

TEACHING FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A DISCUSSION OF THE PERCEIVING, THINKING, FEELING AND INTUITING ELEMENTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

The Context of Religious Education in Victoria

I would like to begin this article by describing two lessons that I recently observed in two different secondary schools in Victoria. The first was given by a student teacher on professional field experience (PXP) rounds. To retain the student teacher's anonymity for the purposes of this paper I shall call her Elaine. Elaine had been given the topic Vatican II to teach to a Year 9 class and the unit outline and content had been drawn from the Melbourne Religious Education textbooks: *To Know Worship and Love* texts (KWL). The time that had been allotted to the study of this topic was two eighty minutes lessons, and the lesson I observed was the second of those lessons. Elaine had taken great care to become informed about the content she was teaching; she had a detailed lesson plan with appropriate learning strategies. She first revisited the learning from the previous lesson to which only a few students responded. Elaine then began introducing the new content. She wrote up on the whiteboard a list of world events that were occurring at the time of Vatican II as she attempted to connect with the students. In general, the students did not know about the events and even though Elaine then offered information about them, there were few connections that the students could make from those events to their everyday. Elaine continued to ask relevant and constructive questions and made reasonable attempts to engage students. She then described relevant aspects of the Council, why and when it was called, the proceedings and so on. She continued writing this information on the board, and she had also prepared some worksheets with relevant information that she used to promote comprehension. By the end of the lesson, students had been given a huge amount of information about Vatican II and about some events in the world at the time. The final task was also drawn from the KWL text book. It required students to write up a diary entry as if they were one of the members at the Council. They had to note their reflections on one of the topics that had been discussed in light of the world events that were happening at that time. Overall, Elaine had done all the appropriate things given the context of the curriculum approach at that school.

My observations were that throughout the introductory work, some students asked a question here and there. In general, they were quite well behaved and for the most part they were kept busy,

copying the information from the whiteboard and following Elaine's instructions. However, few students were able to make meaning of the events from that time or to develop insights about their particular impact on the world. Not surprisingly, the students introduced another level of interaction, so that many students continued conversations in undertones with their neighbours. No doubt, if they were to have a test at a later date, most would be able to learn and reproduce the content appropriately from their notes and the handouts, which could lead to accurate statements being made about the knowledge gained, and the achievement of the cognitive outcomes. However, there was no indication that Vatican II had become a meaningful historical event for them, or that they understood the significance of it for Catholic people. This became evident when they embarked on the last task: the diary entry. None of the students had any idea about what they could or should write. Ultimately, this was a content driven lesson where the imaginative task of diary writing became a nominal concession to 'affective' learning. In fact, affective and/or inner reflective learning (the spiritual dimension) were not catered for, and the learning remained superficial.

The second lesson I observed in another school was on early Christian communities which was also a follow-up lesson to the initial work on the topic. Once again, this lesson was taught by a student teacher on her PXP rounds. I will refer to this student as Joan. The curriculum approach of this school's religious education program was experiential and there was a real effort to connect with the students and to make the lesson interesting. Consequently, while the learning strategies consisted of reading a text and discussing the content, they also included playing a game. (I later discovered from the student that most of the lessons for this unit involved games, drama and other strategies that were aimed at engaging students at the affective level.) In effect, this lesson followed the reverse process to the previous one. In this instance, the effort to engage students was partly by keeping them entertained which meant that students did participate. However, the content remained superficial and was not intellectually challenging to the students. Ultimately, little real knowledge or understanding of the topic was gained. Both these two lessons are evidence of some of the barriers to effective teaching in

religious education and in both cases there was little effort to recognise the complementarity of the cognitive (involving knowledge and skills), affective (involving interest, participation, challenge and enjoyment) and the spiritual (involving inner reflection, imagination, creativity and possibly, transformation) dimensions of the learning process.

These two lessons point to the fact that despite the ongoing work in curriculum development that has dominated the religious education scene over the past thirty years in Australia, effective teaching and learning in religious education is not always achieved. For many years the development of religious education programs for the four dioceses in Victoria was drawn from the *Guidelines for Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* which used an experiential approach known as the catechetical approach. In the late nineties, in response to concern that students were leaving Catholic schools with a serious lack of knowledge and understanding of their faith tradition, new religious education textbooks were developed in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. They focused on providing teachers and students with the necessary content to produce such knowledge. Consequently, when the secondary textbooks arrived in schools, the approach to teaching religious education became content driven, an exercise in cognitive learning. This is clearly explicated in the curriculum framework of the textbooks which is derived from Bloom's taxonomy 'built on an understanding of knowledge as functioning within the categories of Remembering; Understanding; applying; Analysing; Evaluating; and Creating (Engebretson & Pagon, 2001, p. 20).

