Title

Paradoxical promise and threat: Reviewing the Melbourne Goals

Abstract

Paradoxically the Australian Curriculum holds out both promise and threat for educational communities in Australia. A Steiner educational perspective suggests that the forward looking aspects of the Australian Curriculum as expressed in the Melbourne Goals may be jeopardised by other more retrogressive elements. This paper proposes various ways to achieve the learning objectives outlined in the Melbourne Goals. Recommendations focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and moral development and the way in which these are supported by creative arts learning, developmental theories and methodological approaches. Particularly in the areas of art and creativity, where research indicates learning objectives deliver in terms of critical and creative thinking, self-esteem and empathy, the method and steps of implementation of curriculum content matter greatly. If we accept the objectives expressed in the Melbourne Goals as the best way to move forward into the 21st century then we need to embrace the expanding science of qualitative research and place higher value on descriptive reporting.

The Promise

Consigned together within the vessel of the Australian Curriculum, two contrasting philosophical cargoes jostle with each other for focal attention. While progressive features, bearing the momentum of a large wave, push towards the shoreline of the global world, conservative elements form an undercurrent pulling the curriculum back towards past national traditions and strengths. Whereas competing forces necessarily characterise the chaotic processes of creation, through the dialogical tension of push-and-pull, contrasting elements can be joined, synthesised and transformed in a mutually beneficial manner (Bakhtin, 1981, 2004). Carried by the winds of change, the banner that foregrounds the *Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) in the rationale of the Australian Curriculum promises to deliver an authentic curriculum fit for the 21st century. For the effective implementation of the goals the competing elements need further assimilation, accommodation and resolution. In particular the weightiness of the content for the main subject areas needs to be balanced by adequate attentiveness to the general capabilities as the vehicle most able to deliver their promise.

> The educational institutions of the future need to dedicate themselves much more intensively to emotional and social capabilities and convey a more extensive, value-oriented education concept. The importance of acquiring factual knowledge will decline significantly, in favour of the ability to orientate oneself within complex systems and find, assess and creatively utilize relevant information. The learner will take on a much more active and self-responsible role in the learning process, including the creation of content. (UNESCO, 2007, *Kronberg Declaration on the Future of Knowledge Acquisition and Sharing;* cited by Clouder, 2008, p.25)

As ACSA's guiding principles (2009) point out curriculum questions concerning '*what* is taught' are closely related to *how* curriculum is taught (pedagogy, teaching style) and *how curriculum is assessed* (assessment, testing, reporting). This paper explores curriculum challenges relating to the *how* questions: *How best to deliver* the *Melbourne Goals* in a way that ensures their promise is effectively fulfilled. The focus falls on three of the general capabilities – critical and creative thinking, personal and social competence, and ethical behaviour – as the ones most closely associated with

social and emotional learning and moral development, and with the goals related to citizenship and "*confident and creative individuals*" (MCEEYTA, 2008). As the latter goal suggests, creativity engenders confidence (Botín Report, 2008). Creativity, as a capacity that enhances the development of empathy, the ability to imagine oneself in the position of another (Costa and Kallick, 2000, p.45), is also an essential prerequisite of moral development (Gibbs, 2003) and therefore of the service to community which citizenship implies.

To support the arguments and recommendations I develop in this paper, I draw on the area of my major experience which is in Steiner Education. The indications on which Steiner pedagogy is based continue to be trialled in some 1000 autonomous, non-systemic and non-denominational Steiner schools and around 1600 Steiner kindergartens in the world today (Rawson, 2010; http://www.waldorfschule.de). While many of these schools were established in the latter part of the last century, a central core of them have over 80 years of experience in testing and further developing curriculum perspectives that support SEL and moral education. I offer suggestions relating to Steiner philosophy humbly as part of a research endeavour oriented towards a dialogical synthesis of Steiner and contemporary perspectives. I also draw on Kieran Egan's educational theories (1979, 1986), the growing research data of the Imagination in Education Research Group (http://ierg.net/), contemporary research studies, and the work of classic theorists in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and moral education. The developmental overview focuses on the growth of self-identity and self-esteem as the fulcrum around which other attributes grow and develop; the 'self' is seen to be the nexus or place of connection where cognitive, emotional and moral development have the potential for integration.

Towards a Theoretical Framework for SEL and Moral Education

Critical and Creative Thinking

Curriculum should always emerge out of a philosophical project and should be weighed against the principles that inform it. … curriculum matters when it empowers students to become critical agents

capable of understanding and engaging those forces that bear down on their lives as citizens of a larger global community. (Giroux and Ornstein, in Ornstein, 2007, p.3)

The Australian Curriculum Coalition observes that an underpinning theoretical framework appears to be missing from the Australian Curriculum (ACA, October, 2010). The lack of an integrated philosophical approach leaves some areas of the design of the curriculum in contention with others. In particular the weightiness of content description (ACA, October 2010) reflects a more traditional approach that suggests a Perennialism and Essentialism at odds with the future's orientation of the *Melbourne Declaration* which is more Progressive and Reconstructionist in design (Ornstein, 2007, pp. 9-10). In a similar way the conceptual statement in the *Australian Curriculum: General Capabilities Draft Critical and Creative Thinking* (ACARA, June 2011) is rather thin with critical thinking given more weighting than creative thinking which appears to contradict research reports and theories related to creativity. While the integration of critical and creative thinking improves learning outcomes (Sternberg, Torff and Grigorenko, 1998), other data suggests that content-laden tasks impede the development of creativity (Sternberg, 1988b; cited by Starko, p.70). A highly critical atmosphere tends to work against the flow of creativity and may negatively impact on psychological safety (Rogers, 1962; cited by Starko, 2010, p.244).

