



## **Full Length Research Article**

### **VALUES EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL CHANGE FROM AN SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL APPROACH**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Values education is a key element to achieve a comprehensive development of students. The way schools deal with this education is a key element concerning its effectiveness. Nowadays, there is no agreement as regards the most appropriate way to develop and introduce this type of education in schools. Perhaps, this is the reason that explains the development of a significant amount of training programs related to values education. The aim of this study is to know all the programs that have been already used in the promotion of values education in schools. In order to achieve this aim, a bibliometric review is performed, including 170 programs, in the period 1986-2016. This research shows both the relevance that has been given to values education over time and the different approaches and areas from which values education has been developed. The lack of unification in the effective criteria of the analyzed proposals has allowed us to suggest the guidelines for what we consider as the future values education programs.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Values education means transmission of principles and beliefs which guide boys and girls to have healthy, acceptable, supportive and respectful attitudes and behaviors with the others or with the different ones, as a guarantee which promotes the knowledge and development of their self-knowledge and knowledge of others. In this sense, values education is the frame of reference of a new transformative pedagogy which embraces, in a conciliatory manner, behaviors, speeches and working methodologies adapted to times of change in our society at a social, educational, cultural, political and economic level. Values education implies the building of trusted environments and social harmony in

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classrooms where the educational community, students and teachers feel protected and trained to have the ability to change the environment providing a response to any context, regardless of how difficult or impossible it may seem. Rethinking the school to benefit everyone: that is values education. The idea of this research comes from the need to analyze the content of the different values education programs collected in the period 1986-2016, based on the analysis conducted by Pérez-Jorge (2016, in press). From our point of view, we consider a priority to empower the model of values education, a model which has not been so far as effective as it was expected. Many approaches to develop values education in schools have been proposed. However, we think that this education has not been properly developed. We live in a society that is currently experiencing a profound crisis of values, a society where social inequality increases and coexistence is becoming difficult (Guttman, 2001; del Valle et

al, 2015). The preventive nature of education and its value as a tool of social change and transformation has made authors such as Bajaj (2008), Bajaj and Chiu (2009), Brenes-Castro (2004), Fermán, Guzmán, Torres, Ahumada and Díaz (2014), Grasa, (2000), Harris and Morrison (2003), Johnson and Johnson (2006), Moreno (2015), Muñoz (2014), Rodríguez (2015), Tuvilla, (2004), UNESCO (1995) consider their role in the improvement of coexistence and the creation of a relational model based on the respect and the acceptance of others as crucial. Therefore, from this perspective and as stated by Tuvilla, (2004), schools should develop educational programs that contribute to promote and develop in students sympathetic, critical and assertive attitudes to be able to acquire an analytical awareness which enables them to understand the world around them and its possible changes. Therefore, it would be a question of providing young people with social knowledge with the aim of encouraging them to develop values and attitudes to promote their own change and the change of the environment.

With the aim of knowing the way schools work with values education and in order to offer an alternative to the way in which this dimension is developed, an analysis of the programs that have been used so far to educate students using values has been carried out. This has been done in order to determine if teaching activity was effective or not, and if it produced positive effects as regards the improvement of students' values. We have tried to respond whether, in fact, these programs are properly used, that is to say, if they work as a comprehensive training tool for students and if they are used as a training task regarding the promotion of attitudes and knowledge of the complexities of the current social reality.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Taking into account the previously mentioned aim, a bibliometric review is performed, in the period 1986-2016 (February). This review included 170 programs which have been applied in Spain and which cover dealt with eight different fields: a) Self-knowledge and knowledge of others, b) Discrimination, c) Conflicts, d) Interculturalism, e) Human Values, (f) Diversity, (g) Development cooperation and (h) Equality.

each of the programs- they are based on social problems (1); they promote values and attitudes (2); they are adapted to the curriculum (3); they favor the integral development of students (4); they encourage the participation of the educational community (5)). Therefore, we propose the development of an educational program that allows practicing teachers and teachers undergoing training as well as professionals linked to social environment to be trained in values and education for citizenship as a model of democratic coexistence in the classroom in order to achieve a comprehensive or holistic education in children. For these indicators, four different levels were established "from a negative, weak and static approach to a positive, dynamic and motivating conception". These indicators were the following ones: "absence of the indicator (lack of it), level 0 or passive level (deterministic perception of reality, non-critical acceptance of facts and immobility), level 1 or informative level (apparently neutral vision that presents facts in a clear and documented manner), level 2 or training level (dynamic and interactive perception of the reality that shows different points of view and promotes opinions) and level 3 or transformative level (it questions facts providing a critical perception of reality and the commitment to change)" (Boqué, Pañellas, Sheriff & García, 2014, p. 84).

