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Teaching Values Education: An Intrinsic Case Study

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The context of this research is the Department of Education, Science and Training's (DEST) initiative to introduce the Values Education Programme (VEP) into all Key Learning Areas (KLA)s. This paper reports on the first stages of a research project in progress aimed at exploring educationalists', teachers', and student teachers' perceptions and conceptions of the teaching of values in Brisbane secondary schools, in particular the idea of teaching or 'inculcating' students with 'values' as described in the DEST report. Interview transcripts were analysed using Leximancer and phenomenographic techniques. To date two major categories of description of conceptions of the VEP have been identified from the data pool, an institutionalisation discourse and a pragmatism discourse. Within these two major categories a dichotomy of conceptions exists. Key dimensions of the meaning that teaching the VEP holds for high school teachers show a primary focus towards: (1) teaching as a profession, being part of an institution; and (2) being a teacher, teaching strategies, students and their learning and development. The pilot study has identified nine categories of description, describing qualitatively different ways of understanding the VEP elicited from the various conceptions of teachers.

Introduction

This paper is a research-in-progress report of a project that aims to identify and report secondary school teachers' perceptions and conceptions of the implementation of the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) Values Education Programme (VEP). These concepts are constructed by teachers' discourses that reflect the initiative and elaborate teachers' views of the VEP. This research will frame future research on the acceptance, identification with and implementation of the VEP by teachers and schools.

The VEP is an initiative implemented by the DEST with the intention of delivering values education into Australian schools and is supported by funding of \$29.7 million over four years (2004-2008) "to help make values education a core part of Australian schooling" (T. Mercer, personal communication, 8 March, 2005). The *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* released in February 2005, was developed from the *Values Education Study* (2003) and widespread consultation on a *Draft Framework* (2003), and defines values education as any "explicit and/or implicit school-based activity which promotes student understanding and knowledge of values, and which develops the skills and dispositions of students so they can enact particular values as individuals and as members of the wider community" (p. 8). The framework also lists the nine values that have been identified for Australian schooling as

- (a) Care and compassion: Care for self and others
- (b) Doing your best: Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence
- (c) Fair go: Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
- (d) Freedom: Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
- (e) Honesty and trustworthiness: Be honest, sincere and seek the truth
- (f) Integrity: Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
- (g) Respect: Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view
- (h) Responsibility: Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment
- (i) Understanding, tolerance and inclusion: Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others.

The 2005 National Values Education Forum was held in Canberra, 2–3 May, and provided a venue to expand upon and reinforce the outcomes of the 2004 Values Education Forum, strengthen and develop the VEP in Australian schools, provide exemplars of values education practice and emphasize resources being developed for the VEP. The Forum also provided for distribution and discussion of the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools*. All States and Territory Governments have endorsed the Framework which will support schools in the implementation of values education and the funding allocated for a number of values education initiatives to be implemented over the next four years will include values forums in every school and clusters of schools implementing good practice approaches. The Programme will develop a Values Education website, curriculum resources for all schools and national activities, including an annual national forum and projects with parents, principals, teachers and teacher educators (DEST, 2005).

In Australia and several other countries, particularly the USA and UK, values education is leading the charge for educational reform exacerbated by globalisation and politics in pedagogy. The research outlined in this paper has arisen from concern with issues raised in the DEST initiative to introduce the VEP into Australian schools over the next four years. The research aims to contribute to the debate over values education by investigating secondary school teachers' understanding and acceptance of the VEP. This paper presents preliminary data from a pilot study and nine major categories of teachers' perceptions emanating from discourses of institutionalisation and pragmatism have emerged. These findings potentially provide insight into different perceptions of the relationship between the VEP and teachers and could form a framework for discussions in Government, schools and teacher education organisations.