Of the four interrelated processes or elements used to establish the ACARA draft learning continuum (inquiring, generating, analysing and reflecting), only *generating* is creative in terms of the attribute most associated with originality. Creative thinking as it is inspired by and generated through creative arts learning is not mentioned in the framework, even though literacy is included both as a general capability and in the subject domain of English. The *expressive* descriptor is missing from the list of elements as a vital part of imagining, creating and innovating (Dewey; cited by Simpson, Jackson and Aycock). Furthermore, as the Root-Bernsteins observe "to think creatively is first to feel" (cited by Starko, 2010, p.121), the relationship between creative thinking and intuitions or gut *feelings* is not developed. Other creative thinking tools (some of which are mentioned in the draft) include: imaging, abstracting, recognising patterns, pattern forming, analogising, body thinking, empathising, dimensional thinking, modelling, playing, transforming and synthesising (Root-Bernteins, 1999; cited by Starko, 2010, p.121).

Several theorists and researchers interested in creativity emphasise the importance of divergent thinking which produces many possible responses to a set task and which is often characterised by *fluency* (many ideas), *flexibility* (moving between different categories and points of view), *originality* (unusual ideas) and *elaboration* (adding detail to improve and refine ideas) (Starko, 2010, pp.127/8, 190, 295). Steiner perspectives stress the significance of students' image-building capacities: their ability to create, hold and move inner images with fluency and flexibility (Steiner [1984] 1964). As imagination is understood to strengthen memory and moral capacity, the recall of images is emphasised. Recall is greatly heightened by feelings of wonderment and awe, by explorations conducted in a spirit of interest and adventure, attentiveness, playfulness and a wandering kind of wondering (Starko, 2010, p.123; Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan, 1980, pp.103, 126). Strategies that support image-building and memory retention include: narrative-rich content, daily opportunities for oral speech work, discussions, retelling of stories, recitation, choral speaking and singing. Paying attention to the careful selection of high quality imagery from mythological stories, and exposure to sense-rich experiences in Nature like gardening, bush walks, camping, and the celebration of festivals related to the seasons provides further inspiration for imaginative development.

> We want students to be curious, to commune with the world around them, to reflect on the changing formations of a cloud, to feel charmed by the opening of a bud, to sense the logical simplicity of the mathematical order. Students can find beauty in a sunset, intrigue in the geometric shapes of a spider web, and exhilaration in the iridescence of a hummingbird's wings. (Costa and Kallick, 2000, p.34)

Many creativity theories underline the importance of metaphorical and analogical thinking (Starko, 2010, pp.150-159). Strategies that support the development of metaphorical thinking include artistic tasks, poetic writing and speaking, experiential learning, and the visual and sense-rich representation of data in multimodal formats.

A developmental view

Nature wants children to be children before they are men. If we deliberately pervert this order, we shall get premature fruits which are neither ripe nor well-flavoured, and which soon decay … Childhood has ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling peculiar to itself; nothing can be more foolish than to substitute our ways for them. (Rousseau; cited by Chris Jenks, 2005, p.3)

Recently lifespan and child developmental theories have been critiqued by post-structuralist and sociologist-inspired educational theories (Jenks, 2005; James and Prout, 1997). One of the main criticisms observes that stage theories restrict the developmental view to childhood which is seen to be an *unfinished state* in contrast to adulthood which is understood to be a *finished state* (Lee, 2001). A related observation notes that the idea of development assumes a *rational, civilized* adult as the goal of childhood (Lee, 2001; Walkerdine, 1993). The lifespan approach adopted by Steiner education negates both these observations as the developmental view encompasses adulthood and recognises further stages of development beyond the rational limitations of Piaget's *formal operations*. Like Piaget, Steiner (1909/1965) wrote substantially about the relationship between ontogeny and phylogeny and conceived of evolution not only as a biological phenomenon, but as one occurring on the level of culture and consciousness as well (Mazzone, 1999; Gidley, 2007a, 2007b). Unlike Haeckel, Piaget and other evolutionary theorists, Steiner's approach offers a dynamic model that is not prescriptive but open to creative inspiration as the determinant of individual variation. The recent work of Ken Wilber (1996; 2000a; 2000b), Jean Gebser (1949/1985) and others substantiates much of Steiner's pioneering work ([1926] 1966; [1930] 1983) which suggests that humanity has evolved through various cultural periods that are characterised by different types of consciousness. *Vision-logic* is the term Wilber uses to describe the stage of consciousness beyond the mental-rational level which has elements of similarity with Steiner's description of *Imaginative Consciousness* (Gidley, 2007; Steiner, GA 115). The main empirical and theoretical support for further stages of consciousness comes from research in the area of adult developmental psychology which demonstrates that conceptual development continues to unfold into post-formal stages (Commons, Richards and Armon, 1984; Kohlberg, 1990; Hoare, 2006; Commons, 2008). Scientific grounding of

the holistic qualities of the leading perspectives is found in the field of research in quantum physics (Bohm, 1996; Bortoft, 1996; Pribaum, 2006).

