

Remembering Values in Learning

Values Based Education is not new. It is already there and just needs to be remembered and recognised. When an emphasis on values based learning is activated, evidence shows that children's learning both in terms of higher academic achievement and positive character formation is achieved.

Based on evidence from the UK and further afield, values based education also brings a sense of personal worth, belonging, ownership and individual success to children's personalised learning in that their innate gifts, natural strengths and contributions are recognised and built upon.

Values based education is an inclusive model for learning with a strong vision that builds clear aims and objectives. Values based education has no place for 'put downs' yet the processes build in consequences for behaviours - academic and personal - that fall short of the high and realistic expectations that the school agrees as their code of conduct.

One values based school built its children's success on the promotion of the SPICE of learning - the Social and Spiritual, the Personal and Physical, the Intellectual and Intrapersonal, the Creative and Co-operative, and the Ethical and Environmental. Schools adapting this model added their own headings as appropriate to context and culture.

Key components to successful values based learning include:

- Building whole school positive atmospheres that foster happiness, respect, honesty, co-operation and creativity to learning.
- Rigorous academic learning programmes that recognise the equality and respect for all learning opportunities.
- Re-affirming the place of assemblies as a whole school family event that invites, encourages and cements the strength of community values.
- Allowing time for reflection and quiet time.
- Education for the inner strengths that we all possess including the power to choose, the power to give, the power to discern and the power to love ourselves and the positive contributions we all bring to living and learning.

- Distributed leadership at all levels based on a common core of agreed institutional values and accountability strategies that are contextually appropriate.

Values based learning is an integral part of all curriculum and learning. Materials to support a values based approach to learning include programmes on character education and, in particular, the methodologies that activate the ethical use of learning, experience, knowledge and skills.

One very successful values based model brings two components together. One component is the individual's knowledge, skills and experience. The other component is the individual's character, disposition and personality. All learning takes place when the two components come together and work with one other. Neither can operate effectively without the other. It is at this place where relevance, meaning and authenticity is added to learning followed by a period of reflection.

Happy children learn more successfully. Happiness helps to reduce the spectre of those who are seen to be 'failing' or fall on the margins of society. Through happiness, the well being of all is supported and that includes the educators and leaders, too.

Teaching programmes are available to build positive behaviours on themes to include happiness, respect, peace, co-operation, honesty, freedom and responsibility. Practical in approach, they allow for goal setting, creativity, social cohesion and celebrating success as well as learning how to manage conflicts and strengthen peace building activities.

Monitoring and evaluation techniques are available at all leadership levels.

In November 2008, Dr Anthony Seldon, the chief education adviser to the government stated that:

'Until we know ourselves, we cannot learn or learn to give'.

He suggested personal reflection time backed up with character education activities. Values Based learning remembers and encourages reflection.

Remembering values based education brings learning to life, raises standards in the everyday classroom and, most importantly, adds the personal dimension and human code of conduct to life and learning to which we all seek to aspire. The first step is to recognise the need and to build the vision. The second step is to build the practice with training and in school action research.

Appendix 1

Exploring, Experiencing and Expressing Values Based Education

A One Day Experiential Programme

Aims:

- To explore what is meant by Values Education.
- To experience the practice in workshop sessions.
- To share current good practice and how schools have put it into practice.
- How to track progress using Quality Based Values Learning Indicators.
- To express next steps.

Suggested Programme

09.00 Welcomes and Introductions.

09.15 What is Values Based Education?
Whose Values are they?

10.30 Break

11.00 Practical workshop session on Happiness.

12.00 Lunch

13.00 How schools have put it into practice including:

- Setting the Vision and Whole School Approach
- Getting everyone on board
- Selecting Values Based themes
- Values in the Everyday Curriculum
- The Role of Assemblies

14.30 Stretch Break

14.45 Techniques to measure success. Quality Based Values Learning Indicators.

15.15 Next steps
Reflection

16.00 Close