Research aim and questions

In 1997, Churchill, Williamson and Grady reported that teachers and principals generally do not respond positively to the introduction of new "contemporary change initiatives" into their schools and classrooms. They found that teachers have developed an "entrenched resistance" to and "considerable cynicism in views toward educational innovations" (Churchill, Williamson, & Grady, 1997). In 2004, Gardner and Williamson found that although teachers viewed many new initiatives as worthwhile projects, they would be reluctant to participate in new policies due to current workloads and saw the "layers of change upon change" (p. 7) as problematic. Another important issue for teachers, with regard to new government sponsored pedagogical initiatives, was the concern with being "held accountable by others for outcomes over which they had either limited control or no control" (p. 7). Prior (2005), points to some of the layers of change that teachers have had to deal with recently and argues that intense social change over the past two decades has caused many politicians, parents and media commentators to see schools as the "appropriate venue to rectify any social problems so that, for example, drug abuse, road safety, suicide prevention and sex education are seen as best being tackled by schools doing the right thing in an already overcrowded curriculum" (p. 107).

An example of this type of Government initiative is the Discovering Democracy (DD) programme, a part of the Government's Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE) initiative, which was introduced to Australian schools in 1999. The overall response from teachers towards the DD programme was, as the literature above would suggest, less than enthusiastic and today the programme is not utilized in many schools at all. Clearly Churchill, Williamson and Grady's "entrenched resistance" (1997) played a part in the lack of acceptance with the DD programme, as did according to Print, Moroz, and Reynolds (2001), a lack of teachers' awareness about the programme and "fragmentation, low status and avoidance of implementation of CCE" caused by the absence of a "whole-of-school approach" (p. 203). Print et al. (2001) also cited professional development, teacher participation in the development of new curriculum, and teacher preparedness for educational change initiatives as being problematic areas in the success of the DD programme and argue that generally "teachers liked the resource but some found it too difficult to introduce because of the already crowded curriculum, competing demands and priorities" (p. 206).

The literature above shows the contentious nature of the relationship between Government, parents and teachers concerning values education, but there is another important participant in the values education conversation: the school student. Interestingly, there is not a great deal of literature available on how students view the concept of values education. Seven students, varying in age and schools attended, were interviewed at the 2005 National Values Education Forum in Canberra, May 2–3, and one of the questions asked of the students was: "What should schools do more of to help with values education?" (Cole, 2005, p. 17).

Student 1 did not respond, student 2 replied "teach students values and not just tell them to do it". Student 3 said that schools should show greater respect towards students and do more to encourage cooperation and friendliness. Similarly Student 4 felt that the promotion of respect was important and caring relationships between students and

teachers should be fostered. Student 5 stated that "school should teach everyone to be more responsible for their actions", and Student 6, a secondary student, said that teaching values to primary students is one thing, but secondary students will be much more independent about their value choices. She felt that the best way to teach values to older students was "by example and by teachers displaying good values". Student 7 said, to the audience comprised of teachers and educationalists, "the only wisdom I have to offer is to keep on developing so you are abreast of how young people are learning today" and "you appear to have been doing a good job so far, so all you have to do is just keep it up" (Cole, 2005, pp. 17–18).

Perhaps the DD programme has had some impact after all or maybe the students were coached a little before the interview. The students' thoughts on values education are couched in democratic virtues and seem to echo a statement by Susan Pascoe (2005), made at the same forum where she argued that teachers will need to model the values they espouse because "unequal learning opportunities, inconsistent discipline, lack of follow up on absenteeism or lack of pastoral care will all speak volumes to students about the real values in the school" (p. 4).

There has been a worldwide surge in the teaching of civics and citizenship education that leads to a more explicit form of values education than that of the religious and social studies areas of the past few decades (Lee & Fouts, 2005). It is unlikely that a values education programme produced by the DEST will be universally accepted by the community, and many citizens may disagree with the values to be taught and the attitudes that produced the programme. Gore (1998) argues that "community concern about teacher accountability, and the community's lack of knowledge about the pedagogy that teachers employ to teach values and to teach about values, will keep debate in this area of the curriculum alive for years to come" (p. 8). This research will take part in the debate over teaching values and will endeavour to elucidate how and to what extent teachers accept and identify with the VEP.

