

Transformative Pedagogy: An Ethics Education Approach

How to foster the elements of the Ethics Education Approach





CONTEXT SENSITIVITY

How can it be fostered?

An educator can ensure that the program is context-sensitive by using cultural and local based activities that respectfully respond to local and cultural traditions, and by including different perspectives and resources.

To ensure that a program is context-sensitive, the educator needs to:

- Analyse the context, socio-economic and political realities, conflict issues, as well as the needs of the children;
- Plan the program to include the voices of different groups and with consideration not only for how the context can affect the program but also how the program can influence the context;
- Consider the language, minority-majority relations, power dynamics, ages and cultural, ethnic and religious diversity;
- Ensure that all materials are sensitive to the context, that they do not portray any particular bias for or against one group or the other, or display any sense of segregation or discrimination;
- Make sure that the team of educators also represents the different religious, cultural and language diversity of the group;
- Create a safe learning environment before discussing conflicts or causes of violence or injustices in society with the group.
- Make sure to use inclusive methodologies that encourage the voices of everyone and respect for everyone's ideas and opinions.



SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

How can it be fostered?

- Creating a physical space that meets children's need for protection.
- Providing a common ground for sharing and for trusting one another.
- Creating opportunities for children to be who they are without fear of being judged.
- A safe learning environment allows everyone to be authentic and yet feel protected and secure.

The creation of an SLE requires educators to:

- Establish horizontal relations, to be vulnerable in order to encourage children's openness and genuine, meaningful interactions.
- Ensure that participant's ideas, opinions and suggestions are taken into consideration.
- Build knowledge together and make participants feel valued and recognized.

A SLE is created through inclusive practices such as:

- Calling each person by name.
- Acknowledging the presence of each and everyone.
- Appreciating differences and similarities in the group.
- Dealing constructively with any smaller groups, which form within the bigger group.
- Using several methodologies that cater to the diverse learning needs and styles of the participants.
- Engaging children and youth in discussions on the need for and importance of safety in the learning process, when appropriate.
- Collectively identifying strategies and commitments for ensuring a safe environment.

PARTICIPATORY AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Learning can happen individually, but it is through collaboration with others that children and youth can challenge their views, develop new ideas, learn about and broaden their own perspective on the diversity of the world, and enrich themselves, while exploring their own identity.

Participatory and collaborative learning entails opportunity for full participation by each and every person, inclusive practices, diversity-embracing methodologies and techniques, and respect for each participant's way of learning and interacting.

How can it be fostered?

- Understanding participants' learning styles.
- Using a variety of techniques, as the ones promoted in the Learning to Live Together manual.
- Using innovative materials.
- Building on the knowledge, skills and resources, that participants bring to the learning experience.
- Providing spaces and planning activities for children to exchange views, collaborate, discuss, engage in dialogue, and participate in experiential and problem-solving exercises.
- Using collaborative games and the arts.

ROLE MODELLING

How can it be fostered?

Educators can work on being a role model by:

- Keeping their own learning log.
- Constantly reflecting on their attitudes and behaviours, the way they apply ethical values in their interactions with others, and their practice as teachers.
- Sharing their reflections with peers, with a mentor.
- Revisiting the learning log and thus better understanding where they are, where they want to be and how to get there.



SELF-DRIVEN LEARNING


How can it be fostered?

- Preparing the sessions using the learning process proposed in the Learning to Live
- Together manual, so participants are actively involved in the experience and more aware of the changes happening inside of them.
- Stimulating curiosity about the topic to be discussed.
- Using techniques that motivate participants to further explore ideas and gain new experiences through practical exercises. The exploration of the topics should be followed by a moment of meaningful dialogue, so participants can exchange ideas, share experiences, discover the other and challenge their own perceptions.
- Providing time for individual reflection, ensuring connections and continuity among the different learning sessions in the program and creating space for children and youth to share their life applications of any lessons learned.
- Recognizing and appreciating participants' learning efforts.
- Promoting the use of the learning log to ensure that participants connect with themselves and constantly reflect on their discoveries, their own learning process, strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities, and what they want to learn and improve.
- Using other available tools such as the monitoring and impact assessment tools included in the manual, which allow for learning, unlearning and assessing one's own progress.



