On Ethics and Values in Education:
Exploring an Open Educational Model for Ethical Literacy

Elena Xeni

CARDET – Centre for the Advancement and Development of Educational Technology

ABSTRACT

The various radical changes that have taken place in recent years are affecting important aspects of social life. One solution to mitigate the negative effects of these changes could be to invest in an educational model that is based on the values of respect for diversity, equality and responsibility. Within this model there are attitudes, predispositions, and behaviors that can and should be experienced from an early age (Stiles, Jernigen 2010; Jolles, Crone 2012), aiming at forming an integrated personality, focusing on three pillars: respecting the self (myself), respecting the others (others) and responsible behavior and action (the environment).

In an attempt to develop an open model based on Ethical Literacy, as undertaken in the framework of the EU funded project *AVAL - Added VALue Learning for Preschool Teachers & Pedagogical Coordinators*, a thorough investigation of the dominant ethics and values in education emerged as an imperative necessity in the research process. Data obtained from the structured questionnaire issued in the first half of 2017 to 17 pre-primary and primary school teachers in the Cypriot context, highlighted that teachers emphasize the importance of the following values in education: ethics, honesty, justice/ critical thinking reflection. Teachers believe that these can be successfully taught and stress that visual and audio media, educational platforms and presentations are the most effective teaching and learning materials. They also underline that role play, teamwork, and extensions to everyday life are the most effective methodologies for teaching ethics and values.

The results of the study are compared with the data from other European countries in the AVAL partnership, while the pedagogical implications for the values in the proposed model will be tackled on the grounds of a model which seeks to respond to the need of enabling future generations to live in a more open and critical literacy developed society, with children being capable of building solid moral foundations and values that will guide their lives and future.