This research has arisen from concern with issues raised in the DEST initiative to introduce values education into Australian schools. The research aims to contribute to the debate over values education by investigating secondary school teachers' understanding and acceptance of the DEST Values Education Programme (VEP) and poses the key research questions: What do teachers understand by the VEP?, How and to what extent do teachers identify with that programme?, How and to what extent are teachers likely to accept and be responsible for the implementation of the VEP?

Participants

In phenomenographic research, it is particularly important that the interviewees chosen for the data collection are appropriate to the purpose of the research. The research purpose for this study was the driving factor in the selection of the participants who were chosen because they have knowledge and experience about the particular focus (phenomenon) of the research. As deMarris (2004) argues, a primary consideration in the selection of participants for phenomenographic interviews is to "select participants who can talk about the topic or phenomenon under study" (p. 59). For this study, a necessary criteria was that interviewees had to be people who had teaching experience. Another

experience that was sought in the "criterion-based selection" (deMarrais, 2004, p. 59), of participants was having knowledge and experience of other DEST initiatives, or "layers of change upon change" (Gardner & Williamson, 2004, p. 7) in an Australian high school.

Data for the pilot study was collected from four interviewees: a senior male English/SOSE teacher in a private girls high school; a female teacher educator with 12 years prior experience as a high school teacher; a male PE/English teacher, in his first year of teaching at Brisbane high school; and a mature age female pre-service teacher majoring in IT/English, with prior TESOL experience. A further seven interviewees were chosen for the main study who were all teachers with 10 to 20 years secondary teaching experience.

Method

This investigation involved a case study method (Neuman, 2003), and a phenomenographic approach was adopted to explore how teachers conceptualised values education and the implementation of the DEST proposed VEP. Like all research, a phenomenographic study needs to articulate the purpose in mind at all stages of the research. Phenomenographers should begin with a clear intention, and their research should be planned around a particular purpose that "should provide a focus through the whole study and guide action" (Bowden, 2000, p. 6). The underlying purpose for the whole study was to investigate secondary school teachers' understanding and acceptance of the VEP. This purpose affects every action taken in the study. The research structure of discursive phenomenography as followed in this study comprises five steps (Figure 1).

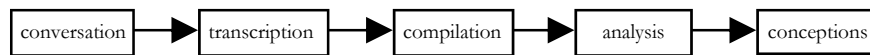


Figure 1.

Steps when carrying out discursive phenomenography (Hasselgren and Beach, 1997, p. 197).

Step 1 - Conversation

Conversations take place in phenomenographic interviews that usually begin with interviewees being asked questions that are "as open-ended as possible in order to let the subjects choose the dimensions of the question they want to answer. The dimensions they choose are an important source of data because they reveal an aspect of the individual's relevance structure" (Marton, 1986, p. 42). Although initial questions may be open-ended, it is important to keep the topics discussed within the study's focus range. Through discussion, interviewees are encouraged to reveal their ways of understanding a phenomenon—in this study, the VEP—and to disclose their relationship to that phenomenon. As Bowden (2000) explains, "the phenomenographic interview has a focus—the way in which interviewees understand the chosen concept—and this focus is maintained throughout" (p. 9).

As might be expected most interviewees had little or no first hand experience with the VEP because the programme had not been greatly publicised to schools at the time of the interviews. In order to give the interviewees a better understanding of the VEP

they were given a synopsis of the programme to read. The synopsis, a three page document constructed entirely from descriptive excerpts about the programme from the *Values Education Study Draft Framework* (2003), provided a stimulus for discussion. It is important to mention that interviewees although generally unfamiliar with the specific initiative being discussed at the beginning of each interview, were as previously mentioned, selected for the research on the basis that they had previous experience with the *type* of initiative being discussed. In other words the participants were familiar with other DEST initiatives that they recognised as being similar to the VEP in their basic structures. Interviews were paused to allow reading of the synopsis and restarted when the interviewee indicated that he or she understood the intended processes and ramifications of the VEP. This use of a stimulus provided interviewees in this research with enough information to express their understanding of the VEP as the focus of the conversations.

