

Values-Based Learning Toolkits

Discovering What Matters

A Journey of Thinking and Feeling



Activities Designed With Students, For Students

DISCOVERING WHAT MATTERS – A JOURNEY OF THINKING AND FEELING

TOOLKITS OF VALUES-BASED ACTIVITIES AND INDICATORS
FOR EDUCATION FOR RESPONSIBLE LIVING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Methods Toolkit : *Measuring What Matters - Values-based indicators*

Student Toolkit: *Discovering What Matters - A journey of thinking and feeling*

Staff Toolkit: *Growing a Shared Vision - A toolkit for schools*

Prepared for the Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL) with financial support from the European Union.

Based on the **WE VALUE** methodology derived from the ESDinds Project, an international research project funded in 2009-2011 by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme and conducted by a project consortium consisting of the following partners:

Research Institutions:

Sustainable Development Coordination Unit, University of Brighton
Charles University Environment Center, Charles University, Czech Republic

Civil Society Organisations:

Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)
Earth Charter Initiative (ECI)
ebbf - ethical business building the future
People's Theater, Offenbach, Germany

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COVER: "True Colours" © Gemma Burford, 2014

First edition September 2014

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DISCLAIMER: With the support of the Erasmus Academic Networks of the European Union. This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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Foreword

Discovering What Matters is part of an international project that aims to inspire students to **identify their own values, and recognise and strengthen the skills necessary to ensure they survive and thrive in the 21st century.**

The Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL) is a group of educators and researchers who have spent more than a decade learning about the values at the heart of sustainable schools and societies. These values include, among others, *trust, compassion, creativity, empowerment, and care and respect for the community of life.*

This research has been used to create this first version of the toolkit for students and teachers. This toolkit is a first attempt to make these new tools available in the formal education system and in similar informal learning/educational situations. The toolkit has been designed to make it possible for students and teachers to use it independently, without the assistance of an adviser, but if you need help, you can find further guidance and case studies at www.wevalue.org.

It is important to note that this toolkit does not impose any particular set of predetermined sustainability values, but should help a school, teacher or student group to select the activities and indicators most relevant to their own curriculum, and their own environmental, social, economic and cultural context.

Other Toolkits for Values-based Learning being prepared in this series include Developing a Shared Vision for use by teachers and school staff in creating a values-based learning environment in their school, and *Measuring What Matters* describing methods for selecting values-based indicators for use in secondary schools and similar learning situations.

The workgroup

What is this Toolkit actually about?

This is a toolkit for students. It can show how far **you already have values**, as well as skills, knowledge, attitudes and personal qualities, which will enable you **to survive and thrive in the 21st century**. Through the activities in the toolkit, you can understand what your own values are, and how to live by them. You may also find out things about yourself that you want to work on.

This toolkit is **simple to follow**, containing only the information required. It does not need lots of **materials or preparation**. Any group of students can use it in any setting.

The **activities** in the toolkit will guide you through your own 'journey of thinking and feeling'. They can be adapted to your own language, culture and social, environmental and economic situation.

You can ask a teacher, parent or staff member to facilitate the activities, or some of you can learn to become student facilitators to help everyone to get the best out of the activities. The facilitator should try to link all the things that come out of the activities, so that the questions and ideas raised in the beginning will make sense at the end. A group should be no more than 10 students. If there are more of you, divide into smaller groups with a student facilitator for each.

You will learn to build trust in each other, and to encourage expression and free speech, while respecting each other's privacy. What you all say should go no further than the room.

Some things may require the help of a teacher or administrator. For example, you should ask the school management to agree that you can present your recommendations from activity 8 at the school assembly and to carry out a minimum of three of them. You may need permission to do some activities during school hours, or to use school facilities for artistic creations.

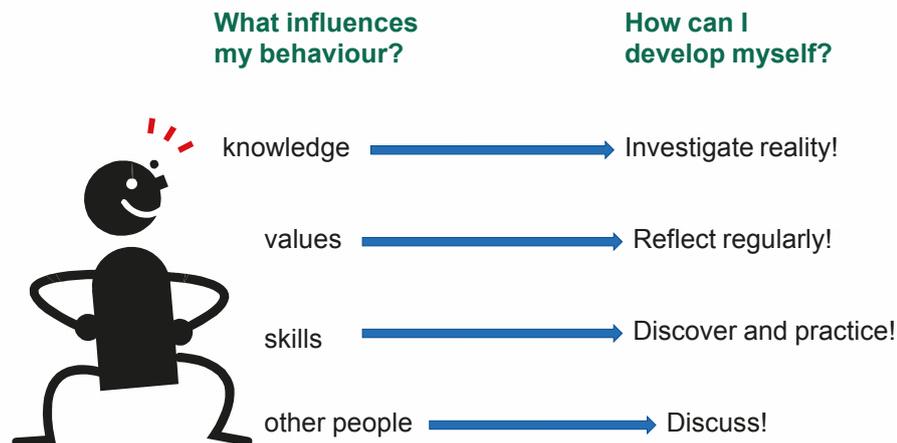
What is so important about these values?

