Does Spiritual Wellbeing Belong in Education?

Spiritual Well-being and Education Discussion Paper
(including discussion questions and workshop ideas)

2006

The need for an inquiry into spiritual well-being emerged as a result of feedback to the DECS *Well-being is Central to Learning* Working Paper circulated in 2005. A number of respondents asked for clarification on what was meant by the term and what implications would its inclusion in a future have for educators.

This paper is designed to contribute to an informed debate through the representation of a range of views from the current national and international literature. The purpose of the paper is to encourage readers to presented contribute to an inquiry in to the dimension of spiritual wellbeing in relation to education.

A series of discussion questions is provided as an appendix to assist in facilitating an open dialogue and opportunity to provide feedback. The reference list can lead readers to further resources if they wish to follow up any of the ideas or arguments. It is hoped that this discussion paper and any reflection on it at a site, district and central levels will make a contribution to greater engagement on this issue within DECS.

Introduction

Increasingly, when we talk about 'learner well-being' in education circles the dimension of spiritual well-being is included along with the physical, cognitive, emotional and social dimension (DECS, 2005). While many policy makers and educators appear to want to retain the concept of spiritual well-being, there is by no means universal agreement as to what it is what it means for education. The paper is structured as an inquiry both into the nature of spirituality and spiritual well-being and into their role in schooling

This paper represents an attempt to consider some of the literature on spirituality and spiritual well-being in relation to education, from a critical perspective, and to draw out those ideas relevant to an inquiry into spirituality in schooling and well-being. Arguably this conversation is necessary in order to ensure that whether or not spirituality is seen to have a place in the *Well-being Framework*, the decision to include it or exclude it will have been made from an informed and considered collective position.

Tacey (2000) who has written widely on spirituality in education and Australian society more generally supports a lively discussion on the subject since:

> *this is after all the Australian stamp upon our spiritual experience: to preserve the integrity of individual difference and the right to disagree even as we attempt to fit in and connect* (p 4).

Tacey (2000) has observed that we are presently in a testing time, with a clash of paradigms, so there is sure to be some resistance to change. He notes that many young people at his university profess a personal interest in spirituality and the search for meaning but institutions, societies and governments do not tend to share this interest. Tacey (2005) has argued that in this sense, people are ahead of their institutions. The business world may even have something to teach educational institutions about spirituality. ANZ bank CEO John McFarlane has shared his views on the subject recently in an interview for the Australian Financial Review (3/11/05) and is quoted as saying:

> *I have a personal view that this century will be much more spiritual and that humanity will matter more. I think we are seeing a shift here.*

Certainly for Tacey (2003) what is taking place is nothing less than a:

> *spontaneous movement in society, a new interest in the reality of spirit and its healing effects on life, health, community and well-being* (p24).

For Tacey (2000), the worst thing we can do is remain silent and refuse to enter the frey as this would only lead to increased misunderstandings and opposition.

It is important at this point to consider what might be meant by spirituality and spiritual well-being in the context of the broader society and within education.

Spirituality – what do we mean by this term nationally and internationally?

Spirituality has begun to be recognized as a construct distinct from religion for many people (Ingersoll, 1998). For others, however there is still a reluctance to use the word spiritual or spirituality (Chittenden, 2000) due to its connotation with religion. Spirituality has traditionally tended to be associated with religion. If this view is adopted, it would therefore not be appropriate in public schooling,

since public education is the right of all and cannot be seen to support one religion over another. The association of spirituality with religion has no doubt contributed to the difficulties in expressing the spiritual dimension in learning. To Walton (in Laurence 2003), religion however has to do with a framework for beliefs, traditions, doctrine, conduct and rituals, whereas spirituality is broader and encompasses an individual's relations to self, others and to the environment, as well as feelings of inner peace, strength, interconnectedness and meaning to life.

