CATALOGUE OF CRITERIA

FOR VALUE EDUCATION

TEACHING MATERIALS

PROJECT VALIDE

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Content

1. Introduction to the teaching material collection

The development of teaching materials plays a crucial role in enhancing the learning experience and supporting educational goals. In the context of the ValiDE project, the creation of teaching materials was designed to reflect democratic values and promote intercultural understanding. The process of producing these materials involved both national and project-level considerations, ensuring that the resources were relevant, adaptable, and effective in a variety of educational settings.

1.1 National level

At the national level, the creation of teaching materials was guided by the specific educational frameworks, curriculum guidelines, and pedagogical approaches of each participating country. Teachers and educators took into account the cultural and social context of their students, tailoring the materials to meet local needs while still aligning with the overarching goals of the ValiDE project. The national-level approach ensured that the materials were culturally sensitive, contextually relevant, and compliant with national educational standards.

Key aspects at the national level included:

- *Alignment with National Curriculum*: Ensuring that the teaching materials supported the educational goals and learning objectives set by national education authorities.
- *Cultural Relevance*: Adapting materials to reflect the local culture, history, and societal values, making them more meaningful and engaging for students.
- *Teacher Autonomy*: Allowing educators the flexibility to modify and personalize the materials to suit the specific needs of their students.

This report provides an overview of the didactic approaches and materials used in the Values in Democratic Education (ValiDe) project, specifically aiming at school teachers, who are interested in integrating democratic values into their educational practices. The focus of the report is to offer insights into how the project addressed the role of democratic values in the classroom, especially in the context of national curricula.

Findings from the Project Results

An analysis of the curricula in Poland, Germany, and Norway revealed that these countries referenced the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (Barrett, 2020) to a rather limited extent. The RFCDC is a tool developed by the Council of

Europe to promote democratic competence, intercultural understanding, and human rights education. However, the project results highlighted, that values had a subordinate role in the national curricula of these three countries. This suggests that while democratic principles are acknowledged, they are not always given the prominence or depth of focus necessary in educational practices.

The Need for Emphasizing Values

Given these findings, the ValiDe project sought to address this gap by placing a special emphasis on values within its teaching materials. The teaching resources developed through the project were designed to provide a more substantial exploration of democratic values, aiming to fill the void identified in national curricula. The materials focused on fostering critical thinking, reflection, and dialogue on values such as fairness, justice, participation, equality, and respect.

In response to the limited attention to values in the curricula, the ValiDe teaching materials were specifically crafted to provide educators with the tools to better incorporate and explore democratic values in their lessons. This approach was particularly crucial for ensuring that democratic education moved beyond theory and became a lived, actionable part of students' educational experiences.

Ultimately, the national-level focus within the ValiDe project was to enhance the integration of democratic values in educational practices, making them more central to the curriculum and providing teachers with resources that encouraged deeper engagement with these crucial topics.

Even though democratic values are not very prominent in the three curricula, there are some characteristics in each country:

In the **Norwegian curriculum** democratic values are explicitly addressed: "Education and training shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for human dignity and nature, and on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights" (Department of Education, 2017). Such education and training should teach pupils about democracy, it should prepare them for democracy, and it should teach them through democracy (NOU 2019:23, p. 219).

In the **German educational curriculum**, democracy education plays a central role in fostering democratic values, civic participation, and human rights awareness. This is reflected

in the federal approach to education, where each of Germany's 16 states (Lünder, 2022) develops its own curricula while aligning with overarching constitutional principles emphasizing democracy and pluralism. Democracy education in Germany has evolved, with significant reforms since 2012 to adapt to a more competence-oriented learning framework. However, its implementation varies across states, with some emphasizing it more extensively than others.

Key Aspects of Democracy Education in Germany include:

Curricular Integration: Democracy education is primarily delivered through subjects such as social studies, history, and political science. It emphasizes participatory and experiential learning, such as involving students in classroom decision-making or school councils (Lüber, 2022; Counsil of Europe, 2016). The curricula emphasize developing democratic competencies, including critical thinking, understanding diverse perspectives, and fostering inclusion (Leibniz Institute for Educational Media).

Age-Appropriate Education: Early childhood education includes democratic principles such as equality, tolerance, and participation. Activities like electing children's councils or resolving conflicts collectively introduce democracy as a lived experience rather than just abstract concepts (Lüber, 2022). In primary and secondary education, democracy education becomes more structured, incorporating discussions on political systems, human rights, and global challenges (Counsil of Europe, 2016; Leibniz Institute for Educational Media).

Cross-Curricular Approach: Democracy education is not limited to specific subjects but is embedded across disciplines to create a "whole-school" democratic ethos. Schools integrate democratic practices in everyday activities, encouraging a culture of respect and participation (Leibniz Institute for Educational Media).