Beauty, Truth and Goodness

Steiner pedagogy proposes that there are three main capabilities associated with the self, namely those of *thinking, feeling and willing*. 'Thinking' is seen to relate to cognitive and intellectual aptitude, 'feeling' to the development of emotional and social skills, and 'willing' to both the growth of manual skilfulness and moral awareness. The maxim 'Head, Heart and Hands,' is often used as a motto for Steiner education to capture the essence of the threefold alignment. The identification of the three faculties as important in the educational context actually predates Steiner's writing. His predecessor, Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) placed significant emphasis on balancing 'head, heart and hands' in schooling. In this way Pestalozzi and Steiner both reflect the classical roots of their philosophies for the threefold aspect was originally identified with the three Platonic virtues of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Although Steiner was critical of Kant (1724-1804), he was thoroughly schooled in his philosophy. It is therefore interesting to note the coalescence of Kant's three critiques with the virtues: The critique of pure reason relates to the virtue of Truth and is aligned with Thinking and the Head; the critique of practical reason is concerned with questions of Ethics, Goodness, and the nature of the Will; and the critique of judgement as a treatise on Aesthetics and Beauty is associated with the Heart (ASCF, 2011). There is also a strong alignment between the three virtues and the *Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008; ASCF, 2011, *Educational Foundations,* p.15-16):

Melbourne Goals		
Successful learners	Confident and creative individuals	Active and informed citizens
The Three Virtues		
TRUTH Thinking faculty	BEAUTY Feeling capacity	GOODNESS Strength of Will: Inner discipline

Cognitive development	Socio-emotional learning	Experiential learning; Skilfulness
Intellectual aptitude	Empathy; socio-emotional intelligence	Moral consciousness.

Educational implications for SEL and moral development of a sensitive thresholds approach

> Of course, each major stage of development offers a window of opportunity distinctly different from anything that has come before. When a higher neural form in our brain completes its growth and begins its full function, a new form of reality and a larger world unfold to us and distinctly new behaviours and abilities fill our repertoire. As we grow from birth to age twenty-one, the strength and complexity of these stages increases exponentially. … we could expect that on completion and maturation of nature's latest, largest, and highest brain at age twenty-one, we would possess capacities more dramatically different from and more powerful than anything previously experienced. (Chiltern Pearce, 2002, p. 51)

While the foundations for each stage are established during the earlier stage, the crossing of the actual threshold comes like a vision, a "sudden coalescence that creates a qualitatively different way of making sense of things" (Egan, [1979] 1986, p.157). As each stage represents a letting go of the past, each stage can be seen as a "sensitive period" for the development of a particular set of capacities that calls for recommendations concerning the kind of content that is most appropriate for best encouraging that development (Egan, 1986, p.7, pp.112-137). The main feature of the first stage (up to 7 years) is that of *mythic understanding* which corresponds with the imaginative consciousness of early childhood in the Steiner approach. Very young children ignore the restrictions of reality and live in their own imaginary worlds. They learn by making sense of the unknown world without in terms of the known world within which necessitates the story form, games and creative play (Egan, 1986, p.29, 159).

Valuing Goodness: Imitation and Imagination

The motif for early childhood, when young children are very active in the limbs or 'willing' sphere, is Goodness. The main principle at work in learning during this early period and onwards (until approximately age nine), is that of imitation: "Every observation is first taken in deeply, grasped by

the will and then, like an echo, comes forth again in a child's behaviour" (Jaffke, 2008). Hoffman draws attention to the moral implications of mimicry as a prosocial act "insofar as instant, ongoing non-verbal imitation communicates emotional connection" (2000, p.45; cited by Hoffman, 2003, p.82).

In contrast to Piaget's disparaging attitude towards play and the imaginative thinking (which he viewed as undirected, childish, and egocentric), Vygotsky considers imagination to be an active, conscious process of meaning-making, that forms a special unity with thinking and language in a way that helps the child to make sense about the world (Vygotsky, Vol.1, p.78; cited by Gajdamaschko, ierg.net). The Steiner approach considers imagination to be *the* sensitive quality at risk if not nurtured during the early childhood stage (Egan, 2005; Lievegoed, 2005; Schoorel, 2004). Different levels of imaginative consciousness are described. *Participative consciousness,* the most unconscious mode of awareness (characteristic of the baby and toddler stage), is associated with deep sleep (Steiner, 1971). Athletes refer to this level of consciousness as being in 'the zone'. It is not possible to be analytical when one is automatically performing a learnt physical skill and yet we can experience that we are in a stream of knowing consciousness. Csikszentmihaly (1990) describes the creative flow process as an "optimal experience" – the "state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" (p.4; cited by Starko, 2010, p.254).

In about the second or third year of life, young children gain a consciousness of self that is accompanied by the awakening of emotional intelligence – the moment when feelings acquire a semi-conscious, dreamlike quality for the first time (Lievegoed, 2005, p.70; Schoorel, 2004). This *imaginative consciousness* is one level more conscious than that of participative consciousness. While the latter relates to the sphere of the will and is the kind of awareness used in experiential and/or embodied learning – imaginative consciousness relates to the feelings (Steiner, 1971). This is the awareness of the artist and poet who know how to switch off their critical thinking while they draw on the creative stream of consciousness. This too is the level of awareness of the young child – they are able to slip into a creative flow of awareness that informs their play. As artists and poets are able to *breathe in a cognitive sense* – to freely move in and out of states of heightened creative awareness and

critical thinking (Zajonc, 2009), so children are able to move in and out of reality and the imaginative world they construct in their play (Harris, 2000; Jaffke, 2008).