Similarly John Fisher (2005), who has been researching the nature of Australian spirituality in relation to education, distinguishes between spirituality and religion. He suggests that while religion tends to focus on ideology and rules of faith and belief systems, spirituality on the other hand, focuses on experience and relationships. In this paradigm, then, every person can be considered to be spiritual to some extent, not just the religious.

Tacey (2005) reminds us however of the historical roots of our secular system. It was necessary, he argues, to create a society that was not dominated by any religious authority in order to allow for individual freedom of choice not to believe in any God or ultimate truth. He suggests however that the time has come to actively begin public conversations on the topic of spirituality in Australia and to develop a common language with which to speak about it.

A study of college students in the US in 1996 called the Education as Transformation project found that a large number of students did not identify themselves as belonging to any particular religious tradition. They did however indicate a strong interest in a spirituality that could give greater meaning to their lives (Laurence, 2000). It is possible to relate this to the often-heard statement in contemporary times: *'I'm not religious, but I'm spiritual.'* Spirituality is often understood by people as being to do with a sense of awe, wonder and mystery,

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a search for meaning and purpose, feelings and emotions, self-knowledge and beliefs not necessarily to do with a religious belief system (O'Brien, 1998). In a discussion paper on spirituality and morality in schooling, however, it was implied while the word spirituality can have a broad meaning; it does suggest degree of specificity since it often is used to refer to:

> *something fundamental in the human condition, which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and/or expressed in everyday language* (NCA discussion paper 1995)

Spirituality can of course be understood differently in different cultural contexts. In the UK it seems to include an emphasis on morality (SCAA, 1995). while Tacey (2000) argues that '*Australian attitudes to spirituality appear to be undergoing a profound and dramatic change.*' (p1)

He suggests there is a rise of a new spirituality in relation to nature, environmentalism, Aboriginal reconciliation, visual arts, contemporary youth culture, the mental health professions and the natural health movement (2000). Tacey argues that in theoretical areas such as education, outdoor education, psychology, physics, nursing, health and indigenous studies spirituality is increasingly becoming an important issue. This 'new spirituality' is fundamentally concerned with discovering new and better ways of life and community. Tacey credits Fisher, in his thesis on teachers and spirituality as one of those who are 'mapping parts of the new public story in Australia' (2000, p4) and observes that:

> '*no longer is one dubbed a freak or a clown if one talks about spirituality*' (p5)

Kazajain (1998), however, writing in the United States, found that when he attempted to speak to his fellow faculty members about the relationship of education and spirituality many responded with either confusion or anger. To

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help them move beyond this stage he decided to frame the topic differently by asking them to share moments of meaning in their own teaching and learning and to share these with each other. Eventually after some discussion the academics were able to come back to the original reasons they wanted to work in a university. These included seeking after truth and wanting to kindle the fire of learning in students. Kazanjain (1998) notes that:

> *most spoke of the joy of watching students come alive in their classes as connections between self and world began to be made.*

These type of conversations with colleagues align with Tacey's (2000) concept of 'generic spirituality' which is

> *Part of a genre of talking about meaning, and talking about what's sacred in life but not necessarily being part of a specific religious tradition.*

Spiritual well-being

Spiritual well-being and spiritual wellness are constructs that have been developed by researchers in psychology and sociology over the past 30 years. They are constructs that help to provide a vocabulary to work with spirituality in secular settings like public schools, youth centers and hospitals.

Spiritual well-being is often seen as a sense of connectedness to something larger than oneself, bringing with it a sense of meaning, purpose and personal value. The right to a sense of spiritual well-being is firmly embedded in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. A clear duty is placed on all those involved to ensure that a child or young person's spiritual well-being is nurtured along with his or her physical and intellectual well-being. How this is done is often not addressed and can appear to be included as something of a

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motherhood statement that is not necessarily meant to be deconstructed. More recently, however the attempt is being made to explore what might be meant by spiritual well-being.