Teacher Training and School Culture: Effective democracy education depends heavily on the attitudes and practices of educators, who are expected to model democratic values. Training programs emphasize equipping teachers with the skills to facilitate discussions on complex societal issues and foster inclusive environments (Lüber, 2022).

Overall, Germany's approach combines formal curricular elements with experiential and participatory learning to instill democratic values from an early age, aiming to prepare students for active, informed citizenship.

Democratic value education within the **Polish primary school curriculum** aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for active participation in a

democratic society. Through the integration of critical thinking, civic participation, social justice, and respect for diversity, the curriculum fosters a foundation for democratic principles, encouraging students to become informed and responsible citizens. While these values may not always be explicitly stated, they are woven throughout various subject areas, preparing students to engage meaningfully with the democratic processes in their communities and beyond. However, it is important to acknowledge some of the challenges and critiques that have emerged in recent years regarding the Polish education system. According to research by Wiśniewski and Zahorska (2020), the introduction of the new "Law on Education" (2017) led to significant disruptions within the system. The swift implementation of changes without adequate preparation, infrastructure, or consultation resulted in hasty curriculum revisions. This rushed approach led to the fragmentation of interdisciplinary teaching, where subject areas were no longer integrated as they had been in the past. Furthermore, the extended syllabi in subjects like history and Polish language were aimed at strengthening national identity but risked sidelining the development of broader democratic competencies. As educators, it is important to recognize that even successful reforms cannot be sustained if they are not fully understood and supported by the wider society, including parents. The lack of public understanding and support for changes in the education system can create fertile ground for populist movements to promote nostalgia for "better times," often at the expense of progress. In such an environment, reforms that aim to strengthen democratic values may face resistance, and reversing these changes becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible. Despite these challenges, democratic value education remains crucial. Teachers play a key role in ensuring that students are not only informed about democratic values but also empowered to practice them in their daily lives. By focusing on cultivating critical thinking, social responsibility, and respect for diversity, educators can help students navigate a complex and changing world while promoting a strong and enduring commitment to democratic principles.

As a common frame of reference, we lean on the "Butterfly-model" from the Council of Europe, describing a model of "Competencies for Democratic Culture" (Figure 1) which is emphasized to be considered in the curriculum of all European countries. This model considers different attitudes, knowledge and critical understanding, skills and values. We focus in particular on the values in the project, but of course also with a view on the model as a whole.
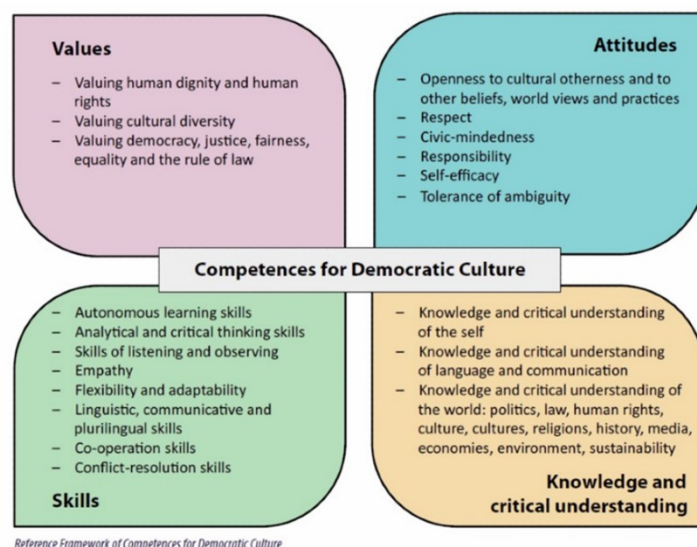
Figure 1. *Model of competencies for democratic culture ("Butterfly-model")*

Source: Council of Europe, Model of Competences. https://www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/model

Throughout the project the three countries focused on different values in more depth: In Norway the students focused on human dignity and human rights, in Germany the students were involved with the focus on diversity, and in Poland the students focused on equity and equality. This ensured little overlap in the content and that students learnt different things in the three countries, which they had to integrate at the end of the three-weeks course.

1.2. Project level

At the project level, the creation of teaching materials was centered around the core objectives of the ValiDE project, which emphasized the promotion of democratic values, intercultural communication, and critical thinking. The project-level approach focused on ensuring that the materials were universally applicable and could be adapted to different educational contexts while fostering a shared understanding of democratic principles across all participating countries.

Key aspects at the project level included:

- *Promotion of Democratic Values*: Ensuring that the materials reflected key democratic concepts such as equality, freedom, participation, and social responsibility.

- *Intercultural Dialogue*: Designing materials that encouraged students to engage with diverse perspectives and promote mutual understanding.