## RESULTS

Those programs created to deal with the development of Self-knowledge and the Knowledge of the others in particular were programs which showed social realities from different points of view, inviting students to give their opinions about them (51.6%). These programs promoted the work on values and formative attitudes (54.8%), collected pre-established and rigid curricular proposals (45.2%) and informed about the importance of integral development (54.8%). With respect to the promotion of community participation, 51.6% did not include the community dimension, as opposed to 12.9% which did it briefly. With regard to those indicators proposed for the analysis, the programs showed the following results. See Figure 1.

Those programs developed in order to deal with the Respect for difference and Non-discrimination were programs based on social realities.

**Table 1. Fields to promote a change in attitudes and in values education**

Field	Number of programs	Values which are developed
Self-knowledge and knowledge of others	31	Self-concept, mutual understanding, group formation, acceptance, self-esteem
Respect for others and non- discrimination	22	Acceptance of the others, interculturalism, prejudices and solidarity.
Conflicts	12	Collaboration, respect and competitiveness.
Interculturalism	9	Multiculturalism, tolerance and solidarity
Human Values	71	Attitudes, peace, care for the environment, critical thinking, cooperation and the value of difference.
Diversity	8	Discrimination, equal opportunities and social harmony, respect for others.
Development cooperation	9	Cooperation, conflict, development, human rights and education.
Equality	8	Coeducation, equal rights and dialogue.
TOTAL	170	

In this sense, we could note the relevance that values education has had over time due to the considerable number of programs, and the need to think, in the light of the results obtained, (after checking the lack or absence of a transformative perspective of change through the analysis of a series of evaluation indicators proposed for the analysis of

Their aim was to make these realities known and to promote opinions among students (63.6%). Moreover, they were programs which fostered the work on values and formative or training attitudes (63.6%) and they collected pre-established and rigid curricular proposals (63.6%). In addition, they involved students in their integral development (63.6%).

Concerning the promotion of community participation, 68.2% of them did not integrate this dimension.

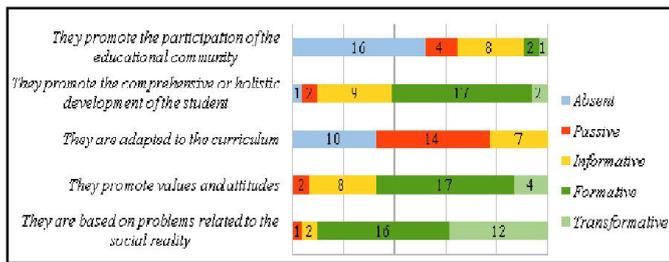


Figure 1. Indicators of programs related to the field of Self-knowledge and Knowledge of the others

Those programs developed to deal with the field of Interculturalism were based on social realities with the aim of generating opinions and different points of view related to these realities (66.7%). Furthermore, they encouraged the work on values and training or formative attitudes (77.8%). They did not collect proposals sufficiently adapted to the schools curricular proposals (22.2%) or they simply collected them in a very general and rigid way (44.4%). In addition, they promoted the integral development of the students in a formative or training manner (55.5%). Taking into account the promotion of the community participation, 66.7% did not include this dimension.

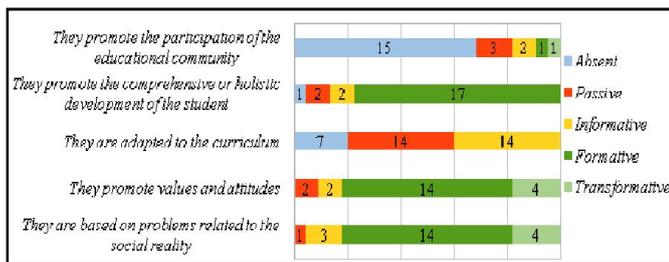


Figure 2. Indicators of programs related to Respect for difference and Non-discrimination

With regard to the indicators proposed for the analysis, the following results are presented. See Figure 3.

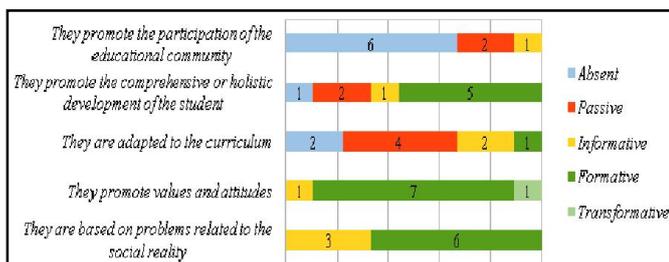


Figure 3. Indicators of programs related to the field of Interculturalism

Regarding the set of programs developed to deal with the scope of Conflict, we can state that they were programs that were based on dissimilar social realities in order to generate opinions and different points of view (60.0%). They promoted the work on values and training or formative attitudes (60.0%), collected for information purposes the curricular areas from which the educational intervention should be done (70.0%).