Transcription

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed into MS Word electronic data files. This produced an accurate record of everything said in each of the interviews and provided files for electronic text scanning with the computer program Leximancer as well as printed copies to work with. *Familiarisation* (Dahlgren & Fallsberg, 1991) with the transcripts was undertaken by the researcher listening to the recordings of the interviews and making any necessary corrections or annotations from handwritten notes taken during the interviews.

Compilation

Compilation is an integral factor in the first part of phenomenographic analysis and as the name suggests it is a process that involves sorting information into groups or categories of description. Marton (1992, cited in Bowden, 2000) describes the method as: "...the analysis boils down to identifying and grouping expressed ways of experiencing the phenomenon (literally or metaphorically making excerpts from the interviews and putting them into piles)" (p. 12). The computer program, Leximancer, is a valuable tool for researchers and can significantly reduce the amount of time needed for reading and analysis. In this study it was used to scan texts and help compile categories of description. The Key Centre for Human Factors and Applied Cognitive Psychology (2005) describes it as

A content analysis tool that is capable of identifying concepts that have been either explicitly or implicitly included in the text... These concepts and their associated thesaurus entries and associated weights can either be automatically learned by the system, hand-coded by the user, or a combination of the two. ... the weights of the terms are automatically calculated from the statistics of the processed documents, reflecting the definitions used by the writer rather than the biases imposed by the reader or analyst.

This research has shown that the "concepts" identified by Leximancer fit into the phenomenographic idea of "categories of description" (Marton, 1986, p. 33), and would seem to overcome one of phenomenography's ongoing concerns, the "tension between being true to the data and at the same time creating, as the researcher sees it, a tidy construction which is useful for some further explanatory or educational purpose"

(Walsh, 2000, p. 21). This tension arises, in part, from the phenomenographic researcher's process of drawing on "his or her particular perspective to describe the relationship the interviewee has to the phenomenon: the researcher's perspective influences the categories 'in' the data" (Walsh, 2000, p. 20). This may well occur during the compilation process where researchers look for "subject's descriptions" (Marton, 1986, p. 33) and categorize them. This is a crucial part of the analysis because "these categorizations are the primary outcomes of phenomenographic research" (Marton, 1986, p. 33). The "subject's descriptions" that Marton describes can be compared to the "concepts" that are discovered by the Leximancer program. Experienced phenomenographers may argue, that they are not actually the same thing but for the purposes of most research they are so closely related, and ostensibly interchangeable, that the Leximancer program can provide a very fast and accurate initial "reading" of transcripts and quickly identify areas of text for further scrutiny. Another important advantage that a researcher gains from using it is in the non-biased reading of the text that the program performs, a very attractive aspect for most researchers and analysts because it alleviates the likelihood of researcher bias in the selection of subject's descriptions for the compilation into categories of description and therefore adds rigor to the research.

In this research compilation took place following the transcription of the interviews. In the first instance a basic content analysis was conducted to manually develop categories of description. Leximancer was then used to scan texts and confirm these. Eventually this will lead to a phenomenographic analysis and establishment of second order conceptions using the methodology as developed by Marton and others. The pilot study enabled initial categories of descriptions to emerge which were instrumental in developing a framework for further interviews.