- **Collaborative Approach**: Encouraging the involvement of students from different countries to work together, thus enriching the learning process and fostering a sense of shared ownership of the educational resources.
- **Critical Thinking and Reflection**: The materials were developed to encourage students to think critically about societal issues and engage in reflective discussions on topics like justice, fairness, and human rights.

2. Process of Creating Scenarios and Producing Materials in the ValiDE Project

The development of scenarios and materials within the ValiDE project was guided by the principle of fostering intercultural collaboration and learning. Students were organized into transnationally mixed cooperation groups, a structure deliberately designed to present challenges while simultaneously offering significant added value. This setup encouraged intercultural communication, mutual understanding, and collaborative learning, key goals of the project.

While this approach enriched the process, it also required students to navigate complexities, such as overcoming language barriers, cultural differences, and varied working styles. Consequently, more effort was directed towards dialogue, reflection, and discussion rather than solely focusing on the refinement of the materials in terms of design, formatting, and detailed articulation of ideas.

Despite these challenges, the collaborative process proved essential. The emphasis on shared ideas and diverse cultural perspectives became the foundation of the materials' quality. The project team strongly believes that this intercultural exchange is where the true value of the materials lies, highlighting the strength of collective creativity and understanding over polished presentation.

2.1 Quality Criteria for Content and Structure of Learning Scenarios in the ValiDE Project

Content Quality

In the ValiDE project, we placed significant emphasis on ensuring that students incorporated current research and relevant theories into their lesson planning. This was crucial in helping them make informed and practical choices when designing their lessons. By

grounding their work in evidence-based approaches, students were able to develop materials that were not only relevant but also aligned with best practices in education. Additionally, we stressed that the content should be accurate, ensuring that students presented correct information that would be both reliable and meaningful for their intended audience.

Structure of the Learning Scenarios

We also highlighted the importance of embedding the teaching materials within a clear and logical course structure. A well-organized structure is key to effective learning, as it ensures that students can easily follow and engage with the content. The lesson plans should have a clear starting point, providing students with a sense of direction and purpose. Similarly, each lesson should conclude with a summary, reinforcing the key concepts and helping students to solidify their learning. This structured approach enhances understanding and makes the learning experience more cohesive and accessible.

2.2 Didactic Ideas and Learning Materials in the ValiDE Project

In the ValiDE project, students were encouraged to explore a variety of creative options for presenting their topics. The emphasis was placed on choosing the most appropriate medium to trigger the desired learning processes. The goal was to create materials that were not only engaging but also flexible and universally applicable across different educational settings and for diverse groups of students. This allowed the materials to be adaptable to different cultural backgrounds and learning environments, fostering inclusivity and accessibility.

In Norway, one of the lessons was called "Virtual Reality as a didactical method in values education in the classroom". The learning goals were: understanding the differences between racism and prejudice, and mechanisms that create in or out groups; Having experienced VR didactics and reflected on VR in a teaching context. This lesson was inspired by the following Dembra activity. Dembra is a programme for schools for the prevention of racism, group-based hostility and antidemocratic attitudes. At dembra.no you will find teaching materials and background information for these topics. The pages can also be used for implementing prevention initiatives at the school (Democracy against prejudice and exclusion …)

The students were presented with theory on racism and prejustice. Then the students watched a video called "Is Australia Racist?" in VR. The session was followed by questions for

reflection: What was the movie about?; What types of racism did the film address? Refer back to the topics of the introductory lecture; How did the group dynamic work in the film?; How do group dynamics influence the willingness to intervene and avert a racist incident?;What representations of "us" and "the others" does the film show? Who is "us" and who are "the others", and do these change during the film? The session ended with a short plenary discussion.

2.3 Didactical ideas for learning materials proposed by NGOs

When we sum up the NGOs approaches in ValiDE we can clearly see a pattern across all three countries. As the NGOs are not subject to the specific rules, regulations and time restrictions you may find in school and teacher education, they are freer to develop teaching methods out of their own principles, philosophies and histories. In all NGOs there is a clear objective to engage and involve the visitors, be it pupils, students or teacher students. This in turn leads to the ValiDE participants being heavily involved in the pedagogical sessions. They are encouraged to discuss, reflect out loud, criticize and thus possibly change the direction of the workshop.

So the participants in the NGOs workshops and seminars are not at the receiving end of a one-sided "teacher-student"-relation, they do not remain passive. They are encouraged by the set-up of the NGO workshop/seminar to bring in all their thoughts, experiences, attitudes, values, even emotions. In sharing these they create a third space (s. Homi K. Bhabha) in which new thoughts, new synapses, new experiences are created by the students themselves. The NGOs are the facilitators of a democratic setting and respectful atmosphere. They provide the space and time, the rules for a respectful and open atmosphere to enable the students to authentically share their innermost thoughts and feelings. The NGOs are merely moderating the debates i.e. by impulse questions, they are not steering them! What the participants learn during these workshops depends highly on the involvement and activity of the participants themselves. They shape their own learning experience in a peer group setting.