The other three dioceses in Victoria have chosen to develop their own religious education guidelines which will be based on Groome's Shared Praxis approach (Groome, 1980, 1991). Indeed, Groome's foundational principles of *inform, form and transform* have the potential to address the three dimensions of learning, cognitive, affective and spiritual as identified above, and it is to be hoped that this will apply to the practice of religious education once the new guidelines are produced. In the meantime, the catechetical/experiential approach of the previous Melbourne Guidelines is still the practice in these dioceses where, for many reasons, the content of the lesson may not always challenge the students intellectually and depth knowledge is not always achieved.

It is beyond doubt that in the hands of a good teacher, programs that are text-book focused or content driven will extend well beyond the cognitive aspects of learning and would include

elements that related to the affect and possibly, the spiritual. It is also more than probable that such teachers would find ways to engage their students without reducing the intellectual level of the content. However, in general, while classroom teachers are dedicated, well-intentioned and hard working, they do not always have that extra 'gifted' dimension to do this easily, nor do they always have sufficient time to search for stimulating, up-to-date and inspiring resources. Therefore, there is a real need for professional development programs for teachers where they are offered appropriate learning models which may assist them to develop new perspectives about engaging students by incorporating the different aspects of learning: cognitive, affective, and spiritual; and the associated processes: perceiving, thinking, feeling and intuiting.

While cognitive, affective and spiritual learning is relevant for all disciplines across the curriculum, for religious education it is most pertinent given the rediscovery of a spirituality outside religion for so many young people and their parents in today's world (Eckersley, 2004; Lynch, 2002; Tacey, 2003). It is useful, at this point, to briefly describe spirituality as it is being used in this context.

Contemporary Understandings of Spirituality

There is a significant body of literature that examines an understanding of spirituality in the contemporary world. While I have discussed this elsewhere (de Souza, 2001, 2003, 2004), it is relevant to revisit briefly these understandings here. Spirituality is seen as relational (for instance, Harris & Moran, 1998, Hay & Nye, 1998, Tacey, 2003; Groome, 1998) which is demonstrated through the individual's expressions of connectedness to the human and non-human world. More recently, new evidence about the biological nature of spirituality as an essential and distinguishing human trait has been revealed through neuroscientific research (Persinger, 1996; Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998). Ramachandran (Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998) has dubbed the area of the temporal lobe the 'God spot' or the 'God module' since there appears to be increased activity in this part of the brain when an individual discusses things of deep meaning and value. There is some suggestion that this area has evolved to fulfil some evolutionary purpose although it does not offer any real proof about the existence of God (Zohar & Marshall, 2000, p. 95; Fontana, 2003, p. 80).

Another perspective comes from Newberg, D'Aquili and Rause (2001) who claim that there is nothing magical about mystical experience, that it is 'nothing more or less than an uplifting sense of genuine spiritual union with something larger than

the self' (2001, p. 101). They conclude that 'humans are natural mystics blessed with an inborn genius for effortless self-transcendence' (p. 113) and that like all experiences, moods, and perceptions, these unitary states are made possible by neurological function. More specifically, they are the result of the softening of the sense of self and the absorption of the self into some larger sense of reality that we believe occurs when the brain's orientation area is deafferented, or deprived of neural input' (pp. 113-4). Thus, Newberg's work has also highlighted a relational dimension of spirituality.

A further perspective offered from the field of neurocardiology (Pearce, 2002) which claims that 'outside our conscious awareness, [a] heart-head dynamic reflects, determines, and affects the very nature of our resulting awareness even as it is, in turn, profoundly affected' and it is within this mutually interdependent system that lies the key to transcendence (p. 4).