Your education should help you learn to live responsibly and sustainability. You should try to become responsible citizens, respectful of society, the planet and its boundaries. For this you need to think critically about world problems and to decide to adopt lifestyles and consumption patterns that are:

- **environmentally responsible**, respecting the need for our civilization to remain within planetary environmental boundaries; and
- **socially responsible**, contributing to social justice with a fair and sustainable distribution of the limited resources available to the world population, while preserving the planet's capacity to support future generations.

In school you learn scientific knowledge and intellectual understanding, but these are often not enough for you to want to change your behaviour and lifestyle. Before you *want* to do something and *decide* to do it, you need to feel strongly about it, and that will reflect your **values**. By becoming aware of your values, discovering your skills and sharing your views with each other, you will be better able to live a responsible and sustainable life!

Why knowledge is not enough



Before starting with the activities...

THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION

Each activity ends with a reflection session where you can all talk about what you have experienced and learned. These are intended to:

- Establish trust and create a safe space for everyone to share their experiences and the feelings they had during the activity.
- Allow anyone to say if they felt excluded or unvalued and let the group discuss it before moving on to the next session.

You learn better when you experience something. The reflection session guided by the facilitator allows you to reflect on your experience and feelings, so you can absorb new knowledge and views. Deep reflection gives you the insights necessary to understanding the consequences of your actions. At its best, reflection integrates knowledge, feelings and action.

Reflection sessions depend on the facilitator providing just leadership and safeguarding the trust of everyone. Whatever you all say should go no further than the room.

First sessions are usually quiet and the facilitator has to be more active in getting the discussion going. Reflection sessions can develop very quickly, however, when you all feel that the group is a safe space where you can express your thoughts without being judged. This safe space supports positive learning when everyone feels appreciated and respected, is being heard, and encourages each other to develop.

WHAT ARE THE INDICATORS?

An indicator gives you a clue about something you can't see or measure directly. For example, if you're in a car, you can't actually see what the driver in front of you is thinking – but their indicator lights let you know if they want to turn left or right. If you're making a cup of tea, you don't need a thermometer to tell you that the water is hot enough: bubbles and steam indicate that it's boiling.

At the heart of this toolkit is a list of values-based indicators relevant to responsible and sustainable living. These indicators both reflect values and also valuable whole-life skills.

This list has been designed to help you to identify 'values in action'—what you think, feel, do and say— and to reflect on what they mean and how they show. The sentences indicate how you feel and what you do. So the sentences are indicators for the values behind your thoughts and actions!

For example, suppose you value student engagement, participation and social entrepreneurship. These values show in action and thoughts for example this way:

Indicator
We want to bring about change in our school and the wider community
We have a sense of power that we <u>can</u> effect change in our school and in the wider community
We understand mistakes as opportunities to learn and improve
We explore issues that are slightly uncomfortable for us
We participate actively in discussions about issues that affect our lifestyles

The activities in the next section have been designed and tested with students aged between 11 and 16 in a school setting, although they can be adapted for younger or older age groups, and for other settings such as youth clubs or projects.

We would love to hear your feedback on what worked well for you and what didn't, as well as any ideas that you might have for new activities. Please feel free to e-mail the PERL secretariat at perl@hihm.no with your comments and suggestions.

The ACTIVITIES

Activity 1	Silent Catch
Goals	To help us to relax and bond. To use non-verbal communication and begin to discover some of our skills. To introduce a reflective mindset.
Description	We throw a ball to each other at random in silence for a certain amount of time. We try to keep the ball in play by making an eye-contact. After a while, another ball can be thrown in to add challenge and fun to the game. No one goes out if they don't catch the ball. The play continues until the facilitator ends it.
Required materials	A small ball or anything that can be thrown, preferably soft.
Preparation	Clear a space to play.
Approximate time needed	5-10 minutes
Facilitation tips	Encourage the use of non-verbal communication. In the most successful cases, the members of the group are often very comfortable with silence – treating it not as a warning sign that people are not participating enough, but as a space in which the 'inner voice' can be heard.
Reflection	Understanding the experiences What happened? How did you feel during the activity? Recognising skills What skills did you use during the game? How did you communicate with others? Relating it to real life How would the skills that you used here be useful in your life?