ARKIVET, Peace and Human Rights Centre, Norway

History didactics and existentialist pedagogy

Most of ARKIVETs pedagogical activities are based on historical consciousness where past, present and future are somewhat intertwined. This is a central feature of history didactics

(Nordgren, 2019). This comes from the foundations location which is a former Gestapo head quarter. When the past is constantly reinvigorated it is not sufficient to have just heard or learned about an historic event, one has to reflect on it. This creates the opportunity for all teaching about historical events to be used as reference points for introspective analysis as well as extroverted responsibility. This affects not just how and what people think about their responsibilities for what the future will look like, but also for how we re-tell or reproduce narratives. This way of critical thinking and thus de-construction is not just a didactical approach but can be used as an existential philosophical enquiry. At least there is the possibility for the participants of ValiDE to bring these approaches along and use them in every encounter with a narrative or teaching on an historical event.

One example of how this is done at ARKIVET is the way the most used teaching unit "Choices and values" is carried it. It starts with an introduction to the history of the State Archive building in which the ARKIVET Peace and Human Rights Centre is located, which was a Gestapo head quarter 1942-1945 and thus a crime scene for abuse and detention. After a tour in the permanent exhibition the pupils are gathered for what is popularly called "The stick". This part starts from the attack on free speech on Norway under nazi occupation. From that they learn about this specific human right and from there they shall now reflect on their own responsibility and on how they execute their own free speech. They are presented with a stick that has a magnetic field. On this stick they shall put statements on the stick far or near the outer areas which are marked "OK" and "Not OK", respectively. The statements they shall decide on are somewhat controversial, such as: "All Asian girls are so pretty" and "Does your father force you to wear the hijab?". The students then engage in a discussion on the limits of free speech in general and the statements especially. They take lessons from past atrocities, and they learn about present human rights – namely free speech. They then reflect on their use of free speech and are encouraged to take responsibility for how and why they utilize it. This encourages the pupils to learn in the middle ground – between self-destruction and world-destruction.

Another example is what all ValiDE exchange students experienced (see "Use of history in exhibition" PR3/PR4). They were given a brief introduction to a local history of World War II i Kristiansand and what the Arkivet building was used for. Then they were taken on a tour in ARKIVETs permanent exhibition "Focal Point Arkivet". Before they entered, they were given the task of finding aspects of the exhibition they could criticize. This could include the artefacts

in exhibition, narrative structures or the tour guides voicing among other things. After the tour they were invited to reflect on the exhibition and encouraged to come up with constructive critical approaches. After that they were shown a Power Point presentation of what the exhibition looked like from the first years (2001-2011), after a revision in 2011 (2011-2016) and after complete refurbishing of the exhibition in 2016 (2016-2024).

In short ARKIVETs didactical contribution to this project has been the insistence of critical approach to narratives and the intertwining of past, present and future which encourages reflecting on individual responsibilities.

Global Ethic Foundation (GEF), Tübingen, Germany

As Global Ethic Foundation which was founded by the Swiss theologian Prof. Dr. Hans Küng, our work focuses on interreligious education and encounter between citizens of all religions, cultures and nations. The idea of connecting people shaped by different religious and cultural environments promotes a peaceful coexistence in the world living together. In order to enhance peace among religions and nations, the idea of a Global Ethic identifies common values and standards that connect people above and beyond the boundaries of religion, culture and nationality.

The fundamental approach of Hans Küng has always been dialogue, specifically interreligious dialogue, but also any dialogue in the original sense of the word: two people coming from different backgrounds (be it politically, religiously, socially...) who enter a mutual exchange. A "true" dialogue will always leave both participants "changed".

For a true dialogue to take place, one needs to create a safe space, rules of respectful communication even during very controversial debates as well as providing a welcoming and trusting setting. This established, the dialogue partners are able to really "show themselves", utter their true beliefs (even if controversial or uncomfortable to the other) and thereby make themselves more "transparent" and understandable for the dialogue partner.

In sharing their own views in this open and authentic way, the dialogue partners can identify differences, which they can now accept respectfully because they understand the underlying beliefs and mind-sets. More importantly, they also find commonalities which can form a new basis for trust and understanding. This experience alters their views and attitudes and helps to create common ground for society to build on in trying times (social cohesion).

