the personal domain, enhancing personal learning skills. Each learning area should be able to show how it is valuable for young people in the larger context of their lives; it should try to alert them to the *meaning* of their learning and not be content with outward proofs of learning as shown in the assessment of measurable outcomes.

The general spiritual-moral contribution of a subject: Each subject fosters general skills for personal development. For example, there is some contribution to personal skilling in each of the various learning activities listed below.

- collecting, analysing and displaying data
- conducting individual and group research studies
- learning how to work collaboratively in groups
- developing explanatory interpretations
- identifying and evaluating arguments; putting arguments in order of priority
- learning how to articulate an informed point of view with logic and supporting evidence
- empathising with the situation and point of view of others
- developing basic skills in numeracy and literacy needed for life in contemporary society
- experiencing art, literature and music, thereby widening the students' cultural horizons
- imaginative identification with characters in literature, and with the perspective and feelings of authors and artists
- identifying cultural diversity and becoming more aware of the potentiality and problems in multicultural democratic societies
- identifying moral, political and environmental issues
- differentiating facts from beliefs
- differentiating emotional and reasoned responses to an issue
- identifying both the explicit and implied values in a situation and making tentative judgments in the light of community values
- identifying and evaluating cultural meanings, stereotypes and identity resources
- identifying and evaluating ideologies
- identifying conflict and its sources with reflection on possibilities for non-violent conflict resolution
- speculating on short-term and long-term human consequences of particular actions
- speculating on the influence of culture on individuals, and on lifestyle and quality of life
- reflecting on implications for wellbeing, quality of life and respect for the environment
- developing historical perspective
- seeing how events in the past can help illuminate and interpret what is happening at present.

To the extent that all subjects achieve student learning in one or more of these activities there is some possibility of carryover into personal learning skills.

In addition to their general input to personal learning skills, each subject is distinctive in the way it contributes to students' understanding of, and participation in, life. It demonstrates a spiritual (meaningful or personal) dimension by adding to the range of an individual's access to physical and cultural inheritance, as well as to their capacity to participate in community life. For example, English studies can open students to a lifelong interest in literature; Mathematics can provide basic skills and computer literacy that are essential for participation in commerce; learning a foreign language enhances the capacity to enter into another culture and literature; Health Education can be a precursor to a lifelong sensitivity to health issues; a study of geology, geography and biology can enhance the capacity to 'read' the ecology of the environment; Religious Studies can contribute an understanding of the ways religious beliefs influence behaviour and how religions interpret the dilemmas of human existence such as life, joy, pain and death.

Every now and again teachers should attempt to alert students to the long-term meaning and value in their current learnings, even if it seems to fall on uninterested ears. Whether or not they agree with it at this stage, it is important for students to know that educators have *reasons* for thinking particular studies ultimately valuable for their personal development; they are not just about achieving miscellaneous outcomes. Not to do this would disadvantage students by failing to highlight the spiritual and moral dimension of the subject; to do it too often would be counterproductive because it would be interpreted by the students as ‘preaching’.

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The paper began with an identification of the gap that exists between the spiritual/moral purposes of education and classroom practice. This is part of the problematic debates about teaching values and about the expectations of religious schools to produce church going-pupils. The paper proposes that it is important for school leaders to clarify the links between educational practice and personal change in pupils, as a way of not only helping develop realistic expectations of the school, but of fostering constructive classroom practice.

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