Imagination is valued as a capacity that continues to develop throughout life (Steiner, [1919] 1947; Vygotsky, [1930] 1967; cited by Starko, 2010, p.54). Paying attention to the growth of the imaginative faculty in early childhood in particular provides a firm foundation for continued development (Greene, 1995; Egan, 2005; Eisner, 2008). Conversely neglecting the imagination during this stage is likely to impede the development of creative capacities in later periods (Steiner, [1919]1947; Masters, 2007). In assessing school readiness in particular, it is necessary to understand the social importance of imaginative play. After the age of four children no longer play alongside each other but engage with their peers in a creative and constructive style of play. This social interaction signals a significant development which requires maturation time:

> Many children are quite capable of applying their intelligence to tasks such as learning to read and write. The question is: Shouldn't this intelligence be given time to develop a social awareness of others through creative play? Without this, literacy can become anti-social, rather than a means of communicating and sharing. The listening and oral language skills, the social interaction and initiative that children can develop at this age in a structured Kindergarten setting should not be underestimated. If the early years period is essentially characterised by the child's will in activity, this last part of the seven year phase is important for the development of will in the social and feeling realm. (Rawson and Richter, 2000, pp.16-17)

Recent research studies confirm Rawson and Richter's (2000) view that advantages of early reading ability "may dissipate over time, or worse, although a child may be advanced academically, socio-emotional skills may not keep pace, leading to worse psychosocial adjustment" (Callahan, 2006; Keitel, Kopala, and Schroder, 2003; cited by Kern and Friedman, 2009, p.420).

Valuing Beauty: Learning through Creative Arts

Romance is the sensitive threshold for the second stage of childhood (7 to 14 years) because, as Egan (1986, p.124) explains "the search for transcendence within reality is at the heart of romance" and children of this age have the ambivalent desire to discover the limits of reality and to transcend them.

This then is the critical period for creative arts learning that best supports "the development of the ability to make romantic associations with things in the real world that are outside everyday experience" (p.125).

Eisner (2009) observes that whereas an overemphasis on the scientific paradigm entrenches the values of prediction, control and standards (2003, p.378), the cultivation of artistic practice engenders an element of discovery, unpredictability and surprise (2009, p.8). Process is valued over outcomes; teachers are able to help students to "work at the edge of incompetence" and to view their work as "temporary experimental accomplishments" (2003, p.379). Instead of the focus falling on the collection of information data, and its classification and categorization, perception is slowed down to facilitate the savouring of qualities, to allow for the flow of process (2009, p.8). The cognitive capacity that enables the experience of qualitative relationships requires the integration of feeling and thinking (p.377). In turn, the development of aesthetic judgment (thinking-feeling cognition) is built on the basis of somatic experience, on a sensing into whether something "feels right" (2009, p.8). Eisner claims that "the primary mission of education is the preparation of artists" because everything that is made well is dependent on artistry: "Well-made objects, processes and ideas, whether practical or theoretical, require aesthetic judgment, depend upon technical skill, reflect attention to proportion and depend on imagination" (2003, p.373).

Valuing Truth: Phenomenology as Teaching Methodology

The stage of *philosophic understanding* (age 14/15 to 20/21) is that characterised by the students' search for truth (Steiner, 1967) and understanding about "the way the world works, people are, things happen" (Egan, 1986, p.128).

> It is the sensitive period for the development of the capacity to seek and find general patterns, regularities, laws in complex phenomena; … to organise complex phenomena into causal processes; … to bind all their knowledge and experience into a single whole; … to find unity underlying diversity; … to form ideologies and metaphysical visions. … to generate … general schemes. (Egan, 1986, p.128)

Steiner education proposes that the most effective way to support students to meet this sensitive threshold is by using phenomenology as a teaching methodology (Hoffman, 1998, 2007; Seamon and Zajonc, 1998) which combines aesthetic awareness with a form of close empirical-scientific observation of the phenomenon under review (Glasby P., O'Flaherty A.L., Millar, D.V., 2005). The method favours slower, quantitatively rigorous but qualitatively rich methods that deepen and contextualise the learning in a manner that is accessible to all students. In each learning activity, students have an initial phenomenological experience of observing and 'taking in' the focal content which is then integrated though multi-modal creative activity (art, music, movement, literary expression) to enable the students to connect emotionally with the initial content. Reflecting on the experiences brings deeper understanding and the 'discovery' of the underlying concepts (Bruner, 1986, 1990) in a way that fosters a re-connection with the earlier observation on a deeper level (Steiner, 1951, [1923] 2004). Often this stage is characterised by the 'aha moment' or 'light-bulb flash' that accompanies insightful learning. A moral dimension is implicit in the approach: the students *know* and understand the content, but as their feelings have been touched by the learning process, they also *care* about the phenomenon under observation and are more likely to awaken to the ethical dimension of the learning experience.