Global Ethic is shaped by a continuous interreligious dialogue and encounter, creating a space for living peacefully and in harmony together. For that reason, GEF main focus is the

educational area, encouraging teachers and pedagogical workers to use and experiment an interreligious pedagogical approach with children: i.e. learn about one's own culture and religious affiliation, but also to better understand and respect people following other religious faiths. By applying this approach, teachers are able to stimulate students' acquisition of social, interreligious and intercultural competencies. Furthermore, another complementary approach GEF recommends is the approach of "Philosophy for Children" (P4C). P4C can contribute to the development of cooperative and collaborative learning in classroom promoting critical and creative thinking. Those above-mentioned approaches provoke critical self-reflection among participants, who feel encouraged to reflect and analyze their own thinking patterns, values and world view. Certain didactic methods are useful to acquire those above-mentioned competencies. For instance, by using theater pedagogy in a workshop setting, which draws on elements of experiential education.

A very successful and highly sought after educational offer is organizing encounters with religious representatives from different religions, where the participants enter into a free exchange with them. This setting raises awareness of different faiths and religions in societal practice from a subjective perspective on a micro level. By creating this space, participants acquire interreligious and intercultural competencies and experience tolerance closely. Furthermore, those encounters and dialogues enhance the comprehension for the so-called "Other" in multicultural society by combating prejudices.

All educational offers provided by the GEF strive to establish space for real dialogue, encounters with people from (socially, politically, religiously...) different groups. Introducing the controversial to spark a dialogue and together reach a shared understanding: a common ground. This contributes in the end to higher societal cohesion, vibrant democratic culture and peace.

Working with complementary pedagogic approaches.

NGO Proharmonia, Centre of Education, Kielce, Poland

ProHarmonia uses the 'service-learning' method based on D. Kolb's experiential learning in its educational activities with children for democracy. In developing the programme, it works closely with primary education teachers from local schools who want to implement this method in their work with children.

In education through service ProHarmonia aims at the SERVICE-LEARNING model (Sigmon, 1979), in which learning goals and social action goals are of equal value and are

mutually reinforcing (in contrast to the SERVICE-LEARNING model - learning goals are more important than social service outcomes; SERVICE-Learning model- service outcomes are more important than learning goals; service-learning model- learning goals and social action outcomes are completely independent).

ProHarmony guides the process of preparation of the project by asking participants the following questions:

1. Who submits the idea of a task to be performed?

2. Who selects the tasks?

3. Who approves the tasks?

4. Who selects the methods for performing the tasks?

5. Who checks the tasks?

6. Who is responsible for carrying out the task?

7. Who decides whether a task is well performed?

8. Who benefits from a task done well?

9. Who decides that a participant/group performing a task should be withdrawn?

10. Who ultimately benefits from the project?

3. Core Aspects Driving the Didactic Approach

3.1. Learning main goals

The main objectives focus on students' social competences in terms of active participation, communication, critical thinking/critical reflection and collaborative learning. These goals refer to education in accordance with the concept of competences of the future proposed in 2021 by Jeremy Lamri. The second group of goals concerns teaching skills, i.e. mainly a constructivist approach to all educational activities related to the creation of lesson scenarios in multicultural teams. These objectives are detailed as follows:

Student Participation: Central to the approach was ensuring that students were actively involved in the learning process. They were encouraged to participate in decision-making, discussions, and hands-on activities, promoting a sense of ownership and engagement with the content.

Space for Reflection and Self-Awareness: The project created opportunities for students to reflect on their personal experiences and develop self-awareness. This encouraged deeper connections to the content and a better understanding of their own values and beliefs.

Learning from and About Others, and Learning About Oneself: An important aspect of the project was fostering learning through interactions with others. By engaging with peers from different backgrounds, students could learn not only about different cultures and perspectives but also about themselves and their own identities.

Constructivist Approach: The project emphasized creating spaces for students to develop their individual concepts and ideas. By encouraging interaction with both the material and other students, a constructivist approach was implemented where knowledge was co-constructed, allowing students to form personal understanding through communication and collaboration with teachers and peers.

Intercultural Approach: A key component of the project was making use of intercultural perspectives. The diversity of the groups provided opportunities to explore different viewpoints, fostering mutual respect and understanding among students from various cultural backgrounds. *Peace Project in Method and Content:* The project aimed to form a "peace project" through both the methods employed and the content explored. This was reflected in the focus on democratic principles, conflict resolution, and building understanding and tolerance between students from different cultures.

Knowledge Building and Critical Thinking: Students were encouraged to critically engage with the knowledge being presented to them. This not only involved absorbing information but also questioning and reflecting on it, thereby fostering critical thinking skills that are essential for active participation in a democratic society.

Addressing Controversial Questions and Moments: The project encouraged students to engage with complex and controversial issues, providing opportunities to discuss differing viewpoints and navigate difficult topics. This approach fostered a deeper understanding of democratic principles and helped students develop the skills needed to handle disagreements constructively.