Furthermore, they promoted the integral development of the students in a formative or training manner (80.0%). Taking into account the promotion of the community participation, 60.0% did not integrate this dimension. With regard to the indicators proposed for the analysis, the following results are shown. See Figure 4.

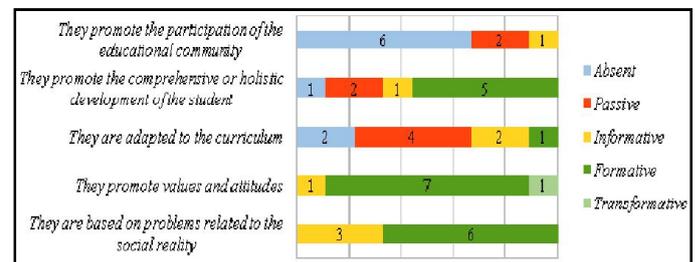


Figure 4. Indicators of the programs related to the field of Conflict

Those programs developed to deal with the field of Human Values were programs based on social realities in order to generate opinions and different points of view (56.9%). They promoted the work on values and training or formative attitudes (64.6%), did not collect proposals sufficiently adapted to the schools curricular proposals (26.2%), or they just collected them ambiguously or non-specifically (60.0%). Moreover, they trained the students to achieve a comprehensive development (60.0%). As regards the promotion of the community participation, 64.6% of them did not integrate this dimension. With respect to the indicators proposed for the analysis, the following results are presented. See Figure 5.

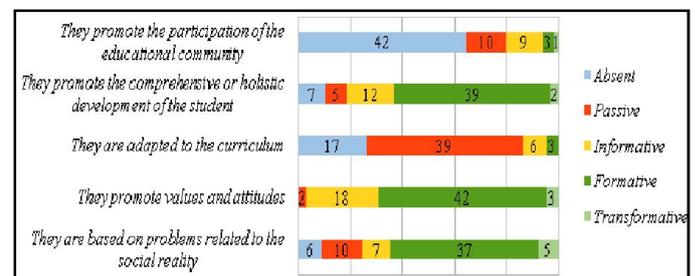
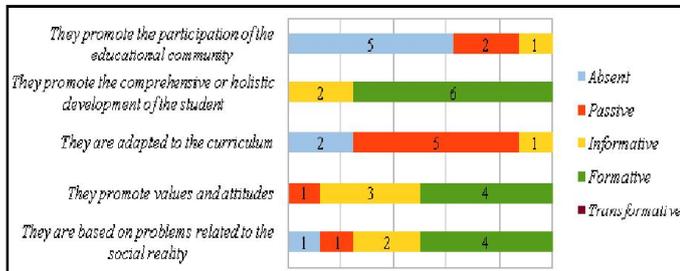


Figure 5. Indicators of programs related to the field of Human Values

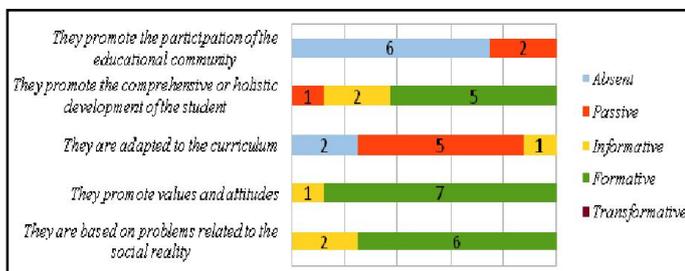
Those programs developed to deal with the scope of Diversity were programs which addressed social realities with the aim of informing and providing training on the reality of diversity (75.0%). They promoted the work on values and formative or training attitudes (50.0%). However, their curricular proposals were not sufficiently adapted to the schools curricular proposals (62.5%) and they trained the students to achieve a comprehensive or holistic development (75.0%). Taking into account the promotion of the community participation, 62.5% of them did not integrate this dimension specifically. With regard to the indicators proposed for the analysis, the following results are shown. See Figure 6.

Those programs developed to deal with the field of Development Cooperation were programs which addressed social realities in order to generate opinions and different

points of view (75.0%). They promoted the work on values and training attitudes (87.5%) and collected proposals which were poorly adapted to the schools curricular proposals (62.5%). In addition, they trained the students to achieve a comprehensive or holistic development (62.5%). With respect to the promotion of the community participation, 75.0% of them did not integrate this dimension. As regards the indicators proposed for the analysis, the following results are presented. See Figure 7.