The nature of reality, self-realization and moral development

Epistemological perspectives

> Seeing light is a metaphor for seeing the invisible in the visible, for detecting the fragile imaginal garment that holds our planet and all existence together. (Zajonc, 1993, p.343)

The clarity associated with rational thinking is dependent on the thinker adopting the *realist* position of an onlooker or observer in relation to the outer world. Originally based on Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum* ('I think, therefore I am') *onlooker consciousness* leaves the thinker confident of their own inner thought activity only. The thinker looks out *objectively* on a world that does not necessarily connect with inner *subjective* thinking. This stance involves an inevitable sense of separation of the self from

outside reality and the feelings of doubt associated with the classic existential dilemma (Steiner [1919] 1947).

> And because the world is external to our thoughts, we can be wrong about it. Individually we can make mistakes, and it is also possible that everyone can be wrong about the nature of the world. (McCall, 2009, p.81)

Steiner's epistemology offers a synthesising contribution that overcomes the dualism of the realist-idealist approaches. In line with more recent quantum theories, he proposes that the inner nature of the human being is aligned with the essential nature of the outside world, and that human consciousness is embedded in universal consciousness (Steiner, [1984] 1964; Zajonc, 1993; Bortoft, 1996). "The explicate order of matter in general … is also in essence the sensuous explicate order that is presented in consciousness in ordinary experience" (Bohm, 1980, p.208).

Following Kohlberg who claimed that "moral perspective is gained as one sees life from the cosmic perspective of the whole of nature" Gibbs explores "the relation of moral development and behaviour to a deeper reality" (2002, p.225) by investigating reports of near death experiences. There is much consonance between the reports concerning the resolution of existential *angst* and the gaining of moral insight. Many of the respondents described experiences of a life review, and transcendent epiphanies related to peace, Love and Light (p.219). Gibbs observes that the heightened moral awareness gained from the near death experience prompted new *spontaneous* moral initiatives. This is the sense in which Steiner uses the word "Intuition" in his description of *ethical individualism* (Steiner, [1894] 1964). The highest moral development is signalled by the capacity to respond to a moral situation spontaneously guided by inner inspiration that knows what the situation requires and that grasps the underlying connection between self, others and the world.

Building Resilience

The developmental process whereby the self establishes a relationship with the outside world unfolds slowly and is associated with the capacity for intellectual thinking which reaches its first stage of maturity when students reach adolescence. While recognising the existential mode of awareness as an indispensable component of the human capacity to enact a free moral deed, the Steiner approach

works towards mediating the effects of existential distancing during childhood. When highly abstract intellectual tasks are scaffolded too early the associated experience of separation from the world can have a harmful effect on the socio-emotional development of young children (Lievegoed, 2005; Masters, 2007; Clouder, 2008). Steiner researchers investigate the developmental indicators that mark the evolving awareness of separateness from the world and the growing sense of selfhood, as well as strategies that support the building of *connections* between the inner self and the outer world, the self and others through relationship, and the realisation of selfhood through service to society.

The emerging individuality of the child is understood to influence its own development which adds a further significant factor to the nature-nurture debate. The Dutch paediatrician, Schoorel (2004), describes the pathway whereby the self adapts itself to the body, one of *emancipation* because the self is seen to have the potential to overcome the forces of heredity and environment. Recent research studies on resilience appear to confirm this view and to reinforce the main tenets of the positive psychology movement (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Despite overwhelming suffering and exposure to trauma, the norm is for children to have the capacity to bounce back: "Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources" (Masten, 2011). Factors associated with resilience include connections to competent and caring adults, self-regulation skills, a positive view of self, and motivation to be effective in the environment (Masten, 2011, p.234).

The Moral Significance of Empathy

While acknowledging Kohlberg's considerable contribution to the field of cognitive moral development, Gibbs (2002) critiques his theories for placing too much emphasis on moral reasoning and distorting moral judgment and maturity:

> In Kohlberg's theory of stages and Deweyan levels, construction is confused with internalization and basic understanding with reasoning that reflects philosophical training. Contractarian and Kantian philosophies should not be seen as postconventional, final stages in an invariant sequence but rather as

> products of hypothetical reflection on normative ethics, stemming from the morality of one or another
>
> of the basic moral stages. (p.77)

Moral development encompasses not only questions of "the right" and "the true" and the use of moral reasoning, but questions concerning "the good" – and "at the core of the good is empathy – the primarily *affective* motive" (Gibbs, 2002, p.77) which Hoffman (2000, p.3) describes as the "spark of human concern for others, the glue that makes social life possible" (cited by Gibbs, p.79). Empathy is the capacity that enables one person to *feel into* another's emotions, to bear another's suffering vicariously by imagining what it is like to be in the sufferer's body and inner self. Gibbs observes that empathy is a "biologically and affectively based, cognitively mediated, and socialized predisposition to connect emotionally with others (2002, p.79).

Gibbs suggests that Kohlberg's and Hoffman's theories complement each other. While empathy provides the depth of feeling missing in moral reasoning, moral principles are helpful in mediating the negative aspects of empathy such as empathic bias and compassion fatigue. However, while the integration of capabilities related to thinking and feeling promote moral development, the practice of moral reasoning and empathy alone does not ensure moral maturity. It is possible to use refined logic, perspective taking and even empathy to serve egoistic as well as prosocial ends. The review of ethical behaviour therefore also considers the issue of moral motivation, and the "follow-through" skills that enable goal attainment which are influenced by ego-strength, perseverance, willpower, and volition (Gibbs, 2002, p.126).