Activity 2	“The first thing you think of when I say ”
Goals	To set us on the path of thinking about ourselves and our future. We create our own individual understanding of our immediate environment and explore together what it means.
Description	<p>Each category is read out loud one at a time. Each of us writes the first thing that comes into our head on a small piece of paper. Our answers can be placed on a table and stuck on a large piece of paper (one per category).</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Name of our School / Group / Project etc...] • Social Life • Sustainability • Participation • Hopes for the future
Required materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large piece of paper for each category (e.g. flip chart page) • 5 small pieces of paper (e.g. 'Post-it ® notes) for each student • Pens for everyone
Preparation	Write the name of each category in the middle of a large paper and divide out pens and small papers for each student.
Approximate time needed	30 minutes
Facilitation tips	Encourage the participants to write whatever comes into their mind. It can be a thought, a feeling, a question or “I don’t know”, good or bad. It is not so important what the students write on their small papers: what goes on in their minds matters. If you see any inappropriate words on the small papers, let them be there but ignore them. Focus on the serious ones.
Reflection	<p>Understanding the experiences</p> <p>How did you feel when trying to write a reaction to each category?</p> <p>Recognising skills</p> <p>What skills did you use during this activity by yourself? and with others?</p> <p>Relating it to real life</p> <p>What did you learn from this experience?</p> <p>What does it tell you about the meaning of these things in your life?</p>

Activity 3	The Future We Want (The “Yes, And...”-game)
Goals	To help us think about the future we want and then verbalise our vision for others. By agreeing to accept the previous hope, we create a space where we know our own hopes will be accepted.
Description	We each think of our hopes for the future. Someone starts by saying: “In the future I hope to see...” and add their own hope to the sentence. Each person takes a turn to say “yes” to accept the sentence said by the preceding person, then “and” before adding their own hope. Go round the group twice.
Required materials	One big sheet of paper, and separate strips of paper (two per student), to write down the hopes. Two marker pens.
Preparation	Arrange the room so that everyone can sit in one large circle. Choose one person to write down all the hopes on the large paper, and another to write each hope on a separate strip of paper. (The separate strips
Approximate time needed	15-20 minutes
Facilitation tips	This can be done at an organisational level (e.g. hopes for the future of your school / group / project etc) or at the level of wider society, or both. Each student needs to be asked to listen to the other students before saying their own sentence. The point is to support each other and acknowledge different kinds of hopes. Make sure the rule is to accept others’ contribution even if they don’t agree. If they disagree with the hope mentioned before them, ask them to think about whether they can add another element to the story to make it more acceptable to them.
Reflection	<p>Understanding the experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? • Were you working together? <p>Recognising skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills did you use during this activity by yourself? • ...and with others? <p>Relating it to real life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these realistic hopes? • What skills do you need to make these a reality?

Activity 4	Indicators of skills and values
Goals	To focus on the skills and values we need to live a sustainable and responsible life. To discover we already have some of the skills needed to create the future we want. To get a holistic approach to living a responsible life by finding connections between indicators.
Description	<p>1) Individually</p> <p>The indicator list (see Annex 1) is introduced as ideas that are important for some people. Ask everyone to read and think about how they feel about the indicators, marking the five most important ones with a ✓ and the five least important ones with a X. There are no right or wrong answers.</p> <p>2) Collectively</p> <p>We gather around a large size list of indicators on a table. We place sweets/tokens on our own choices of most important ones (one for each indicator). We discuss together and decide collectively five most important ones. We can move the sweets/tokens if we change our minds and can add new indicators by writing in the blank spaces.</p> <p>3) Clustering</p> <p>Cut the indicators (large font versions from Annex 2) into separate strips and group them. This allows us to make sense of our own connections instead of seeing the indicators as an isolated list of sentences. We can make our own rules about how to group them, and whether to bring in some or all of our own values-based indicators ('hopes for the future') from Activity 3 as well.</p>
Required materials	<p>Copies of the indicator list (Annex 1) for everyone, and pens</p> <p>One large size indicator list</p> <p>One set of indicator strips, cut up (Annex 2)</p> <p>Enough sweets/tokens for the collective part of the activity.</p>
Preparation	Copy the indicator list for everyone and create one large size list. (If you don't have access to poster printing facilities, you can write out the indicators by hand – they don't all have to fit on one page). Get the sweets/tokens and clear the space for the collective work.
Approximate time needed	40 minutes
Facilitation tips	Encourage discussion throughout the activity of all the skills that the students currently possess, and how they can use them.