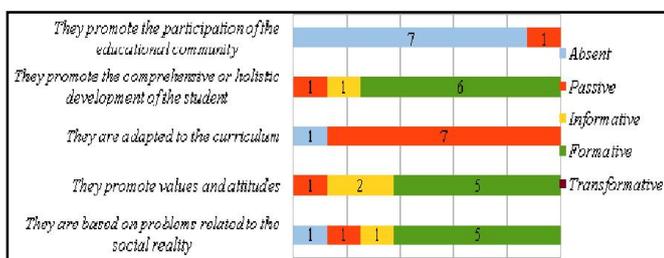


**Figure 6. Indicators of programs related to the field of Diversity**



**Figure 7. Indicators of programs related to the field of Development Cooperation**

Those programs developed to deal with the field of the Equality were programs based on social realities and developed with the aim of training in the promotion of equality (62.5%). They promoted the work on values and training or formative attitudes (62.5%) and collected proposals which were slightly adapted to the schools curricular proposals (87.5%). Moreover, they trained the students to achieve an integral or holistic development (75.0%). Taking into account the promotion of the community participation, 87.5% of them did not include this dimension specifically. With respect to the indicators proposed for the analysis, the following results are obtained. See Figure 8.



**Figure 8. Indicators of programs related to the field of Equality**

## Conclusions and proposal for intervention

There is a wide variety of fields developed by the designed programs in order to support the change of attitudes and values

education, the fields of self-knowledge and knowledge of others. Discrimination and human values have been the most addressed fields in the proposals of programs developed in the period 1986-2016 as regards values education. Programs to support the change of attitudes and values education aim to develop positive attitudes and values among students. There is an important lack of identity in these programs in relation to the reality of the educational centers and the characteristics of students. It is necessary to develop the methodological models that are promoted by the analyzed programs in the educational centers. In this sense, new forms of sharing and communicating can be used in an appropriate and non-hostile environment where students can reflect on the different ways of feeling, thinking and acting. Values education programs should be part of the personal training of the students due to their positive influence on learning. Moreover, these programs promote children's motivation and stimulation to learn.

The training aspect found in the indicators related to the development of the different areas of the programs which have been analyzed indicates an idea of continuation of the values promoted and developed by these programs. Few of the programs which have been analyzed have presented a transformative vision which encourages children to question the reality, promoting a critical perspective and engaging them with the need to generate personal and social changes. Taking into account our own experience, we consider that presently the programs of development and promotion of values in schools are not used or they are not appropriately applied. One of the main problems is the lack of training and professional skills of teachers concerning the design and implementation of programs. This is the reason why we dare to state what we consider as the basis to achieve an appropriate training of teachers in values education and citizenship as a model of democratic coexistence in the classroom. This research aims to provide support strategies both for teachers and students, to promote the creation of professional teams of support and follow-up for students, as well as the creation of materials for teacher training, not only for professionals but also for those teachers who are being trained in Values Education and Citizenship, exploring aspects related to citizenship and the democratic life in the classroom. These aspects are based on a comprehensive teacher training proposal and a transformative pedagogy that makes students have the ability to modify those situations of power and conflicts that may complicate school life. That is to say, one that includes three fundamental elements: participation of the educational community, comprehensive education and open attitude towards diversity and respect for differences.

When we deal with this program related to teacher training in values education and citizenship as a model of democratic coexistence in the classrooms, the first question that arises, as stated by Rodríguez (2008, p. 8) and as it has been also proved in this study, is "if this training is necessary or not since it is possible to think that teachers do not need skills or specific strategies to teach values, but, on the contrary, this is a process that occurs naturally in the educational practice". As recent studies have proved (Pérez-Jorge & Rodríguez, 2012; Pérez-Jorge, 2010 and Pérez-Jorge, 2010b; Pérez-Jorge, Alegre, Rodríguez-Jiménez, Márquez-Domínguez, & De la Rosa, 2016), teacher training in Citizenship Education is not

included in the permanent university educational programs or in their own self-motivation. The general outlook that has been observed suggests the need for greater efforts to reinforce teachers' competences in order to teach citizenship and, consequently, their teaching concerns. According to the results of this and other studies, we consider that, perhaps, the lack of identity of these programs, together with the reality of the educational centers, the characteristics of the students and the lack of specific training for teachers, is an important issue to be taken into account in order to include working proposals of these programs in teachers' programming. We may be witnessing a process of de-professionalization of teaching that has caused teachers to become mere executors of curricular proposals designed by different publishers who obviate the need to improve the quality of education and the democratic coexistence in classrooms. The establishment of specific curricular subjects (*Education for Citizenship and Human Rights* in schools, LOE, 2006) or the current subject *Social and Civic Values* in Primary Education and *Ethical Values* in Secondary Education, LOMCE, 2013) requires teachers to have specific competences for the appropriate development of teaching.

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