Fisher (1998) points out that recent research has drawn attention to the importance of spirituality in human health and well-being. He defines spiritual health or well-being as

> *A fundamental dimension of people's overall health and wellbeing, permeating and integrating all the other dimensions of health (ie the physical, mental, emotional, social and physical).*

Fisher (1998) has developed a model of spiritual wellbeing that is made up of five domains of spiritual well being. He suggested that everyone tends to belong more or less to one of these categories, which included:

- personalists (meaning, purpose and values)
- communalists (morality, culture and religion)
- environmentalists (care, nurture and stewardship of the physical, eco-political and social environment
- globalists (transcendental)
- rationalists (philosophical)

People in each of these categories were seen to embrace a different aspect of spiritual wellbeing. The personal included a focus on the individual human spirit, the communal on in -depth interpersonal relations, the environmental on connectedness with nature and the global on faith.

Fisher (2005) has recently developed a questionnaire which seeks to measure spiritual health among learners as well as adults and is based on a model that

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sees spiritual health as reflected in the quality of relationships people have with themselves, with other people and with the environment. Fisher found in developing the instrument with students in secondary schools that it could identify students who have what he called spiritual distress, arising out of a marked difference between their ideal existence and their lived experience. Fisher (2005) shows how there was a huge discrepancy in a year 9 girl's ideal and lived experience. She was then picked up by the school as needing support, which led to a complete transformation of her life.

Jackson and Monteux (2003) define spiritual well being as

> *A sense of good health about oneself as a human being and as a unique individual..... It happens when people are fulfilling their potential as individuals and human beings. They are aware of their own dignity and value; they enjoy themselves and have a sense of direction; they can sense this quality in others and consequently respect and relate positively to them and they are at ease with the world around them (p52).*

Ingerson (1998) suggests that spiritually well people manifest a positive energy or optimism that help them to manage challenges, have a commitment to truth and are often a source of inspiration to others. She does note, however, that people who pursue the truth are not necessarily valued in unhealthy organizations.

Indigenous concepts of spiritual wellbeing

Indigenous concepts of cultural and spiritual wellbeing focus on spirituality as an integrating life force within a holistic paradigm. The closest word for health within Aboriginal languages is *punyu,* translated as wellbeing and is associated with being: strong; happy; knowledgeable; socially responsible; beautiful; clean

and safe – both in the sense of being within the lore and in the sense of being cared for. *Punyu* is seen as being all that is alive and contributing to life (Atkinson, 2002) and therefore has a strongly spiritual dimension. A holistic understanding of both spirituality and wellbeing has the potential to build cross-cultural bridges within Australian society and within other countries.

A new way of thinking about spirituality: Spiritual Intelligence

Tacey (2005, 2000) has called for more discussion about spirituality in the modern context. As noted elsewhere (Burrows, 2006) the physicist Danae Zohar and psychologist Marshall (2000) have provided us with a new way to think about this topic through the concept of spiritual intelligence. They challenge and support us to think differently about the nature of intelligence, tracing its beginnings in concepts of IQ and ways of measuring it, then on to emotional intelligence, which is based on notions of self awareness, self-management, self motivation, recognising emotions in others, empathy and social skills, followed by spiritual intelligence.

Spiritual intelligence is described as 'our ultimate intelligence' (p4) in that it has transformative power. They argue that is the intelligence we use when we wrestle with issues of good and evil and use our creativity to imagine different ways of living and being. They describe how spiritual intelligence can be used to shift individuals and our cultures from a state of acting from lower motivations (fear, greed, anger, and self-assertion) to one of acting from higher motivations (exploration, cooperation, power-within, mastery, and higher service). Spiritual intelligence in this model has the capacity to integrate all the intelligences.