The research study conducted by de Souza, Cartwright and McGilp (2002) also found different levels of connectedness were apparent for each participant beginning with their relationships within their immediate family and community and, with some growth and maturity, these were extended to include the 'Other' in the wider context. Expressions of this connectedness were apparent in actions for justice, or signs of empathy and compassion, and indeed, the valuing of special family and community occasions. Finally, most spoke of their sense of a Supreme Being, something 'out there' as apart from the material world, and all participants stated that they had really valued the process of the research interview since it had given them a chance to reflect on their inner lives which, in some instances, had led to new insights about themselves and their world. Thus, these findings supported the concept that levels of connectedness are linked to the spiritual expressions of young people which provide them with a sense of self worth and which help them to find some meaning and purpose in their everyday. The findings also indicated that whilst a religious tradition may affect the spirituality of a young person, the development of their spiritual lives is more dependent on the positive relationships that they form from their very early years.

Drawing on the above findings, de Souza (2003, 2004) concluded that spirituality could be described as a journey towards Ultimate Unity. The movement appeared to spiral through different strata of connectedness which generally moved forward towards deeper levels but which sometimes receded, depending on the context of the individual's experiences and responses. It was

logical, then, to assume that the forward movement evident for some of the participants had the potential to ultimately lead to the deepest level of connectedness where an individual experienced becoming one with the Other – Ultimate Unity. In this, de Souza's conclusions supported Newberg's (2001) contention that the neurology of transcendence is a movement towards Absolute Unitary Being, that is when the self-blends into other and mind and matter become one and the same (p. 156). Newberg proposed a 'unitary continuum' where, at one point, a person may interact with others and the world but experience it as something from which s/he is apart. However, as s/he moves up the unitary continuum, that separateness becomes less distinct (p. 145). If this is true, it could lead to individual experiences of mystery and sacredness.

While much of the research into the functioning of the brain and the biology of spirituality are still relatively new and controversial, they do raise some pertinent questions about the probability that spirituality is an innate element in the build up of the human person, that it is relational and therefore, that it is expressed through actions and values that demonstrate the connectedness the individual has to the Other in the community and creation, and to a Transcendent Other. Equally, they generate questions about the role of spirituality in learning programs. It is vital that religious education teachers tap into this spirituality by recognising and addressing the spiritual dimension of learning which can promote connectedness, meaning and empathy. Moreover, they should recognise their unique role to inform the new developments in education that are investigating the role of values across the curriculum since they are better situated to have the knowledge and language that can link these to the spiritual dimension in education. To this end, I would like to propose a refined version of a curriculum model (see de Souza 2001) that addresses cognitive, affective and spiritual learning.

A Curriculum Model That Addresses the Relational Aspects of Learning

The understanding of spirituality as a relational aspect of being which is built up with layers of connectedness has a distinct relevance for the development of learning programs to address this dimension in a student's life. To begin with, the participants expressed both an *intellectual* understanding of the relationships and a *deeply felt* sense of connectedness and it appeared that these elements had nurtured the participants in their sense of self, values and belonging, and in helping them find meaning and purpose in their lives. In general, this was clearly linked to the relationships they had formed from their very early years and no mention was made of religious formation as a contributing factor.

Another significant implication of the findings was the importance of the inner life and the learning that ensued from its nurturing. This finding supports Merton's concept of the spirituality of education where 'the activation and development of our inner capacity to understand and live fully as our real selves is the central concern (Del Prete, 2002, p. 165). Again, this focus on nurturing the inner life has significance for the learning situation.

Consequently, these two findings highlight, in particular, the need for an integrated learning program where cognitive (knowledge and skills) learning is complemented by an equal emphasis on affective (feeling) and spiritual (inner reflecting/intuiting) learning. The importance of these latter elements has been attested to in recent literature on emotional and spiritual intelligences (Emotional Quotient and Spiritual Quotient) that are recognised as significant for the effective functioning of rational intelligence (Intellectual Quotient) (Goleman 1995; Zohar & Marshall 2000).

Emotional intelligence is 'viewed as operating across both the cognitive and emotional systems. It operates in a mostly unitary fashion but is still divisible into four branches' (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000, p. 107). The model of emotional intelligence, as propounded by Mayer and Salovey (1997), has four levels. The first, emotional perception and identification, is about recognising emotions and inputting information about the emotions. The second and third levels focus on facilitating emotions and using them in problem solving. The fourth and final level is about emotional management.

