

## VALIDATION WORKSHOP REPORT

### - SPAIN -

**Hosting partner:** World Association of Early Childhood Educators (AMEI-WAECE)/ Innovation Training Center ITC.

**Title of the event:** Values Education inside the classroom: how to implement values in the educational system.

**Venue and date:** June 1<sup>st</sup> 2019. AMEI-WAECE office. Estrella Polar 7, bajo derecha 28007, Madrid. SPAIN.

**Participants:** The participants of the validation workshops of AVAL project have been selected due their large experience on education: principals, pedagogical coordinators, practitioners, and so on. Some of them are also author of pedagogical resources for well-known publishing houses like Edelvives, Anaya or Buño, among others. One of them is very well known because she is participating in a Tv program called "The secret life of kids".



## **Feedback and results. Recommendations to be included in the general guidelines document:**

### **Feedback nº1: VALUES IN SCHOOLS as it is said in the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The scientific community agrees on the necessity of education from the time babies are born, if not before, it would be advisable that **we all come to an agreement regarding the objectives, content and methods of this early education**. Furthermore, this would help us to avoid having education services become merely a stage of accelerated school knowledge. If we read once again *Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20, 1989, we find what we understand today as appropriate early childhood education:

*States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:*

*(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;*

*(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;*

*(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;*

***(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;***

These words are not a definition, but rather they describe what **'education of the child shall be directed to.'** They outline and identify perfectly what we must understand as "education." Today education is defined as what is offered to children ***for their integral development NOT ONLY in COGNITIVE (a word that is not used in the article) aspects, but also psychological and spiritual aspects through experiences of pedagogical and recreational socialization.*** This definition is perfectly valid regardless of the age of the child. It is a valid definition since the moment of birth. The methodologies to be utilized could vary, but the essence of the concept will remain constant and with a lifelong perspective. It must be, according to section (d), an education directed to **'The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace...'. That is, VALUES EDUCATION.**

### **Feedback nº 2: Values education, at soon as possible.**

Arguing from the premise that when children are born they are not aware of the roles, norms, standards of conduct, and the moral and social values of their community, educational agents are converted into facilitators of experience and relations that enable children's progressive social maturity.

We can define a value as a real, desirable, objective and convenient element for human beings who interiorize it through individual experience, and which is converted into a moral norm of conduct. Through their experiences, children select, choose, and make their own system of values that helps them to develop a moral conscience and to acquire the individual commitment for organizing their conduct and putting it into practice. Education must offer children a guide for conduct from their early childhood onwards. A guide that promotes achieving the internal maturity that is essential for acquiring an autonomous conscience.

The fundamental condition that allows us to speak of personality formation and values education at this age is that their conduct becomes predictable, which implies a definable direction in their behavior. The main point of this formation is gaining the capacity to observe and use rules of conduct that are socially acceptable. These are norms that children assimilate into their activities and use in communication with adults, other children and the surrounding world. These norms help them to self-regulate and to regulate their conduct more effectively during their subsequent stages of development.

Using this point of view, it is possible to state that values take shape during the processes of the development of individuals from their earliest stages of life. Neuroscientist Dr. Paul Bloom from Yale University has identified moral decision making in infants as young as 4 months of age. This highlights the fundamental importance of providing values education in the home and child care and development centers from infancy forward.

### Feedback nº 3. How to teach values.

In the early psychological formation of children, it is generally not possible to act directly on their structure of values, capacities, and motivation. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a well-organized and methodologically conceived activities that allow children to orient their thoughts and conduct when they are carried out. This activity base is then intentionally transferred to other similar activities and they progressively form capacities, motives, and values.

**This is to say that values are not taught as values per se, but rather they are formed as a consequence of performing activities that children find interesting. In these activities, the actions enable the composition of future values.**

When during role playing or performance, the hero helps his needy friend, a determined influence on personal concepts of friendship and human solidarity is performed. Slowly, through the repetition and enrichment of this activity, a subsequent personality value is formed.

Values, as we know them, are learned and chosen in daily life through the behaviors that children observe in adults and assimilate through play. The formation of values can occur spontaneously or be directed pedagogically. Pedagogical direction of the formation of values helps to guarantee that the individual will gain values in accordance with generally accepted social norms and values – and hopefully those that are in line with peaceful relations among people.

If the activities that are offered for the formation of values are accompanied by strong sense of emotional satisfaction and welfare, children will tend to repeat them. Such activities will

become habitual because they will start being part of the system that regulates children's conduct.

That is to say that the formation of habits and the performance of activities directed at values formation should develop positive feelings and personal experiences in children and not only externally reinforce and orient their conduct.

In this sense, **knowledge for knowledge's sake does not guarantee value formation**. Instead it must be accompanied by personal emotional experiences that express and enable the unity of affective, social and cognitive processes.

#### **Feedback nº 4. Values education must become a transversal program that is developed through all of the activities of a learning center.**

Thus, direct work on the formation of values should not be attempted. Instead, the formation of habits, concepts, notions and personal experiences that will result in the formation of values should be carried out through well-organized and methodologically conceived activities that allow children to orient themselves as they perform the activities. This should be transferred to other similar activities and progressively form the capacities, motives or values that are intended to be formed. This means that **values formation is really a transversal axis that must be utilized transversally in the content of all the activities that children carry out**. It can be incorporated as a general objective within the planning of any learning activity.

Knowledge of educational practice leads us to claim that it is necessary to work with the transversal axes of the curriculum and with the rest of the objectives and content in a structured manner as one of the blocks that make up the curriculum.

Work with values exclusively as though they were a separate transversal axis has the disadvantage of creating a difficulty in relating the general objective to more specific objectives. This disadvantage can lead to discarding this pedagogical practice. Working this general objective into other activities and evaluating it in reference to the specific objectives of the activity can be difficult. On the other hand, the excessive use of cognition in the previously cited programs limits work on the transversal axes to mere verbal observations on the part of the educator. This does not guarantee the realization of the value.

Offering activities specifically directed towards carrying out actions that result in the formation of values is not a pedagogical contradiction in the global focus of value formation.

Approaching values education in this way values education can be integrated as a general objective within any general activity. Each value can be worked with in other activities as particular and specific content. The realization of one or another methodological procedure depends on the characteristics of the group, the focus of the content, the objectives of the activity, and so on.