Zohar and Marshall (2000) argue that if IQ is seen as the part of our consciousness we use to reason and EQ (emotional intelligence) is the part we use to feel emotions, this then leaves an unaccounted- for place at the centre of

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the self which is revealed when we ask ourselves who is it who is actually doing this thinking or feeling. This hole is what leads many people in Western society to search for meaning to fill the emptiness within and fulfill their purpose for living. The authors go into the neuroscience behind changes in consciousness and the development of SQ (spiritual intelligence).

Zohar and Marshall also write about the 'natural spirituality 'of children, suggesting that children's curiosity and questioning about the world is evidence that children 'naturally want to construct what adults would call a metaphysical framework for their lives' (p193). This is echoed by the work of Coles (1990) on the spiritual life of children and reminds us that when we dismiss children's deep and intuitive questions we are likely to damage their originally high SQ' (p195).

Sisk and Torrence (2001), both well known in the field of gifted education, have also written on spiritual intelligence. Paths of spiritual intelligence similarly are identified and ways of developing and nurturing it are described. Education is seen as having a pivotal role in on developing spiritual intelligence in young people.

A strength in this way of thinking could lie in its connectedness in learning. Zohar and Marshall (2000) as well as Sisk and Torrance (2001) recognise the importance of understanding the interrelatedness of theories of intellectual, emotional and spiritual intelligences. This understanding, as de Souza has noted (2004), makes links between the elements of thinking, feeling, perceiving and intuiting in the process of learning. This can help to address that 'hole at the centre of the self' as some people move beyond focusing on the intellect and cognitive learning to the exclusion of other creative and potentially transformative aspects of our consciousness.

What role does spirituality and spiritual well-being have in secular schooling?

The connections between spirituality and education are often not made, at least in public education. The need to address the spiritual and moral dimension of education was recognized by the National Curriculum Association in the United Kingdom, which produced a discussion paper in 1993 to provide guidance to schools. In this paper the point is made that the potential for spiritual development is open to everyone, not only those with a particular belief or faith.

> *To limit spiritual development in this way would be to exclude from its scope the majority of pupils in our schools who do not come from overtly religious backgrounds* (NCA, 1993)

Nel Noddings, a US researcher, noted in 1992 that 'possibly the greatest lack in modern public schooling is spirituality' (1992, p81). She made the comment that

> *The more I think about the centrality of spirituality in our lives, the more concerned I become about its shameful neglect in the public undertaking we call 'education'. Surely our responsibility to educate includes attention to matters of the spirit (p 85).*

Parker Palmer (1999) has gone even further, suggesting that education is generally so fearful of spirituality that it tends to focus on facts rather than meaning and information rather than wisdom, thereby missing the real issues in life (1998). Palmer makes it clear however that in his vision he rejects any form of religion in public education. Kessler (1998) similarly makes a strong case for the inclusion of education for spiritual development. She has argued that if we are educating for citizenship and leadership in a democracy then spirituality clearly belongs in schools. Sisk and Torrance (2000) hypothesize that part of the reason for the increase in enrolments in religious schools and in home schooling in the United States is due to schools 'ignoring the central aspect of living a

meaningful life' (p251). They argue that public education in the US is clearly facing a challenge and needs to address this issue.

For some time, however there has been a noticeable awkwardness in conversations about spirituality and its role in public education. Myers (1997) has drawn our attention to the difficulties experienced by the many people who sense there is a spiritual dimension to child development, along with the physical, social and emotional aspects but who are struggling to put their thoughts into words. Ingersoll (1998) suggests that spirituality in public education is less controversial when spirituality is understood as a *'normal line of development like cognition, emotion or sexual identity' (p34)* For others, spirituality might be seen to be more about recognising or realizing our innate capacity for spirituality rather than being about developing it.