While this theory requires further discussion and research, it is correct to say that emotionality and affect have often been ignored by cognitive theorists (Stocker 1984, 2003). Stocker offers the argument that attention should be given to these areas because:

First, absence and deficiency of affect and emotionality are characterizing features of dissoaciation, depersonalisation, and of various neuroses, borderline conditions, and psychoses. Second, without affectivity it is impossible to live a good human life and it may well be impossible to live a human life, to be a person at all. Third, accounts of people that deny or omit the fact that people are affective beings are not accounts of healthy people, who can and do live good human lives (Stocker, 1984, 2003, p. 258).

Consequently, recognising the role of the emotions in the intellectual performance and life of a student

should be an important factor in the learning process.

Spiritual Intelligence, as proposed by Zohar and Marshall (2000) is essential for the effective functioning of both our intelligence quotient (IQ) and emotional quotient (EQ) since 'neither IQ nor EQ, separately or in combination, is enough to explain the full complexity of human intelligence nor the vast richness of the human soul and imagination' (Zohar & Marshall, 2000, p. 5). Equally, the spiritual dimension is a vital factor in the life of a student which incorporates aspects of the inner life and which is regarded as 'an intuitive and interior way or knowing'. To activate and grow in our capacity to know the living dimensions of truth requires practice in an intuitive way of knowing that Merton views as natural, though neglected in western society" (Del Prete, 2002, p. 171).

Indeed, most learning programs in western society focus on the outer life and the inner life can become stifled to such an extent that the individual may lose touch with inner self, that is who they really are. Instead, their outer self continues to play different roles according to specific interactions or contexts and sometimes these roles may be in direct conflict with their inner Self which could have a detrimental impact on the individual's mental and emotional well-being. If education seeks to address the whole person in order for an individual to reach his/her potential, both the outer and the inner lives of the individual need to be addressed and nurtured.

In relation to inner life experience, there is some suggestion that intuition is an element in the learning process and this idea is examined here. To begin with, Claxton (2003) claims that intuition is a different 'way of knowing' and it covers a number of specific areas that are less articulate and explicit than normal reasoning and discourse. Citing the *Chambers Twentieth-Century Dictionary*, Claxton describes intuition as 'the power of the mind by which it immediately perceives the truth of things without reasoning or analysis' (p.33). Finally, Claxton contends that intuitions are 'holistic interpretations of situations based on analogies drawn from a largely unconscious experiential database' (p. 50). Eraut (2003) concurs with Claxton's description of intuition but argues that if intuition is a process it should be referred to as a 'way to knowing' rather than a 'way of knowing' (p. 256).

The conclusions of cognitive psychologist, Gary Klein who studied the seemingly intuitive decision making actions of fire fighters serve to further illuminate the understanding of intuition (Breen, 2000). Klein claims that intuition was born out of

experience because experienced decision makers perceives a different world from what an inexperienced person may perceive:

Intuition is really a matter of learning how to see – of looking for cues or patterns that ultimately show you what to do... [when] sensory perceptions detect subtle details ... that would have been invisible to less-experienced fire fighters (Breen, 2000).

A further word about intuition and the inner life that is relevant here comes from Palmer (1998) who proposes the idea that ‘talking to ourselves’ may allow a person to discover that ‘the teacher within is the sanest conversation partner’ they could ever have (p. 32). He advocates that we need to find every possible way to listen to our inner voices and if we don’t, it will either become silent or violent:

I am convinced that some forms of depression, of which I have personal experience, are induced by a long-ignored inner teacher trying desperately to get us to listen by threatening to destroy us. When we honor that voice with simple attention, it responds by speaking more gently and engaging us in a life-giving conversation of the soul (Palmer, 1998, p. 32).

Tacey (2004) apparently shares Palmer’s understanding of intuition when he highlights the importance of the role of the inner world and suggests that the word ‘intuition’ is about tuition from within.

Finally, O’Connor (1985, 1988, 1990) claims that according to Jung, intuition is the ‘function that tells us of future possibilities. It is the proverbial hunch and the function that informs us about the atmosphere that surrounds an experience or event. It is sometimes seen, and quite correctly so, as *unconscious perception as opposed to sensation, which can be seen as conscious perception* [italics are mine].