Analysis

The research began with a pilot study that was based on four interviews held in January 2005. These four interviews were transcribed and analysed and a framework for guiding interview conversations was developed from the pilot study experience. The participants were chosen for the pilot study, not only for the purposes of obtaining a cross section, but more importantly because of their background in education, teaching and experience with previous DEST initiatives similar to the VEP. Collection of data was through phenomenographic interviews and the computer program Leximancer was used to assist in the examination and interpretation of text in the compilation process. The full interviews formed the data set for a phenomenographic study of teachers' conceptions of the VEP (Bowden & Walsh, 2000; deMarris & Lapan, 2004; Marton, 1986, 1997; Trigwell, 2000). The outcome space of the conceptions of the VEP and the internal relations of this outcome space will be presented in full detail in future work.

For Trigwell (2000), the fundamentals of the phenomenographic research approach are "that it is a *relational second-order* perspective, that it aims to describe the *key aspects of the variation* of experience of a phenomenon rather than the richness of individual experiences, and that it yields a *limited number of internally related*, hierarchical categories of description of the variation" (p. 1). Application of these to the pilot study shows that

1. The study was conducted from a *relational* perspective in which the conceptions of teachers were seen as being constituted as the relation between the teachers and the VEP.
2. The study was *qualitative*, being based entirely on the transcripts of interviews with the participants.
3. A *second-order* perspective, in which the experience of the interviewee, as expressed in the interview, was used as the basis of the analysis.
4. The outcome space concentrates on those aspects of the experience that *vary*. It does not constitute a full and rich description of the experience of the introduction of the VEP and a category of description is not a rich description of a conception.
5. The internal relations of the categories of description and between the categories of description have not been fully analysed in this paper although preliminary identifications have been illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Categories of description

<p>1. Institutionalisation discourse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being an employee (the job) (non-consequentialist/deontological) • Education - the institutional system, as in, Department of Education, Science and Training. What happens to people in the education system is largely uncontrollable for the individual. • Having little or no autonomy in the VE programme • (Producing and advocating) Transmissive, objectivist, behaviourist teaching and learning approaches. • The hidden curriculum 	<p>2. Pragmatism discourse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a teacher of students (the work) (altruistic/virtuous/caring) • Educating – engaging with students' learning. If teaching and educating mean 'helping [students] learn how to integrate the contents of the curriculum into their minds, hearts, and everyday lives' (Gregory, 2001, p. 69), then, how we teach is every bit as important as what we teach. • Having a great deal of autonomy in the VE programme • (Choosing and utilising) Constructivist, student centred, problem based learning approaches • Socio-critical literacy
2. Identifying whose or which values	1. Already doing it
4. Scepticism and entrenched resistance	3. Situating as an integral part of pedagogy
5. Politics in pedagogy	6. Not opposed to the idea
7. It's difficult to teach values	
8. Comparisons with private schools	
9. Problems with student assessment	

The hierarchy of the structural component can be described as follows. Two major categories of description were identified from the data: conceptions of values education elicited from an institutionalisation discourse and conceptions of values education elicited from a pragmatism discourse. Within these two major categories a dichotomy of conceptions exists. Key dimensions of the meaning that *teaching* the VEP holds for high school teachers show a primary focus towards: teaching as a profession, being an

employee and part of an institution; and towards being a teacher, teaching strategies, students and their learning and development. Nine categories of description, describing qualitatively different ways of understanding the VEP that focused on the various conceptions of teachers were identified. These are shown separated into the major categories of the dichotomy from which they emanate in Table 1.

Conceptions

The nine categories of description, describing qualitatively different ways of understanding the VEP are expressed in more detail below, some with brief excerpts from interview transcripts to illustrate key aspects.

1. *Already doing it focused category*

The interviewees believe that teachers have always tried to teach values to their students by modelling or explaining value concepts. They see the list of agreed values as being no more than teachers already advocate as appropriate behaviour in their classrooms.

Interview 1: It always has been done. Schools and education has always been a place for the continuation and the teaching of cultural values. That is part of the role historically, of schools.