More recently the Australian educator and researcher Souza (2004) has argued that there is pressing need to explore contemporary understandings of spirituality and its relationship to education and learning. In 1999, however, state education ministers, through the Adelaide Declaration, formed the National Goals for Schools, which state that, that '*schooling provides a foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development'.* In addition the National Declaration for Education (2001) included a focus on a spiritual frame of reference for education, to support the cultivation:

> *of natural reverence and wonder in young people, to help them explore why they believe what they believe and to give them the capacity to analyse their own world-view and those of others.*

Earlier, on a global level, the UNESCO Report (1996) introduced the concept of the four pillars of learning: learning to know; to do; to live together and to be. In

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its exploration of learning to be, the UNESCO report includes a focus on that learning that is beyond knowledge and information – the essence of spirituality according to Chittenden (2000).

Katzanjian (1998) suggests that spirituality in education is

> *that which animates the mind and body, giving meaning, purpose and context to thought, word and action – or more simply, the meaning-making aspect of learning (p1).*

To many advocates of spirituality and education, spirituality is primarily about acknowledging learners' (and possibly educators') needs as human beings to find meaning and purpose in their lives. In this way of thinking spirituality in schooling is connected with an holistic world view, where success is measured not simply by what learners know or learn but what they become (Palmer 1998). Educators according to de Souza (2004) need to be encouraged to look beyond the achievement of surface knowledge and recognise the role of feelings and intuition in the learning process.

For Jackson and Monteux (2003) the spiritual dimension in education is strongly linked to the Aristotelian virtues of benevolence, compassion, honesty, sympathy, respect and loyalty. For Ingerson (1998) *'as far as values go, there is no way to separate values from public education' (p66).* She suggests that approaching spirituality through values such as honesty, hope, forgiveness and compassions could be a productive approach since she cannot imagine resistance to these.
In this way perhaps, educators may feel more at ease with developing a way to address this area of human growth in learners.

O'Brien (1998) argues that once a definition of spirituality is agreed upon, responsibility can be shared. He suggests that any definition should begin with

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reference to learners' entitlement to a sense of holistic wellbeing of which spirituality is a part. He sees that a commitment to spiritual wellbeing is an inclusive concept, which allows for the valuing of all learners whatever their cognitive, physical or social development (1998).

Jackson and Monteux (2003) raise the issue that the spiritual wellbeing of learners is related to inclusive schooling since it is unlikely to be fostered if education systems are focused on competition, performance and assessment. Jackson and Monteux (2003) also draw our attention to their concern that spiritual well-being could become yet another thing to assess, in both learners and educators. They argue that the basic requirement is a curriculum that is imbued with the spirituality that will foster spiritual well-being, rather than yet another set of officially approached procedures and guidelines for promoting spiritual being. This concern can be extended to the danger for well-being initiatives more generally in adopting a procedural approach to implementation and measurement.

Connections with the SACSA and the Essential Learnings

There are many links that can be made across a number of learning areas if educators wish to build aspects of spirituality and spiritual wellbeing broadly understood, into the curriculum. In particular in English for example, a range of texts can be considered in relation to values, meaning and purpose of individual's lives and challenges. English, Art, Health and Physical Education, Mathematics and the Sciences can all be viewed with the kind of lens that highlights human discoveries and epiphanies, the making of connections and the integration of experiences on a number of levels.

The Essential Learnings have clear connections with spirituality in the broader sense, with their focus on

- Futures: *Who I want to be and how I want the world to be for others.*

- Identity: *Who I am*

- Interdependence*: Where and how I fit in with others, developing a sense of interconnectedness with other people, taking action to shape local and global communities*

- Thinking: *How I understand the world, developing creativity, wisdom*

- Communication *How I express myself and interact with others, generating ideas and solutions*

Connections with methodologies of teaching and learning

Clearly there are many connecting points between spirituality and spiritual wellbeing and teaching and learning methodologies. It is not only content that can stimulate learners' engagement in learning. Using approaches such as learning styles, multiple intelligences and emotional intelligences educators can enliven and enrich the learning opportunities for their students. Educators can be aware of consciously trying to create opportunities for 'flow' for their students. The concept of flow was developed by Csiksentmihalyi (1998) who suggests that this is what happens when we are sufficiently challenged and engaged in whatever we are learning, so that our sense of time and space is altered allowing for a deeper kind of learning, that is deeply emotional and spiritual.