Integration of Affective Learning Process Elements: In addition to cognitive learning, the project integrated affective elements to address emotions, values, and attitudes. This created a holistic learning experience, where students were not only intellectually challenged

but also emotionally engaged with the content, strengthening their personal connection to the subject matter.

By integrating these key elements into the teaching process, the ValiDE project created an environment where democratic principles could be learned, discussed, and applied in meaningful ways. Through active participation, intercultural exchange, and critical reflection, students were empowered to become informed, empathetic, and responsible citizens.

3.2 Examples of Didactic Ideas for Democratic Value Education in Primary Schools

Classroom Parliament

a.   Create a "classroom parliament" where students can discuss and vote on class issues, such as the organization of a party or project.

b.   Assign roles like speaker, representatives, and voters to mimic democratic processes.

Community Helpers Week

c.   Introduce the concept of community roles (e.g., firefighters, teachers, and local leaders) and their importance in a democratic society.

d.   Invite guest speakers or organize activities where students act as "helpers" to understand civic responsibility.

The Responsibility Tree

e.   Create a wall display where students write responsibilities (e.g., helping others, cleaning up) on leaves to attach to a tree.

f.   Discuss how responsibilities contribute to fairness and equality in a community.

Conflict Resolution Role-Play

g.   Present common classroom conflicts (e.g., sharing materials, choosing partners) and guide students to resolve them collaboratively.

h.   Highlight values like respect, compromise, and active listening.

Cultural Exchange Day

i.   Organize a day where students learn about and share traditions from various cultures represented in the class.

j.   Emphasize the democratic value of respecting diversity.

4. Learning Materials for Value Education in Primary Schools

Teaching value education to primary school students requires creativity and the use of diverse, engaging learning materials. By leveraging a variety of tools, educators can effectively communicate important democratic principles such as fairness, respect, cooperation, and responsibility.

The following examples showcase practical and age-appropriate materials that can be integrated into the classroom to make value education both enjoyable and meaningful. These resources, ranging from storybooks to interactive games and art projects, are designed to inspire curiosity, foster discussions, and help students develop a deeper understanding of democratic values in a way that resonates with their everyday experiences.

Storybooks and Fables

a.   Examples: *The Lion and the Mouse* (emphasizing kindness), *The Rainbow Fish* (sharing and inclusion).

b.   Use stories to spark discussions about fairness, respect, and cooperation.

Visual Aids and Posters

c.   Create or display posters illustrating democratic principles, such as "Everyone has a voice" or "Work together to solve problems."

d.   Use visual charts to show classroom roles or shared responsibilities.

Interactive Games

e.   Example: A classroom board game where students collaborate to reach a goal, emphasizing teamwork and compromise.

f.   Use digital tools like Kahoot or Quizizz to quiz students on democratic concepts.

Multimedia Resources

g.   Videos or animations that depict democratic values, such as fairness or teamwork.

h.   Examples: Clips from *Sesame Street* or similar programs that teach respect and cooperation.

Activity Kits and Worksheets

i.   Printable worksheets for drawing or writing about democratic values, such as "How I can help my community."

j.   Puzzle activities where students match democratic terms (e.g., fairness, respect) to their definitions.

Art Projects

k.   Create a "Democracy Mural" where students contribute ideas about what democracy means to them.

l.   Encourage students to draw pictures of acts of kindness, fairness, or responsibility.

Below you find criteria for theoretical and practical approach for evaluating the quality of choosing academic content and teaching aids, teaching methods and student's activities, assessing learning progress.

We emphasized that the students used key terms and subject terminology that could be expected at the student level.

Procedures of goals achieving

Democratic value education aims to instill principles such as equality, freedom, respect for others, participation, and responsibility in students. It equips them with the skills and mindset needed to actively engage in democratic processes and make ethical decisions. To effectively teach democratic values, educators should use strategies and methods that promote active participation, critical thinking, and collaboration in the classroom.

4.1 Strategies for Democratic Value Education

Create a Democratic Classroom Environment

a.   Encourage open dialogue where every student feels heard and respected.

b.   Establish classroom rules collaboratively, allowing students to take ownership of the learning environment.

c.   Model democratic behaviors, such as fairness and inclusivity, in interactions with students.

Foster Student Participation

d.   Give students opportunities to voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes, such as planning class activities or resolving conflicts.

e.   Rotate leadership roles, such as group leader or class representative, to ensure every student experiences responsibility.

Encourage Active Citizenship

f. Link classroom discussions to real-world democratic processes, such as elections, community involvement, and civic responsibility.

   g. Promote participation in school governance through student councils or committees.

Fostering critical thinking

   a. Encourage critical thinking.