In general, then, intuitive learning would appear to operate at an unconscious level where new thoughts and feelings, which have been provoked by new perceptions or sensations, become absorbed through a ‘rumination’ process (Claxton, 2000, p. 40) into the learning that an individual has accumulated unconsciously that is, through unconscious perceptions, and which are stored at a depth level, at the core of his/her being. Subsequently, new learnings evolve from this merging which may translate into changed attitudes and/or behaviour. Thus, learning that is

transformational is an integration of these four elements, perceiving, thinking, feeling and intuiting. Without integration it is possible that learning may remain superficial or ‘surface’ learning.

This understanding of learning can be linked to Jung’s theory that humans experience phenomena in four ways. O’Connor (1985, 1988, 1990) identifies these four functions:

1. Perceived the facts; that is, taken in through your senses the event.
2. Thought about them and pieced them together logically by thinking about them.
3. Felt about them, made value judgements and given views; that is, felt about the situation.
4. Looked beyond the facts to certain other possibilities ... for which you have used your intuition (O’Connor, 1990, p. 75).

These four elements enable us to become familiar with both our inner and outer worlds, and this is essential if learning is to become meaningful to and address the whole person. Hence, learning must be balanced between the four elements of the process: perceiving, thinking, feeling and intuiting. Perceiving leads to thinking and feeling which are linked to cognitive and affective learning, and while these have usually been addressed in educational programs, they have frequently been given unequal emphasis. The fourth element, intuition, a result of unconscious perception becomes the connecting factor between new and old learning. Therefore, it may raise the potential for learning to address the relational aspects of a student’s life, that is, the spiritual dimension. This is something that has not always been clearly articulated. Indeed, an integration of these elements is vital if education, ultimately, seeks to be transformational.

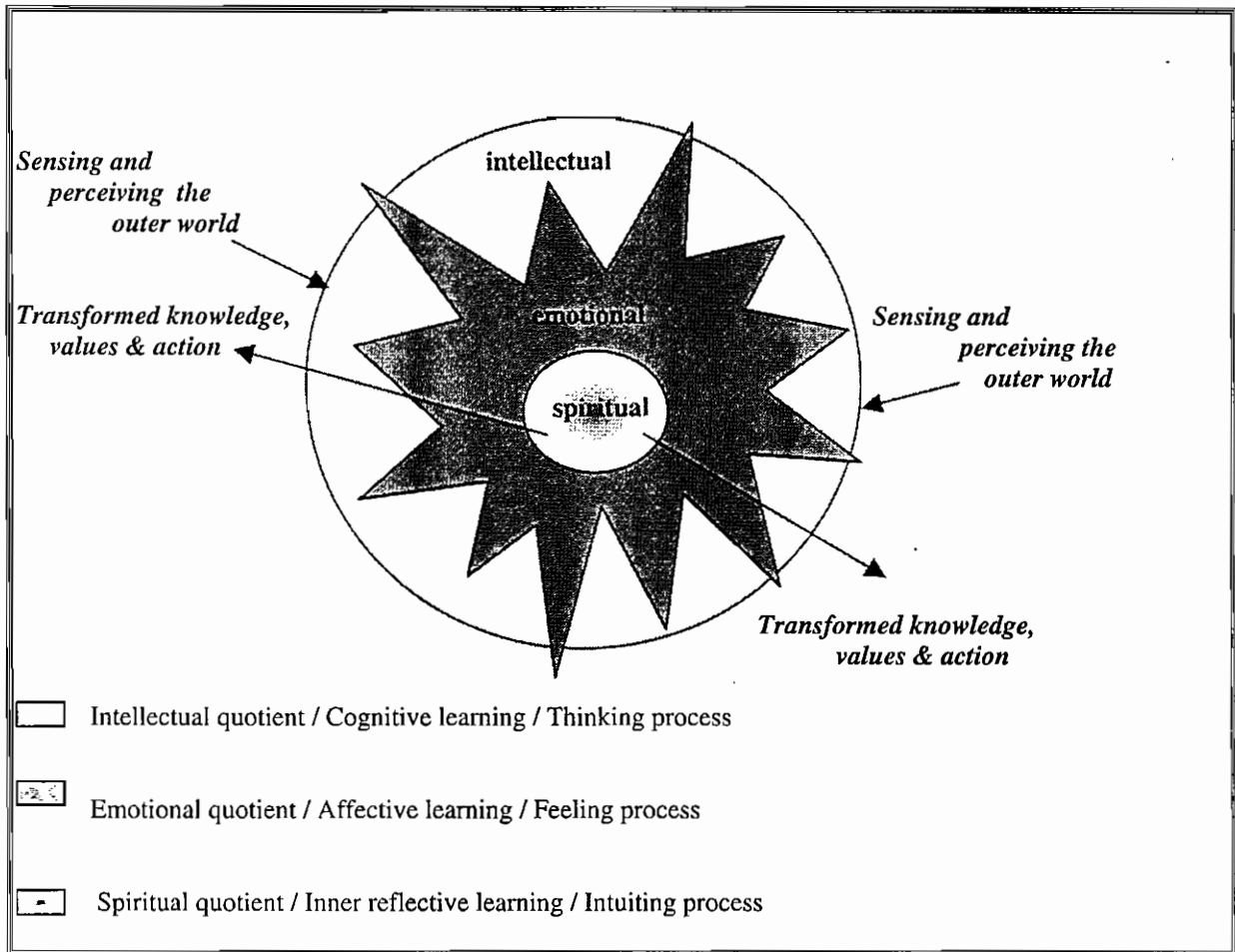
Therefore, it is proposed here that the concept of the three intelligences, intellectual, emotional and spiritual may provide a useful framework for the learning and teaching process so that cognitive and affective learning may be complemented by spiritual learning. To this end, I use a learning model with my students that recognises the complementarity of the processes: perceiving, thinking, feeling and intuiting (Figure 1). The interaction and integration therein leads to ‘depth’ learning that has real potential to be transformational.