2. *Identifying whose or which values focused category*

Teachers are concerned about the selection of values to be taught in the VEP. They are somewhat sceptical about whose or which values will be selected for inclusion in a school initiated program designed to teach values to students.

3. *Situating as an integral part of pedagogy focused category*

Interviewees believe that values probably *cannot* be taught, and definitely *should not* be taught, as an individual topic or subject. They believe that values education should be carried out as an integral part of everyday teaching, in all KLAs and curricula.

Interview 2: ...we are there to help the students explore the values, not to brain wash them into any one particular value belief.

4. *Scepticism and entrenched resistance focused category*

Interviewees were sceptical about the introduction of another Federal Government initiative into schools. They have experienced this kind of teaching initiative being introduced before, and witnessed the failures of such projects to maintain their momentum and achieve their goals. They believe that the VEP will most likely be something that is introduced as a teaching method or practice that all teachers are instructed to engage with, after which very little, if any, assessment or evaluation of the initiative will take place and eventually it will be forgotten and subsequently disappear resulting in a waste of time, money and resources.

5. *Politics in pedagogy focused category*

Interviewees see the Values Education initiative as being politically motivated and being more concerned with some agenda other than simply encouraging Australian school students to adopt, express, advocate and enact the agreed set of values.

Interview 2: That is right, I actually don't see it, I see it more as a publicity stunt to be perfectly honest. I don't think it will change a lot of what is taught.

6. Not opposed to the idea focused category

Interviewees are generally in favour of some type of values education in schools. They have no objection to the notion that school is a good and appropriate venue for the promotion of values and believe that teachers are quite capable of teaching values.

7. It's difficult to teach values focused category

Interviewees believe that teaching values is problematic and difficult. They do not have clear cut ideas about teachers' methods and practices in the area of values education. At first this conception seems to contradict conception 6 (*Not opposed to the idea*), but the two conceptions are situated in different registers. When interviewees advocate a positive position towards teaching values education they are expressing conceptions concerning their acceptance and belief in the worth or integrity of values education. In this category (7) they are concerned with extra work load, more curriculum content and standardised accountability related to a subject that is hard to teach. That is, the VEP is seen as difficult to execute.

Interview 1: That immediately shows you how difficult the area of values education is.

8. Comparisons with private schools focused category

In this category interviewees maintain cynicism towards the introduction of the VEP. Here they see the introduction as a reaction to criticism and that it has been, in part, conceptualised from a competitive marketing epistemology rather than a genuine concern for the moral education of Australian students. They relate a societal perception of private schools having superior values education potential and that private schools have always had an inherent values regimen reinforcing their pedagogical and cultural contexts.

Interview 3: To me the main thing is the social justice and care which I think lacks in state schools generally. State schools are not involved enough with the community.

9. Problems with student assessment focused category

Interviewees viewed assessment of values education as being problematic. Assessment was regarded as not really possible; interviewees could not envisage a workable method of evaluating student learning in the VEP. Notions of "values tests" or examinations were alluded to and quickly dismissed as inappropriate; a conclusion that resulted in a void of conceptions of possible assessment procedures.

The key aspects of this research are that it takes a *relational (or non-dualist) qualitative, second-order* perspective; it aims to describe the *key aspects of the variation* of the experience of a phenomenon rather than the richness of individual experiences, and it produces a *limited number of internally related, hierarchical* categories of description of the variation (Trigwell, 2000).

Discussion

The research described here may be seen as the nucleus for further analysis, elaboration and debate. It refers to the findings from a pilot study set of four interviews; another seven interviews conducted in the main study have yet to be evaluated. It would be inappropriate to attempt a "conclusion" at this stage although some elements of the research carried out so far do merit some further discussion.