The goal is to create self-realised human beings (Hooks, 2010) – not just replace a dominating ideology with a new one (Fox, 2002). According to Willingham (i.d. i Hooks, 2010, p. 8-9), critical thinking involves «…seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms young ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence…".

   b. Encourage dialogue about the role of the teacher in fostering critical thinking. The teacher is a role model and because of this the teacher must not just talk about critical thinking but also practice it: "walk the talk". It is also a demanding role that requires that the teacher can handle uncertainty. The teacher must encourage free speech and critical thinking, whilst at the same time recognize racism and extremist ideas and statements. It is important that the teacher reacts to discriminatory remarks and takes action. It is also important that the teacher practice dialogue with all students in class whilst at the same time upholding rules regarding right and wrong. In the core curriculum in Norway for example, this could mean to ensure that "All forms of discrimination must be counteracted" (The Norwegian Education Act § 1-1).

   c. Link the democratic classroom to critical thinking. What are the characteristics of a democratic classroom? «Progressive educators continue to honour education as the practice of freedom because we understand that democracy thrives in an environment where learning is valued, where the ability to think is the mark of responsible citizenship, where free speech and dissent is accepted and encouraged» (Hooks, 2010, p. 17).

4.2 Methods for Teaching Democratic Values

Discussion-Based Learning

   a. Use structured discussions or debates on topics related to democratic principles, such as equality or justice.

b. Facilitate Socratic questioning to encourage critical thinking and exploration of diverse perspectives.

Collaborative Learning

c. Use group projects to foster teamwork and mutual respect.

d. Encourage students to work together to solve problems, emphasizing the importance of cooperation in achieving shared goals.

Experimential Learning

e. Organize simulations, such as mock elections, model UN sessions, or classroom parliaments, to help students experience democratic processes firsthand.

f. Plan community service projects to teach responsibility and the importance of contributing to society.

Case Studies and Real-Life Examples

g. Analyze historical or current events that highlight democratic principles, such as civil rights movements or peaceful protests.

h. Discuss inspiring figures who exemplify democratic values, like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, or Malala Yousafzai.

4.3 Techniques for Implementing Democratic Value Education

Role-Playing and Simulations

a. Role-play scenarios involving democratic dilemmas or conflicts to help students practice decision-making and empathy.

b. Conduct simulations of democratic institutions, such as voting or debating laws, to teach procedural aspects of democracy.

Dialogue Circles

c. Hold regular dialogue circles where students can share their thoughts on topics like fairness, equality, or inclusion.

d. Use the circle format to ensure all voices are heard and respected equally.

Peer Mediation

e. Train students in conflict resolution techniques to mediate disputes among their peers.

f. Use these opportunities to demonstrate the importance of compromise and mutual understanding in democratic societies.

Critical Media Literacy

g. Teach students to analyze media and identify biases or misinformation.

h. Discuss how media influences democratic processes and public opinion.

Reflection and Journaling

i. Encourage students to reflect on their experiences with democratic practices in the classroom or their community.

j. Use journals for personal reflections on how they can embody democratic values in their daily lives.

Summarizing, teaching democratic values requires intentional strategies that make principles like equality, freedom, and participation come alive in the classroom. By fostering a democratic atmosphere, using engaging methods, and applying practical techniques, educators can empower students to become active, informed, and responsible participants in their communities and the broader democratic society.

4.4 Didactical aids for Democratic Value Education

Incorporating educational teaching aids can significantly enhance student engagement and success in value education. These tools complement the teacher's instruction by reinforcing key concepts and ensuring that the core messages are clearly understood. Teaching aids help emphasize essential information, guiding students to focus on what matters most.

Moreover, they bridge the gap between abstract ideas and real-life experiences, making complex concepts more accessible. By stimulating multiple senses, educational aids cater to diverse learning styles, fostering a deeper connection to the material and promoting meaningful, inclusive learning experiences in the classroom.

A teaching aid is anything that can be used to help reinforce new information or skills. It is helpful to consider the age of your students and the subject you are teaching. You must also consider your specific students. Do they need more active involvement? Do they prefer more serious teaching aids? Are they struggling with your subject?

Create teaching aids that build on your students' knowledge and inspire them to learn more.

Examples of teaching aids for value education in primary school

Storybooks and Picture Books. Use age-appropriate stories that convey values such as honesty, kindness, or perseverance. Encourage discussions about the characters' choices and their consequences.

Role-Playing and Puppets. Create scenarios where students can act out value-based dilemmas, such as sharing or resolving conflicts. Use puppets to simplify complex ideas and engage younger learners in moral decision-making.

Visual Aids and Posters. Display posters or infographics illustrating values like teamwork, respect, and fairness. Example: A poster showing "The Golden Rule" with simple, illustrated examples of how to treat others kindly.

Interactive Games. Use board games, card games, or digital tools that promote cooperation, problem-solving, or empathy. Example: A game where students earn points for helping others or solving challenges collaboratively.

