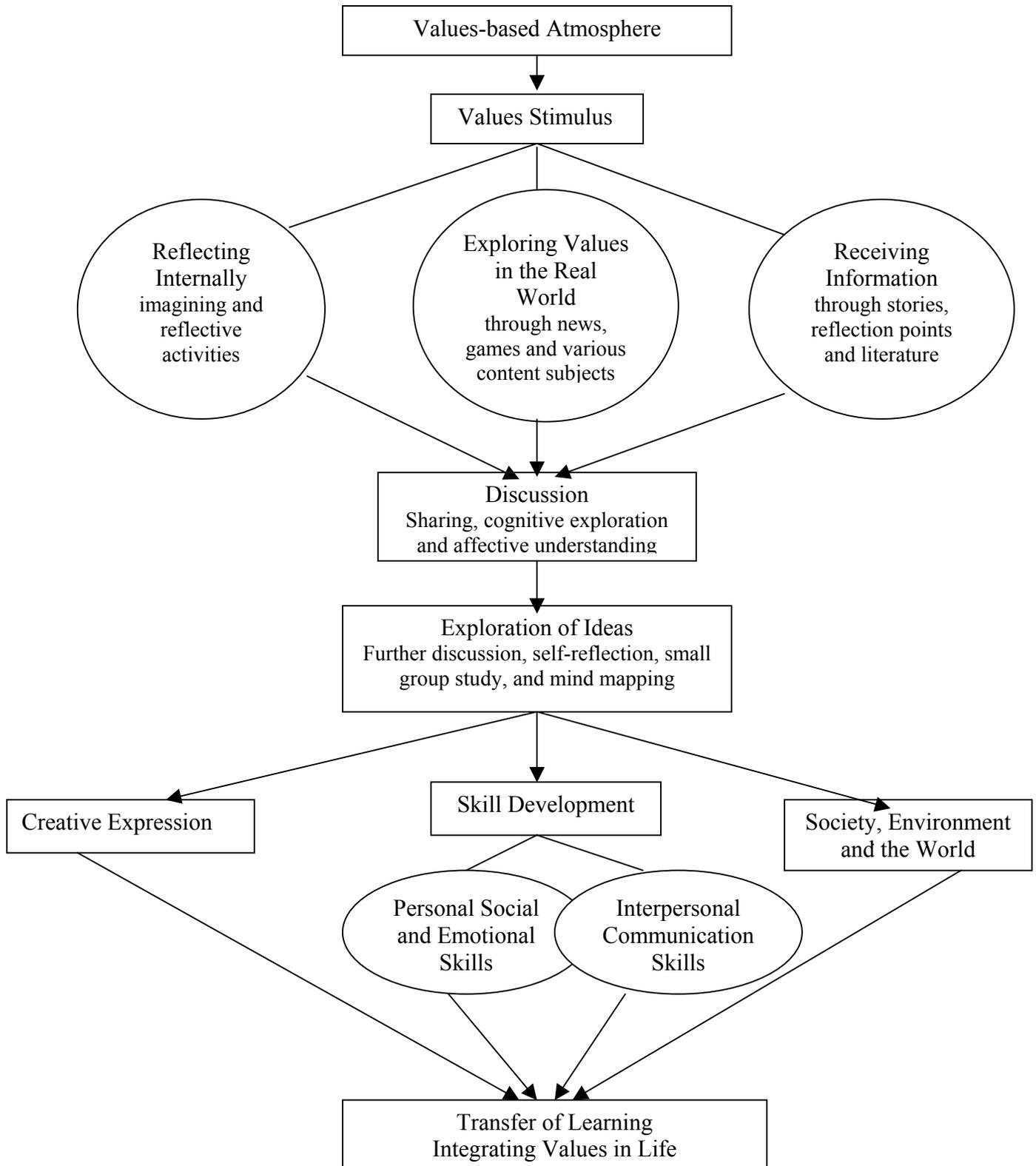


Developing Values Schematic: The LVEP Method



Developing Values

Would you like your students to be peaceful, respectful and honest? Would you like them to know they make a difference in this world and feel empowered to create and contribute? How do we teach values? How do we encourage children and youth to develop values and the complementary social skills and attitudes that empower them to reach their potential?

As educators, we want each one of our students to be able to contribute to society with respect, confidence and purpose. As people, both adults and children are concerned about and affected by violence, social problems, and a lack of respect. In a world where negative role models, the glorification of violence, and materialism abound, older children and youth rarely acquire positive social skills or values simply by being told to do so. “Resistant” students or marginalized youth turn away from moralizing approaches to character education. “Good” students may adopt values-based behaviors when exposed to “awareness-level” activities, but do they understand their own core values and the implications of those values for the larger society? Do they base decisions on universal values as adults? How can we further that process?

Living Values: An Educational Program (LVEP) is a comprehensive values education program. It provides methods and activities for educators to actively engage and allow students the opportunity to explore and experience 12 universal values. Students benefit by developing skills to cognitively explore, understand and apply values. What methods are used within LVEP? This paper offers a schematic and describes the basic values development process within this program.