> The child gains ego-strength through learning, socialization, language acquisition, cognitive
>
> development …, frontal lobe maturation, and increasingly regulated attentional stability. Accordingly,
>
> appetitive affect can be increasingly regulated and gratification delayed. (Gibbs, 2002, p.127)

The Faculty of the Will in Steiner philosophy (1894/1964) refers to the full range of motivational behaviours from drives, instincts and desires to more refined moral impulses. Steiner education proposes that the three faculties of *thinking, feeling and willing* need to be integrated; it is particularly important for will forces to influence and enliven thinking and for thinking to refine and regulate will impulses. Teachers aim to awaken children's thinking so that they learn to 'think for themselves' instead of reproducing factual content. In today's media-saturated world where the capacity to form

one's own *original* inner images is under threat (Kearney, 1988, 1989), the discipline required to activate the thinking and image-building capability is becoming a stronger imperative. The feeling faculty is understood to play a harmonising and mediating function. The principle of Beauty informs the development of depth of feeling, emotional intelligence, and empathic awareness. The aim is to refine and extend the students' abilities to perceive with their senses. Training in aesthetic awareness, sentience, and sensibility therefore supports creative and imaginative as well as moral development.

As Steiner (1971, GA 9) proposes that 'the Self' is the vehicle of the spirit, self-realisation is understood to be "the human being's most sacred task" (Lievegoed, 2005, p.133). The "I" organization which reaches the first stage of maturity around the age of twenty-one, is the bearer of self-consciousness and the source of ego-strength. Taking up the role of leader, orchestra conductor or director, the Self or "I" organizes the higher *executive functioning* of the organism (Riggs et al., 2006). Key characteristics of the I-organization therefore include the increasing levels of conscious awareness that inform intentionality (Schoorel, 2004, p.18)*:* the ability to fire the will through the warmth of interest and the related capacity to make *conscious choices* in *freedom*. The function of the I-organization is to direct the human being's quest towards self-realization, ethical individuation and the fulfilment of destiny, including the carrying out of tasks and responsibilities that relate to service for others and world development.

Nodal points in the development of self-realisation

- **Self-awareness (around age two/three)**

Children refer to themselves by their name, until the moment they call themselves "I" for the first time which marks their awareness of their own selfhood (Masters, 2007, p.32; Schoorel, 2004, p.27). This consciousness of *self* as a detached observer in relation to the outside world is a function of conscious thinking (Lievegoed, 2005, p.131). Self-recognising children

> sense their body as containing, and being guided by, an inner mental self, an "I," which thinks, feels,
>
> plans, remembers … [and understands] that one is somebody separated from others not just physically

but also in terms of inner experience; and that one's external image is an aspect of one's inner experience. This makes it possible for one to realize that the same holds true for others: Their external image is the other side of their inner experience. (Hoffman, 2000, pp.72-73; cited by Gibbs, 2003, p.87)

- **Experience of Self (around age 9 to 10 years)**

The self is not only experienced consciously in thought but is also experienced in the deeper layers of the feeling life. It is this deep-seated and felt experience of self that finds its first expression towards the end of the ninth year and that "is reinforced during pubescence and becomes the dominant feeling in puberty itself" (p.131). The first *felt experience* of the separation of self from the world is tragic in an archetypal sense: it is as if every self has to re-experience the original mythical expulsion from Eden which rings true to our inner psychological experience of the lost paradise of childhood. Children undergoing this experience often feel naked, vulnerable and ill-equipped. As Egan observes the world now appears new to them "full of strange entities, working by mysterious laws, unfeeling, vast, mysterious, threatening" (1986, p.29).

- **Self-realization (age 18 years)**

The felt experience of self is not the deepest layer of self-awareness, for lying deeper still and more hidden from consciousness is that aspect of self that is related to the will. However it is from this source that the resolution of the painful experience of separation finally flows. Consciousness and experience of self are followed by a need for self expression in the world. When realization of self awakens, students are often motivated to 'save the world', some are even prepared to fight and die for their ideals. Chiltern Pearce (drawing on Paul Maclean's six decades of research in neuroscience) observes that this "poignant and passionate idealism" is accompanied by an expectation that "something tremendous is supposed to happen" (2002, p.53). He relates this experience to the growth spurt of the prefrontal lobes which takes place between the ages of fifteen and eighteen.

> Because the secondary stage of prefrontal growth is the highest evolutionary movement within us, it is the most fragile – precisely as the toddler stage is so fragile. This means that the emotional nurturing received at the mid-teenage period serves as a major determinant in the success or failure of this latest opening of intelligence. (Chiltern Pearce, 2002, p.49/footnote)

A further stage of self-realisation follows in adulthood with the insight that there is an inner pathway to self-realization: the outward focus of the will turns inwards towards self-change and education and inner development *of the self* then become a prerequisite for working towards change in the world (Lievegoed, 2005, p.132).