This model recognises that while students’ learning is based on what they consciously perceive through their senses, their initial response may be at the intellectual level (thinking - knowledge based) or

the emotional level (feelings based). These responses will then lead to an integration of the two so that the intellect and the emotions work together to produce a deeper level of knowledge and engagement. However, if the learning is to go beyond the surface, it must touch the 'soul' of the student. It must reach that core where the learning becomes transformed by an inner response which may and should lead to outward expressions of changed thinking and behaviour. It is at this level

that intuiting becomes the fourth aspect of an integrated learning process so that the learner's response becomes transformed without her/him consciously knowing exactly how or why the change has occurred. The motion then is perpetual, moving from initial perceptions at the surface through thoughts and feelings that merge with previous learning and instincts at the centre before returning to the surface in transformed expressions.

Figure 1
A Curriculum Model: the Learning Process – Thinking, Feeling, Intuiting



To illustrate the above discussion I would like to identify a topic for a lesson and explore various responses to it. For instance, if the topic is 'bullying', one student may promptly think about what they know of bullying: what the word means, what previous information may have come their way, have they ever bullied someone or seen someone bullied. These last two thoughts are likely to prompt some feelings so that thoughts and feelings merge. Another student who has been bullied is more likely to respond initially with feeling so that subsequent thinking will be coloured by the feelings. If the teaching of the content is to

be effective, the learning activities will be designed to move the thoughts and feelings through to a deeper level. At this level, the individual may have previous relevant knowledge which has been gained unconsciously through the senses, such as having unconsciously noticed the expression, body language or subsequent behaviour of a person who has been bullied and knowing at a depth level that the person has been affected, hurt, traumatised and so on. The merging of the new knowledge and the previous knowledge now raises the potential for the individual to recognise what it means to bully or to be bullied, the wrongs of the situation, and to feel

some empathy with the person who has been bullied. If the learning has reached a depth level, it should prompt some future action and/or response to the practice of bullying or to bullies themselves – the transformation.

In order to apply this model of learning in education, learning outcomes for each of the three areas need to be articulated (given the outcomes-based curriculum approach in use). While cognitive outcomes are articulated as specific learning that will be demonstrated at the end of a unit of work, the proposed affective and spiritual learning are expressed as a hoped-for outcome. In the case of affective learning, the outcome may not be evident in the space of a lesson but may evolve over the duration of a unit of work. In the case of spiritual learning, the hope is that a shift will take place at a depth level, the 'soul' of the student, so that there will be a corresponding change in thinking and behaviour patterns which may only happen after a period of time, sometimes stretching way past the classroom and into later years. Nonetheless, it should be planned for so that opportunities are offered for students to develop these aspects of learning.