Art and Craft Projects. Engage students in creating value-themed crafts, such as "gratitude jars," where they write things they are thankful for, or posters celebrating diversity. Collaborative mural projects can also encourage teamwork and appreciation of shared efforts.

Real-Life Examples and Multimedia. Show short videos or animations depicting value-related lessons. Example: Clips from educational programs focusing on respect or friendship.

Experiential Activities. Organize activities like planting a garden to teach responsibility and care for the environment. Plan community service projects, such as cleaning the classroom or donating to a local cause, to instill a sense of responsibility and empathy.

Value Charts and Journals. Create a class "value chart" where students record acts of kindness or fairness they observe throughout the week. Provide personal journals for students to reflect on their feelings, decisions, and goals related to values.

By using these aids, you can help primary school students internalize values in a way that resonates with their everyday experiences, ensuring the lessons are both enjoyable and impactful.

5. The ways of verification educational results

The main criterium of verification recognized competence of students manifesting in their activities and attitudes. Students' activity in argumentation, discussion and cooperation is crucial for evaluation. As far as the attitudes is concerned, didactical observation of the students should be the main method of validation.

Throughout the program, the students worked with their values and attitudes. Values and attitudes are not easy to assess, but one example how we approached this was the mind-maps about human rights and human dignity, which the students worked on in Norway at the beginning and at the end of the week. In this way, their growth (pre=black; post=green) in thinking about these values became visible on a piece of paper. At the end of the program, the students filled in a questionnaire, which addressed how the student experienced the learning output about values in democracy education.

6. Catalogue of Criteria for High-Quality Teaching Materials in Value Education

This catalog is based on an analysis of value education principles and current scientific research on instructional quality. It provides a framework for selecting and designing teaching materials that foster meaningful, impactful, and ethically grounded learning experiences.

Alignment with Educational Goals

- Reflect and support the overarching goals of value education, such as fostering respect, empathy, responsibility, and critical ethical reasoning.
- Align with the curriculum objectives and the developmental needs of students.

Age-Appropriateness and Accessibility

Materials must be suitable for the learners' age, cognitive development, and social-emotional maturity. They should:

- Present content that is comprehensible yet challenging.
- Include language and imagery appropriate to the students' developmental stages.
- Be inclusive of diverse learning abilities, providing support where necessary (e.g., visual aids, simplified texts, or extensions for advanced learners).

Fostering Critical Thinking and Ethical Reflection

- Encourage students to engage in higher-order thinking processes, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

- Present scenarios and dilemmas that require ethical reasoning and reflection on values.

- Offer opportunities for discussion, debate, and consideration of multiple perspectives.

Inclusivity and Representation

- Representing a wide range of cultural, social, and philosophical viewpoints.

- Avoiding stereotypes or bias in text, imagery, or examples.

- Encouraging students to see value in different cultures, traditions, and worldviews.

Relevance to Real-Life Contexts

Materials should connect to the learners' experiences and the broader social context by:

- Providing relatable examples and practical applications of values in everyday life.

- Incorporating current societal and global challenges (e.g., environmental sustainability, social justice, digital ethics).

- Encouraging students to apply values to real-life decision-making and problem-solving.

Engagement and Motivation

- Including interactive elements, such as case studies, role-playing activities, and reflective exercises.

- Using a variety of media (e.g., videos, stories, and digital tools) to maintain interest.

- Creating a balance between structured learning and exploratory, student-led activities.

Scientific and Ethical Accuracy

Teaching materials must meet high standards of factual and ethical credibility by:

- Being grounded in verified scientific, historical, or sociological knowledge.

- Reflecting ethical principles consistently throughout the content.

- Citing reliable sources for factual claims and philosophical positions.

Promoting Emotional and Social Skills

Value education materials should develop emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills by:

- Facilitating self-awareness and self-regulation through reflective exercises.

- Encouraging empathy, compassion, and active listening in group activities.

- Supporting collaborative learning and conflict resolution strategies.

Flexibility for Diverse Teaching Methods

Materials should support a variety of instructional strategies, allowing teachers to:

- Adapt content to suit individual and group needs.

- Use differentiated approaches for diverse classroom settings.

- Integrate materials into project-based learning, discussion forums, or experiential activities.

Quality Presentation and Usability

Finally, teaching materials should be well-designed and user-friendly:

- Visually appealing with clear organization, typography, and imagery.

- Structured with logical sequencing and explicit learning objectives.

- Easy for teachers to implement, including teacher guides, assessment tools, and supplementary resources.

Summarizing, high-quality teaching materials in value education serve as a bridge between ethical theory and practical application. By meeting these criteria, they empower students to develop a grounded, reflective, and inclusive value system that informs their behavior and decisions in both personal and social contexts.

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