CRITICAL THINKING

How can it be fostered?

- Providing spaces for interaction, inter-relation and meaningful dialogue with one another.
 - Connecting inner and outer dialogues.
 - Using strong questioning and listening skills to create powerful dialogues.
 - Encouraging open questions.
 - Allowing children to ask and respond freely, and to ask again and again "why?" in order to enter into a process of unlearning.
 - Using materials and methodologies that are relevant to the context and children's realities, that encourage discussion, that allow children to seek and find solutions and alternatives from different points of view and that create opportunities to see issue from different angles.
 - Helping children and youth understand the tendency towards biases, stereotypes and misperceptions and the consequent need to go beyond the surface of an issue.
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IMAGINATION

How can it be fostered?

- Promoting spaces for children draw inspiration and re-envision themselves, their relations with others and their communities, especially in situations where the immediate reality is challenging in terms of the absence of safe space or the presence of violence and conflicts.
- Using the arts, storytelling, music and contact with nature.
- Cultivating a sense of inner space and freedom so children can develop their own vision and understanding.
- Nurturing and stimulating children's senses, eliciting the potential to see new things, appreciate different smells, or become aware of different sounds.



CONSCIENTIZATION (CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS)

How can it be fostered?

- Creating opportunities for interaction with people of different backgrounds.
- Providing spaces to reflect upon and identify the causes of violence and injustices in society.
- Offering opportunities for participants to find ways to transform those situations within their own sphere of influence.
- Providing opportunities to reflect on experiences, situations around them and the world, the impact of those on society and individuals, and in so doing, to develop a sense of solidarity with others.
- Developing meaningful dialogues.
- Promoting the use of journals.
- Creating experiential activities that challenge the way children and youth see the world around them.
- Listening to different narratives and meeting people of different backgrounds and ways of thinking.
- Challenging preconceived ideas, the privileges each person has or the lack of them, and the power that lies within each person to change the self and inspire changes in others.



COLLECTIVE ACTION

How can it be fostered?

Collective action is a facilitated process involving exploration, dialogue and meaningful interactions designed to allow participants to go through a shared learning journey. Over time, the children themselves become more able to engage with each other to identify and respond to ethical challenges they encounter during their journey.

- Creating the spaces for children and youth to envision new realities and find ways to bring them to fruition in their sphere of influence.
- Creating spaces to putting into practice the elements of the educational approach, practicing critical thinking, critical consciousness, self-driven learning and imagination.
- Allowing participants to come up with their own solutions and take ownership of the processes and outcomes.
- Encouraging participants and allocating resources for them to take actions collectively that will enhance their awareness of their common humanity, their shared responsibilities and develop their individual and collective identities with respect for their differences.



INTERCONNECTEDNESS

How can it be fostered?

Ethical reflections, attitudes and behaviours can be strengthened by:

- Creating opportunities for children and youth to identify and reflect on this interconnectedness and shared responsibility.
- Allowing transitions between the immediate and the bigger picture, and Helping them to connect inner and outer dialogues.

Interconnectedness does not happen immediately; it is created throughout the program by:

- Creating opportunities to get to know the self, one another, explore each other's views, experience moments together, challenge one's ideas about the other, and create connections and relations.
- Allowing children to learn to be in silence, to rediscover their own essence and recognize the ways they react to and approach difficult situations.
- Creating spaces for children and youth to meditate, to learn about themselves, how to breath, to calm down, to find alternatives and stop when they feel their dignity is trampled upon, or they feel close to reacting violently.
- Fostering the capacity in children to maintain their centre when they face contradictions and nurture equanimity through exercising detachment and managing their emotions.
- Educators need to be aware of this important element from the beginning of the design and planning of their programs to ensure that the ethics education programs foster a weaving together of stories of life, change, discovery and action among the participants.