Educators and spirituality

Fisher (1998) found in his Australian study of educators and spiritual wellbeing that

All the teachers believed that spiritual health should be included in the curriculum in a variety of ways. ...More than two-thirds of the teachers expressed the view that spiritual health should be integral to the curriculum (p45).

Those educators in Fisher's study who demonstrated skills in fostering learners' spiritual health were found to have: a caring, sensitive and personal approach; a concern for individuals; and a high degree of commitment to personal beliefs and values. If, as Fisher (1999) suggests, schools can enhance spiritual connectedness leading to the enhancement of total well-being in learners, then educators surely play a key role in this process. For Fisher, educators are 'the living curriculum' (p45).

Sisk and Torrance (2000) suggest that while many educators may believe that spirituality is an important aspect of all our lives, they could tend to shy away from talking about it or may not agree on how to implement it. Therefore they argue, 'sensitive' teacher training is needed.

How can spirituality and spiritual well-being be facilitated in the educational context?

For those educators interested in working within the spiritual dimension there is much that can be done. Ideas, strategies and resources could be explored in a future paper if an initial inquiry into the role of spirituality and spiritual well-being in DECS sites indicated this could be useful, and appropriate. It is possible, through the use of a 'spiritual lens', to nurture spiritual well-being through curriculum content, methodology, processes, a spiritual approach to counseling, a values and virtues approach, using emotional intelligence, and resiliency – based or other pastoral care programs and through mentoring and being of service to the community.

Fisher (1998) introduces the idea of a spiritual facilitator for schools that would like to nurture spiritual health. While parents and caregivers have primary responsibility for children and young people's spiritual health, educators can still play a role in its development. Fisher suggests that a spiritual facilitator could provide support to educators to foster learners' spiritual health as part of an overall concern for their well-being. He saw that a person in this role would liaise with principals, leadership including coordinators, counselors, pastoral care teachers, parents and community groups to enhance the spiritual health of learners and reduce the obstacles to its development. It may be difficult to imagine such a position existing in our organization but it is possible to see that aspects of such a role could be incorporated into the work of site, district and central support staff.

Conclusion

It is clear that spirituality, spiritual well-being and education when looked at together provide a rich field for inquiry. As Palmer (2005) says,

> `the spiritual is always present in public education whether we acknowledge it or not. Spiritual questions, rightly understood are embedded in every discipline, from health to history, physics to psychology, entomology and English. Spirituality – the human quest for connectedness – is not something that needs to be 'brought into' or 'added onto' the curriculum. It is at the heart of every subject we teach, where it waits to be brought forth'.

The deepening awareness of spirituality that so many researchers and writers have identified is potentially a vehicle for change in public education and can be better understood by examining the tensions within it. Hopefully this paper has

helped to frame some of the issues and provide a base from which to start addressing them. Perhaps Palmer (1998) is right when he says that

> *We are entering a new era when spirituality and education need not be seen as enemies but as partners in a conversation about the future of public schooling.*

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Possible Questions for Discussion and Workshopping Ideas: Spiritual Wellbeing

Describe a powerful experience in teaching or learning for you.

Describe a time when you experienced 'flow' in learning something.

When do you feel most 'spiritual? Answers could include when listening to music, being in nature etc.

Describe a time when you were able to create a classroom environment that was able to facilitate 'flow' for your students.

What made you decide to become an educator?

How might spirituality be addressed in your site?

What obstacles could lie in the way of developing new models and ways of operating that reflect spirituality?

'*I'm spiritual, but I'm not religious*' What might people who say this be referring to in this statement?

How does spirituality serve as a web that interconnects initiatives such as student values, moral and ethical development, experiential education, health and wellness and community service?

