
Title	Pre-service teachers to 'Walk the Talk': An experiential learning model for values education
Author(s)	Shanti Divaharan, Liu Woon Chia, Chye Stephanie and Caroline Koh
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Pre-service teachers to 'Walk the Talk': An Experiential Learning model for values education

The National Education (NE) initiative was introduced by the Ministry of Education, Singapore, to schools in 1997 to develop national cohesion, cultivate instincts for survival and instil confidence in Singapore's future. Since the launch, NE has become an important part of the school programme, both in formal and informal curriculum (*Report of the committee on National Education*, 2007). With the changes brought about by globalisation, there is now a growing need to move to a stronger emphasis on cultivating a sense of belongingness and emotional rootedness to Singapore. As a teacher preparation institute, National Institute of Education has a key role to play in enabling and equipping educators in the NE effort. In particular, NIE has the potential to contribute directly and significantly to enhance pre-service teachers' knowledge, skills and interest in delivering NE, and to help deepen their conviction and commitment to nurture citizens with a strong sense of belonging to Singapore.

The aims of this research are twofold. Firstly, this study will attempt to investigate the following:

1. What are the pre-service teachers' perceptions of NE?
2. What is their experience of learning NE?
3. Are they prepared to teaching NE?

Secondly, it will propose an Experiential Learning model for effective immersion of pre-service teachers to values education so that they become better prepared to teach their students.

A qualitative methodology was adopted to gather student teachers' perceptions and to elicit suggestions to better their NE learning experiences. 14 focus group interviews were conducted with pre-service teachers from the Bachelors program (4 years), Diploma program (2 years) and the Post-graduate Diploma in Education program (1

year). Content coding was done and member checks were conducted to ensure reliability of interpretation.

The findings indicate that pre-service teachers were aware of the six NE messages. However, they felt that they learnt the NE messages due to their formal education in Singapore schools rather than in NIE. To increase their confidence in teaching NE, it was suggested that NIE should create experiences and provide more time for reflections. Isolated events did not foster their learning of NE. The researchers thus propose Kolb's Experiential Learning model as a counter proposal to improve values education among pre-service teachers such that they become confident teachers with the ability to design experiences to impart values to their students in school.