The Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1

The following has been extracted from Implementing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools: Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1: Final Report September 2006.
http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/default.asp?id=16381

Connecting to the community

Engaging the school community in values education and the development of young people as productive citizens and contributors to society was pursued by five clusters of schools.

Taking values to the community

The Red Earth Community Cluster (Vic) sought to develop good citizenship by practising values in community settings and having students engage in community service in a variety of ways.

Red Earth Community Cluster, Victoria
Cluster coordinator: Robyn Floyd, Mooroolbark Heights Secondary College
Participating schools:
• Bimbadeen Heights Primary School
• Kilsyth Primary School
• Manchester Primary School
• Mooroolbark East Primary School
• Mooroolbark Heights Secondary College
UAN critical friend: Professor Lorraine Ling, Latrobe University, Victoria

The Red Earth Community Cluster’s desire to develop good citizenship by practising values in community settings, saw groups of students from each of the schools engaged in community service in a variety of ways, which subsequently have been recorded by the schools on a DVD with background music composed by a senior student.

More specifically, having engaged in discussions about values within their classes, students had the opportunity to experience them in action through such projects as:
• Year 6 students creating a patchwork knitted rug and visiting the residents of Walmsley Village aged care home to present it and sing carols to the residents, while Years 3 and 4 students regularly visit them to play games;
Years 3 and 4 students creating a sensory garden, with the support of Bunnings Hardware, for the Calendenia Day Centre;

Year 9 students planning, developing and implementing small community projects in teams of three or four such as raising money for young cancer patients, helping in local primary schools and organising activities for residents of a retirement home.

This overall approach is, it should be noted, underpinned in the cluster by the adoption of the American-based Tribes TLC® programme (discussed in more detail in the ‘Teaching it well’ section of this report) designed to ‘assure the healthy development of every child so that each has the knowledge, competency and resilience to be successful in a rapidly changing world’. Tribes, which is predicated on notions of appreciation/no put downs, right to pass, mutual respect and attentive listening’, is viewed as highly consistent with the values the schools are trying to promote and already has seen fewer incidences of bullying and inappropriate behaviour in the schools.

Perhaps the key value the schools are seeking to reflect in the programmes listed above, which also directly relates to their use of Tribes, is Respect. Typical of the way this is handled in the schools is the cluster primary that focused on the value of Respect for a full term, with students asked to describe behaviours supporting Respect. Their overall response, which preluded a competition for students to produce a poster, poem or board game based on Respect, comprised:

**Respect for others**
- Showing care for others, especially their feelings
- Using manners and ‘magic words’ – being courteous
- Listening when others are talking – showing interest
- Including other people in what you do
- Accepting people’s differences – race, beliefs, culture, opinions …
- Showing that being different is okay
- Showing tolerance
- Following rules and laws

**Respect for yourself**
- Believing in yourself
- Keeping yourself healthy by eating healthy food and exercising
- Being positive about yourself and others

**Respect for property**
- Taking care of your own and other people’s belongings
- Asking before you use something that isn’t yours

**Respect for the environment**
• Taking care of the environment — not littering or vandalising
• Reducing greenhouse gases by walking not driving

Above all – Treat others how you want to be treated.

It is interesting in this context to note the difference between the outcome of involving students in discussions about a particular value, as outlined above, and seeking the generalised input of parents on values as a whole.

When cluster schools sought to involve parents in a dedicated values night, they found attendance very poor indeed, with the school coordinators outnumbering the parents who turned up. This was despite publicity in local papers and school newsletters in advance. By contrast, when a parent–student night with values related to behaviour, and input from Jim Stynes, was arranged, 100 parents and children were attracted and very positive comments received. Although this may in part reflect the drawing power of this ex-AFL footballer, it also suggests the need for a clear focus when such activities first are called.

Key messages

1. Service learning can be an effective way of teaching students about values, particularly in primary schools. Students need class activities and discussion, however, before they embark on interactive community projects with a service learning focus.

2. Parental involvement is commonly the least successful aspect of good practice projects covered by this report. Involving parents in values education discussions requires persistence and follow-up. This is one reason why values education needs to be publicised regularly within the school community.