Values-based Atmosphere

The establishment of a values-based atmosphere in the learning setting is essential for optimal exploration and development of values by children and young adults. A student-centered learning environment in which relationships are based on trust, caring and respect naturally enhance motivation, creativity, and affective and cognitive development. During LVEP Educator Workshops, educators are asked to discuss optimal teaching methods to help students feel loved, valued, respected, understood and safe; the dynamics behind acknowledgement and values-based discipline are explored. Modeling of values by educators, clear rules, and encouragement are a few positive factors necessary – as described in Living Values: An Educational Program’s (LVEP) Theoretical Model.¹

Values Stimulus

A lesson on values can be launched easily in many learning settings. Often the subject matter leads into an interesting discussion about values. Or, a lesson on values can be launched when there is a conflict between students. These instances provide stimuli for the exploration of values.



However, one must be cautious about doing values activities only at the awareness level. For this reason, LVEP advocates using the full range of activities found in the Living Values Activities books.ⁱⁱ Students are more likely to develop a love for values and be committed to implementing them if they explore values at all levels and develop the personal and social skills that allow them to experience the benefits of living those values.

The values stimuli noted in the schematic are Receiving Information, Reflecting Internally, and Exploring Values in the Real World. Each Living Values Activities lesson begins with one of these values stimuli. Each kind of values stimuli are used in most of the Living Values Activities units. The types of activities within each category are:

Receiving Information – Reflection points on each value provide information about its meaning and application. Literature, stories and cultural information provide rich sources for exploration about values. Stories about failures because of holding an anti-value are not sufficient; students feel more motivated by hearing positive examples of people succeeding with values.

Reflecting Internally – Imagining and reflective activities ask students to create their own ideas. For example, students are asked to imagine a peaceful world. Visualizing values in action makes them more relevant to students, as they find a place within where they can create that experience and think of ideas they know are their own. Reflective exercises ask them to think about their experiences in relation to the value.

Exploring Values in the Real World – Many Living Values Activities use games, real situations, news or subject matter content to launch the lesson. For example, one honesty unit begins with a story as the values stimulus. The next activity asks students to create a drama about honesty and a drama about corruption from previously studied history. Thus, the effects of dishonesty can be explored before the topic moves to the more sensitive area of personal honesty.

Each value unit is designed to begin with a values stimulus to create maximum relevance or meaning. For example, lecturing to students about not fighting in school is an ineffective method to create peace and respect. In contrast, beginning a lesson on peace with an imagination exercise not only elicits the creativity of “good students” but also interests students often considered resistant or “unmotivated.” Once students develop a voice for peace they are more empowered to discuss the effects of peace -- and violence.

Discussion

Creating an open, respectful space for discussion is an important part of this process. Sharing is validating. Talking about feelings in relation to values questions can clarify



viewpoints and develop empathy. Negativity can be accepted and queried; the positive values under the negativity can be understood.

In some of the Living Values Activities there are questions to discuss. These can open the cognitive exploration process and the generation of alternatives.

Exploration of Ideas

Some discussions are followed by self-reflection or small group planning in preparation for art projects, journaling, or dramas. Other discussions lead into mind-mapping values and anti-values. This method is useful to view the effects of values and anti-values on the self, relationships and different sections of society. Other discussions lead to small group study regarding the effects of values in different subjects. If the youth of today are going to carry these values not only into their personal lives as adults, but into the larger society, then it is also important to have them explore issues of social justice and have adult role models who exemplify those values.

Creative Expression

The arts are a wonderful medium for students to express their ideas and feelings creatively – and make a value their own. Drawing, painting, making mobiles and murals combine with performance arts. Dance, movement and music allow expression and build a feeling of community. Other activities ask students to journal and write creative stories or poetry.

Skill Development

It is not enough to think about and discuss values, nor even to understand their effects. Skills are needed to be able to use values throughout the day. The youngsters of today increasingly need to be able to experience the positive feelings of values, understand the effects of their behaviors and choices in relation to their own well-being, and be able to develop socially conscious decision-making skills.

Personal Social and Emotional Skills – There are a variety of intrapersonal skills taught within the Living Values Activities. The Relaxation/Focusing exercises help students enjoy “feeling” the value. This ability to self-regulate one’s emotion and “de-stress” is an important skill in adapting and communicating successfully. Other activities build an understanding of the individual’s positive qualities; develop the belief that “I make a difference”; enable learning about personal rights; honouring their own perceptions; and increasing positive self-talk, goal-setting and responsibility.

Interpersonal Communication Skills – Emotional intelligence is enhanced by the above set of activities and furthered in activities that build understanding of the roles of hurt, fear and anger and their consequences in our relationships with



others. Conflict resolution skills, positive communication, cooperation games and doing projects together are other activities that build interpersonal communication skills.

Society, Environment and the World

To help youth desire and be able to contribute to the larger society with respect, confidence and purpose, it is important for them to understand the practical implications of values in relationship to the community and the world. Many activities are designed to do exactly this while others build cognitive awareness of and motivation for social justice and responsibility. The simplicity unit takes up the topic of environmental awareness and ecological responsibility.

Transfer of Learning -- Integrating Values in Life

Living Values homework activities increase the likelihood of students carrying new values behaviors into their homes. Students are asked to create special projects that exemplify different values in their class, school and/or community. “Integrating Values in Life” is for students to incorporate values-based behaviors in their life – with their family, society and the environment.

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Cited Materials

ⁱ Tillman, Diane and Quera Colomina, Pilar. (2000). *LVEP Educator Training Guide*. Deerfield, FL: HCI.

ⁱⁱ Tillman, Diane and Hsu, Diana. (2000). *Living Values Activities for Children Ages 3-7*. Deerfield, FL: HCI.

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