The way in which self-realization is brought to expression depends on the student's pathway through the earlier two stages of self-experience which is why Steiner educators place much emphasis on these thresholds. There are two main dangers: one where self-expression becomes too pronounced and students assert themselves and their own wishes and desires *against others* and the world; the other where self-expression fails and students' sense of self-identity is stamped out, leaving them in the *slavish service* of others. It is the task of the teacher to help students to maintain the balance between these extremes.

The ability to express oneself in the world takes place on many levels but all are ultimately related to the identity the self forges in terms of its own biography, and the way this is integrated with its sense of vocation and relation to the world. Assisting students to have the ability to find their own authentic and embodied voice is the main goal of education aptly expressed in the following words:

> Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives (Marie Steiner, 1923).

Programmes that model Values Education, SEL and Creative Arts Learning

Creative Arts Learning: The Song Room

> I would teach children music, physics and philosophy; but most importantly music, for in the patterns of music and all the arts are the keys to learning. (Plato, Philosopher; cited on the Song Room website)

Providing free long-term music and arts-based programs that are designed to meet the specific needs of children and schools in disadvantaged and high need communities, the Song Room is a national not for profit organisation. In support of their vision that all Australian children have the opportunity to participate in music and the arts, they deliver programs to around 250 schools and communities each year and work with over 20,000 children every week. Programs are targeted to schools in the most

marginalised communities in Australia from the 700,000 children in schools without specialist teachers in the arts. Their research data indicates, significantly, that three out of four students in government primary schools in Australia do not participate in music education. The Song Room collaborates with arts and community organizations, universities and research partners. The research evidence from their programs demonstrates that they achieve improved learning outcomes (concentration, literacy, numeracy, school engagement and retention), enhanced personal development (communication and teamwork) and enhanced social outcomes (http://www.songroom.org.au/home).

Values Education

> VASP has once again confirmed my strong belief that values education, both explicit and implicit, must underpin all we do in our schools. (Teacher reflection, post-project survey, VASP, 2010, p.5)

The final report of VASP (2010, p.10) observes how well the project serves the goals of schooling that are expressed in the *Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2010). The five key interrelated impacts that were identified by the project (values consciousness, wellbeing, agency, connectedness and transformation) demonstrate that a *systematic and planned* approach to values education achieves goals that extend beyond those related to values: such programmes have the potential to enhance students' social and emotional well-being which in turn revitalises their engagement with schooling in general and leads to improved academic outcomes. The report also notes that the various cluster projects had an impact on the school as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) as the benefits extended beyond the individual participants and led to transformations in "classrooms, relationships, school environments, teacher professional practice and parents' engagement in their children's schooling" (VASP, 2010, p.10, p.63-67). The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools makes the following recommendations: use a shared language; embed student-centred and values focused pedagogies; promote values as an integrated curriculum concept; teach values explicitly; model values; create opportunities for increased student agency; foster intercultural understanding, social cohesion and inclusion; continue

professional learning and collaboration; encourage teacher risk taking; and collect data for continuous improvement (VASP, 2010, p.11).

Programmes supporting social and emotional learning

The national trend in Australia towards increasing recognition of the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) forms part of an international movement in which institutions like OECD and UNESCO have taken a leading role. The Fundación Marcelino Botín Report (2008) covers two major international meta-analyses that focus specifically on SEL and Skills for Life (SFL) and question whether SEL/SFL programmes significantly enhance what they are teaching; whether they reduce or prevent problematic behaviours (violence, aggression, and suicide); whether they promote positive behaviours such as pro-social behaviour, school compliance and service orientation; and finally whether the programmes effectively improve school grades and/or academic achievement (Diekstra, 2008, p.256). The results are clearly positive in regard to all the research questions. In line with the research findings of the VASP in Australia, the Botín Foundation's international research, reports that SEL/SFL programmes not only significantly enhance social and emotional development but also play a key role in "overall development in terms of personality, academic progress, school career and societal functioning" (Diekstra, 2008, p.256).

> The overall conclusion from both reviews is crystal clear: systematic, programmatic attention to the teaching of social-emotional skills in the school system has world-wide significance. (Diekstra and Gravesteijn, 2008, p.259)

Towards a world-class curriculum fit for the 21st century

> The lack of a theory of learning contributes to the perception that this is not a 21st century curriculum. ... The curriculum does not adequately reflect the intention of the Melbourne Declaration that young people should become successful, creative, innovative and resourceful learners … able to

work independently as well as collaborate with others. …The documents do not focus sufficiently on thinking skills, imagination, links to the real world and student engagement. (ACA, October, 2010)

Over the last twenty to thirty years, educational futures researchers have undertaken research to identify key components of a 21st century education that will better prepare young people for the complexities and uncertainties of the future. A contribution towards this endeavour was provided by the report of two Australian researchers Beare and Slaughter (1993) who listed educational features which they propose schools should incorporate to better prepare young people for the future. Their recommendations include the following strategies which are supported by the discussions in this paper: appropriate imagery; teach for wholeness and balance; teach identification, connectedness, and integration; develop individual values; teach visualisation; cultivate visions of the future; empowerment through active hope; tell stories; teach and learn how to celebrate; and teach futures tools. Gidley's (1998, 2002) research response to their report notes significantly that eight of the ten identified features form core aspects of Steiner education. Most of the Steiner students interviewed seemed undaunted by negative forecasts of the future in terms of their own will to do something to create their 'preferred future' (Gidley, Bateman et al., 2004; Gidley and Hampson, 2005).