Accordingly, a cognitive learning outcome may state:

By the end of the lesson students will define, OR describe, OR recall, OR recognise, OR illustrate and so on.

The affective learning outcome may state:

By the end of the lesson opportunities will be provided for students to show awareness of, OR experience, OR accept, OR appreciate, OR display interest and so on.

Finally, the spiritual learning outcome may state:

By the end of the lesson opportunities will be provided for students to develop a sensitivity to, OR empathise with, OR develop compassion, OR reflect inwardly, OR accept responsibility, OR contemplate and so on.

The reasons for including statements about affective and spiritual learning despite the fact that they may not be demonstrable or, indeed, measurable are to ensure that the teacher will keep these aspects of the learning in mind as they plan and teach the lesson. This reduces the chance that the learning may remain at the cognitive level, surface learning, with an emphasis on tasks that keep students busy and assist with classroom control.

Such an approach also challenges the teacher to find new ways of communicating the content in ways to seriously engage their students for instance, using an arts approach, to teach topics that may be perceived as 'boring' by many students. The arts promote learning through different senses leading to a variation of perceptions, thereby increasing the possibilities of developing students' creativity and imagination. This is equally the case with the use of other visually and aurally stimulating resources and activities which connect and resonate with students' stories and lives, so that they become more relevant and meaningful. Anecdotal evidence from my postgraduate students when they plan a unit of work using this kind of approach in their own classrooms indicates that their own students' learning has been effective, meaningful and enjoyable. Words to the effect that this was the best RE lesson for both teacher and students are commonly used to describe the experience.

To conclude, addressing the perceiving, thinking, feeling and intuiting processes in the learning situation are vital for a healthy classroom environment where opportunities exist for students to connect and find meaning. This is particularly necessary in the contemporary context when so many students and their parents are unchurched. Many of the parents with school-going children today belong to Generation X and only have a superficial knowledge about their faith tradition (Lynch, 2002; Rymarz, 1999). In such instances, religious education may be likened to the teaching of a foreign subject where connections must first be established if it is at all to become meaningful. In addition, strategies that nurture and give expression to the inner life should be included in the daily program. These may be drawn from early Christian practices and would include time for silence, solitude and contemplation. More attention needs to be given to activities that promote positively the relational aspects of young people's lives rather than those that continue to propagate the highly charged competitive climate that encourages the individual to work against their co-students thereby generating a dehumanising effect. Further, children should be encouraged to recognise that their individual gifts are God given for the use and benefit of all, thereby deepening their sense of connectedness to the Other.

Most importantly, teachers need to become more reflective and intuitive practitioners themselves so that they can bring 'soul' into their educational practice. This is an essential factor in the educational process if the spiritual dimension is to be recognized and addressed appropriately. Only then, may religious education programs offer students increased opportunities to develop

meaningful knowledge about their faith tradition, and help them become faith-filled and hope-filled people.

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The *Theatre of Learning* uses experiential and multi-sensory RE to make RE make sense. Its techniques are:

- *Working in circles for trust building exercises and listening skills.*
- *Working in a multi-sensory environment in which music, scent, plants, flowers and subdued lighting play an important part;*
- *Religion neutral exercises which parallel the rituals and ceremonies of the traditions the pupils are learning;*
- *Participatory symbols which enable pupils to experience that ritual and liturgy are very powerful and enable believers to feel changed;*
- *Creating a concrete platform from which to understand abstract concepts using stories and concept building exercises;*
- *Hitting the spiritual target by preparing lessons which link the child's own spirituality to that of the tradition being studied.*

The techniques are described in a multi-media teacher resource file, *Making RE Make Sense*, which includes a film of *Theatre of Learning* in action and a full photographic tour of many lessons in progress that illustrate the sets and activities the teacher creates. *Teaching Christianity* is the first of a series of four resource files containing lesson plans that enable teachers to plan their own versions of the lessons. These are followed by extensive literacy support in the form of writing frames, vocabulary lists and levelled essays that enable pupils to move, according to their ability, from a basic factual account to a full critical analysis of the aspect of a religious tradition they are studying. The CD Rom version included in the file enables teachers to adapt the written tasks to their own needs. The author can be contacted at njphillips@supanet.com.