Is there room in the curriculum for spirituality?

How have you been able to embed spirituality in the curriculum?

Write down 10 values that are really important to you. Now strike out 3. Then strike out another 3. Finally strike out 2 more. The one that is left will be the most important.

What does spirituality mean to you?

What is the proper relationship between spirituality and education in a secular schooling system?

What does spiritual wellbeing mean to you?

What is spiritual intelligence? Come up with definitions in groups.

What do educators need/want to know about spiritual wellbeing?

Can/should educators have an impact in this area?

Should education have anything to do with spirituality?

What are the characteristics of sites and centres where positive values and spirituality are nourished and flourish?

What are the most powerful lived and shared values in an organization?

What are individual, interpersonal and organisational level outcomes of spirituality?

Are spirituality and the search for meaning the same thing?

What is awe? Is it simply neuronal excitement?

How are meaning and the sacred similar? Or are they different?

Do we (or learners) develop our spirituality or do we discover or realise our inherent capacity for it?

Is spirituality something that needs to be added on to the curriculum or is it at the heart of everything we teach?

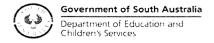What would count as personal transformation for you?

What makes an educational experience transformative?

What are the obstacles to and the opportunities for transformation for learners and educators, in my site?

Try the spiritual intelligence quiz at http://www.beliefnet.com/story/35/story_3571_1.html. Could be used for discussion

How can values be integrated into education in a diverse, pluralistic democracy?

With so many differences in values, how can citizens in a democracy seek unity in the midst of pluralism?

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Is it possible to include concerns for values in new ways, which admit the conflicts and disagreements but confront them and seek to transcend them?

What/how might spirituality contribute to the role of values in education?

Is it useful to speak in terms of spirituality as a general goal for education?

What is the place of spirituality in a post modern world?

What is the place of spirituality in a globalised world?

How can indigenous concepts of spiritual wellbeing be connected with non-indigenous conceptions?

How can other cultures concepts of spirituality and spiritual wellbeing assist in understanding this topic?

How can we help young people to find personal relevance/meaning not only in what we teach but also in their lives?

Possible Ways to Workshop the Discussion Questions

- Put one of the questions up on the whiteboard. Give participants small pieces of card. Ask them to write a brief response – eg provide a definition of spiritual intelligence – on the card, anonymously. Redistribute the cards and have each person read out someone else's response. Discussion could then take place about similarities, differences, themes and patterns.

- Participants could share their response with a partner or small group, those who felt comfortable could share with whole group later.

- Values exercise. Each person writes down 10 values that are important to them, they then strike out 3. There will be groans. Then they are to strike out another 3. More groans! Then finally, have them strike out 2. This is a very engaging activity as people have to really think about what is more important – the dog or cat or their spouse! Seriously, while fun this is quite a deep exercise of reflection. People are not asked to share their values but they do laugh a lot and spirituality/values do not have to be a serious business!

- Play a piece of music such as Pachelbel's Canon (shown through research to be a powerful mood enhancer and de-stressor). Discuss how music makes people feel, people could share favourite 'spiritual' pieces.

- Have people share their favourite art works. Discuss the role of art in spirituality. Perhaps display posters or cards of artworks.

- Ask participants to visualise what a school that was conducive to developing spiritual wellbeing might look like? Have people draw, talk, or write about what they visualised? Think about the inside and outside aspects of this school. What would it look like, feel like, even smell like.

- Have a debate – those for spirituality in education and those against.

- Have a panel of 'experts' or invited guests or at least people adopting a certain perspective discuss one of the questions, having had preparation. Include time for questions.

- It is possible to access a PowerPoint presentation based on the ideas in this paper. See Sherylee Dawe for details. A facilitator can also be arranged.

- Some questions are more suited to small groups of colleagues in a team or faculty area. Questions could be explored over an afternoon tea perhaps.