This paper has presented preliminary data from a pilot study and the categories of perceptions emanating from discourses of institutionalisation and pragmatism that have emerged. These categories of perception illustrate certain ways of understanding the VEP that teachers have developed through previous experience as well as their future concerns about, on the one hand, delivering an effective and worthwhile education for their students, and on the other hand, their own quality of life as constructed by their work and work-place conditions. At this stage it would be fair to say that teachers do not fully understand the entire VEP in terms of its finer details and intended execution, but they do understand the VEP to be an initiative of DEST that will be introduced to all state schools in Queensland (and all other states and territories) and that the ultimate responsibility for its delivery will fall upon individual teachers. In line with previous research investigating teachers' understandings and acceptance of change initiatives, the research shown here shows a key variation in the ways of experiencing the introduction of the VE programme from a primarily institutionalism-focused to a primarily pragmatism-focused experience.

This institutionalism/pragmatism dichotomy influences the ways in which teachers identify with the VEP. There is a certain amount of animosity and resentment towards the VEP, much of which emanates from the perception that it is "another programme". From the institutionalism perspective teachers are not generally enthusiastic about the perception of undertaking more work for no compensation and view the VEP as encroachment on their limited teaching time and a directive to alter their current teaching practices. From the pragmatism viewpoint teachers believe that the philosophical ideology of the programme espouses a worthwhile endeavour and are supportive of the programme's intentions, but believe that they are now, and have been for sometime, delivering values education through their current teaching practices. Again this perception tends to position the VEP in a relationship with teachers that they see as wasteful in terms of time and resources. Teaching values and students' learning involve more than content, methods and outcomes; introducing the VE programme involves more than choosing content, employing appropriate methods and aiming for appropriate learning outcomes. Teachers' views of the nature of being part of an institution, an employee, play an essential part in the effectiveness of change initiatives in pedagogy. These findings potentially provide insight into different perceptions of the relationship between education and educating; between the VEP and teachers. Where the introduction of the VEP is experienced as of no benefit to teachers themselves, time spent on teaching the VEP is likely to be experienced as in competition with an already overcrowded curriculum. In light of the research findings - particularly those outlined in the categories of description 4, 7 and 9, under *Conceptions* in the *Method* section — it is unlikely that teachers will be accepting of, or wish to take on, responsibility for the implementation of the VEP. Teachers' conceptions of the VEP being wasteful, difficult and un-assessable would suggest that the "entrenched resistance" they show towards it will deny the requirements of full cooperation and involvement with the VEP that DEST would like to see.

In summary, this paper brings to light two important perspectives used by teachers in forming perceptions about the VEP. First, it indicates that teachers are conscious of their

work loads and work conditions when evaluating the introduction of change initiatives. Second, the research confirms that teachers are conscientious about the teaching of values and about quality teaching time spent with students. Teachers are possessive, defensive and protective of their in-class teaching time and methods and generally view any encroachments on those areas with resentment and scepticism.

Implications

Without the full cooperation, enthusiasm and dedication of teachers the VEP seems destined to failure. The DEST is spending a lot of money on peripherals, that is, conferences, printed materials, online resources and so on, with no guarantee of the programme's success. It can be seen that the most important factor in the success of a VEP type of new change initiative in schools is the acceptance and cooperation of teachers in the implementation of the initiative. Therefore, the most important issue that the DEST needs to address is the task of acquiring teachers' cooperation and participation in the implementation of the programme. This task could be approached in several different ways, through, for example, university teacher education programs and direct marketing involving concessions and rewards for teachers currently working in schools. Alternatively, the DEST could scrap the entire programme and spend the money on other school resources or continue on its chosen pathway where peripherals are produced, and a little money is allocated to schools who profess a desire to participate, largely however, to produce more peripherals, and much discussion and decision-making takes place without the inclusion of teachers.

The problem of teacher engagement with the VEP (and change initiatives in general) is an area requiring further research. Where government initiatives are using large amounts of tax-payer funded budgets to produce high quality professional peripherals it is essential that those initiatives are successful and productive. The investigation and formulation of paradigms to achieve such success would necessitate interesting and worthwhile research.

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