Potential threats to the effective implementation of the Melbourne Goals

A 'tick-the-box' approach

Paradoxically the effective achievement of the Melbourne Goals may be impeded by the Australian Curriculum if the foregrounding of the goals is not matched by their systematic implementation. Currently the Australian Curriculum includes a technologically sophisticated mapping system whereby the general capabilities (the prime vehicle of the *Melbourne Declaration*) have been linked to each of the content descriptors and elaborations in all of the subject areas. However the system is one that relies on teachers and school communities to carry out in a way that meets the intention behind the goals. It is possible that a superficial 'tick-the-box' approach to the goals may in fact hinder their implementation rather than promoting SEL by encouraging teachers and school communities to mistakenly think that they have adequately met the learning goals.

Programs like those recommended in the international research carried out by the Botín foundation or the VASP and Song Room here in Australia need to be implemented on a nation-wide scale to assist teachers and schools to effectively address the clauses relating to SEL and moral development in the Melbourne Goals. The Botín and VASP reports show that meeting the requirements of SEL and values education entails a programmatic school-wide process of cultural review and professional learning programs for teachers to support the change process.

The need for a strong theoretical framework

The response of the Australian Curriculum Coalition observes that clarity regarding the conceptual approach underpinning the curriculum is missing and that a "stronger definition of curriculum is needed to bring together content coverage, general capabilities and cross curriculum dimensions" (ACA, October, 2010). In particular it is necessary to consider whether curriculum content choices have been informed by an integrated approach to educational theory that encompasses socio-emotional and moral developmental perspectives associated with the *Melbourne Declaration.* Where specified content requires a high level of complex understanding and analysis designed to engender sceptical distancing in younger students, an inevitable conflict will arise between some of the "successful learning" goals and those relating to "confidence and creativity" and to values education (ASCF, *Child development paper,* 2011; Lievegoed, 2005). An educational approach that strives to enact the spirit of the goals of the Australian Curriculum will build empowerment through active hope (Beare and Slaughter, 1993; Gidley, 1998; 2002) and take care not to overexpose students to doom and gloom reports of an endangered world and to high levels of intellectual cynicism (Steiner, [1919]1947; Eisner, 2003; 2008).

While the Australian Curriculum is – admirably – not prescriptive in relation to methodology it is nevertheless worth noting that the effective endeavour to meet the *Melbourne Declaration* necessarily needs to pay attention to pedagogy and teaching styles that are aligned with the goals (Darling, 1990, 1994; Starko, 2010). Here as well nation-wide programmes that support creative arts learning and SEL (Eisner, 2009; Noddings, 1992, 2003; Gidley, 2010), professional development

courses for teachers and school-wide change along the lines of the successful VASP report will be greatly beneficial.

Aligning content, methodology and assessment

> The procedure and criteria used to evaluate students, teachers, and school administrators have profound effects on the content and form of schooling (Eisner, 1994, p.365).

Another significant factor that will determine the effective implementation of the *Melbourne Declaration* relates to the assessment, testing and reporting of the Australian Curriculum. Although a start has been made in this direction through the inclusion of achievement standards in the four main subject areas much more work is still to be done in relation to this task. One of the main problems relating to assessment is the lack of clarity concerning ACARA's role and that of the states and territories in the rollout process (ACA, October, 2010).

When the educational focus falls on 'doing well' as the critical concern then the measurable aspects of learning become over privileged and programs inevitably become increasingly focused and related to test performance. An overly rigorous testing regime may well be at odds with the essential goals of education (Eisner, 1994; Noddings, 2009). The recommendations in this paper emphasise the importance of arts learning which is often undervalued even though research indicates that the development of imagination and creativity supports SEL and moral development and that academic achievement is built on this foundation (Botín report, 2008; VASP, 2010). However, for creative arts learning to deliver in terms of critical and creative thinking, self-esteem and empathy, the assessment methods required by the Australian Curriculum matter greatly. If we accept the objectives expressed in the Goals of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, December 2010) as the best way to move forward into the 21st century then we need to embrace the expanding science of qualitative research and place higher value on descriptive reporting.

Final reflections

The effective implementation of the learning goals associated with the *Melbourne Declaration* relies on the systematic and programmatic implementation of SEL and moral development; a sound

theoretical underpinning of the Australian Curriculum which encompasses SEL and values education; and embedded developmental theories, methodologies and assessment methods that further support SEL, moral development and values education.

We may not know what the future holds but we can equip students with the capabilities that will enable them to face the future with self-awareness, confidence and resilience and support them to find self-fulfilment through service to society. The key to meeting the educational future lies in supporting the development of self-identity as the most sacred task of humankind. A further imperative identifies the importance of nurturing the imaginative faculty as the emergent consciousness that best characterises 21st century learning. Chiltern Pearce's account of Paul Maclean's research in neuroscience sounds both an optimistic and a warning note. The growth spurt of the prefrontal cortex that holds the promise of the potential development of exponential and dramatic capacities is not guaranteed. Diekstra (2008) observes that failure to adequately support the implementation of the programmes recommended in the Botín report for SEL would be a "flagrant violation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child." The overall impact of the research results is both encouraging and sobering. As Diekstra notes, the reports place "a heavy responsibility on governments and educational policy makers around the globe."

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