Reflection	<p>Understanding the experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which were your most important values?• Have they changed? Why?• How was it to work with others? <p>Recognising skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did you use any of the skills while doing the exercise? <p>Relating it to real life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did you know you have this many skills already?• How does that make you feel?• In what kind of situations can you practice these skills?
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Activity 5	Spatial Survey
Goals	To help us to evaluate where we think our school (or group, project, etc.) is now, in relation to each of our 3 most important indicators.
Description	<p>1) Prioritizing</p> <p>We choose our 3 most important indicators (these can be the 'hopes for the future' from Activity 3, and/or the printed indicators from Activity 4). Write each of the chosen indicators on a piece of paper.</p> <p>2) Measuring</p> <p>The 3 pieces of paper representing the most important indicators are stuck on the wall at one end of the classroom. Students all start from the opposite wall, marking the "not at all" point, and move to the mark where they feel their school is at. Repeat this for each indicator.</p>
Required materials	Pieces of paper saying Not at all, a little, adequate, good, excellent
Preparation	Measure by eye the halfway point of the classroom or hall, and place the "adequate", then place the markers for "a little" and "good" half way to each end. Opposite ends of the room form the "not at all" and "excellent" (see room plan below).
Approximate time needed	20 minutes
Facilitation tips	Ask the students to go with what they really feel and ignore where the others stand. They can stand in between the markers if they want to.
Reflection	<p>Understanding the experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened here? • How did you choose the three most important indicators? • Were you able to think for yourself? • To what degree did you hide your real belief once you saw where others had chosen to stand? • What does this tell you?

Layout of the classroom or hall for Activity 5 (Spatial Survey)

Stick the marker for 'not at all' on the wall at this end of the room. Students start here. If they feel the indicator is not being lived out at all, they stand still and don't move forward.

Place the marker for 'a little' on the floor here. Students move to this point if they feel the indicator is only being lived out a little in the school.

Stick the marker for 'adequate' on the floor here. Students move to this point if they feel the indicator is being lived out adequately.

Stick the marker for 'good' on the floor here. Students move to this point if they feel the indicator is being lived out well.

Stick the marker for 'excellent', and the indicator, on the wall here. Students stand next to the indicator if they feel it is being lived out as well as it could be.

Activity 6	Art week
Goals	To take a week to internalise and vocalise our thoughts and feelings on the process so far.
Description	We can do this in school if our teacher agrees, and our own time if we want to. We go outside and find our own quiet place in nature, turn off our cell-phones, and open up to observe by using different senses. We capture the feelings that emerge by writing in our own journal or writing ourselves a letter, or we can express our thoughts through drama, dance, video, painting, writing or making a collection of song lyrics that have meaning for us, as well as engaging online.
Required materials	Physical space to showcase their visible journey or art expressions (e.g. in the school halls), or to show to others such as parents if they wish.
Preparation	Ensure that suitable materials are available when needed
Approximate time needed	A week
Facilitation tips	It might be helpful to check in half-way through the week and share ideas (this is optional).
Reflection (one week later)	Understanding the experiences What did you think, see, listen and do during the week? How did these things help you process the activities? What motivated you to take part in the week?

Activity 7	Role play: 'Living' our values and skills
Goals	To practice using the skills we need for our hopes to become a reality.
Description	Groups of 3-4 students create a role play about one hope from activity 3, or indicator of a skill from activity 4, and present it to the other groups.
Required materials	None required
Preparation	Have the hopes for the future (from Activity 3) and the three most important indicators (from Activity 5) visible.
Approximate time needed	40 minutes
Facilitation tips	Help each group to involve everyone rather equally. Do not encourage showing off.
Reflection	<p>Understanding the experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? • Did you feel you were able to express your hopes? <p>Recognising skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills did you use doing this activity? <p>Relating it to real life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn about communicating your hopes to others? • What other ways are there to express your hopes?

Activity 8	Our messages to the school
Goals	To enable us to discover the power of our 'voice' and communicate our improved vision of school life.
Description	We come up with ideas for what our hopes would look like in practice in school. We think of at least six recommendations for the school management. We also think about things that we and our peers can do in order to make our vision a reality. We prepare for presenting our recommendations at the school assembly.
Required materials	Whatever the students feel is necessary
Preparation	Whatever the students feel is necessary
Approximate time needed	Variable
Facilitation tips	<p>Before starting this activity, make sure that the school management is committed to putting at least three of the students' recommendations into practice, and giving them regular feedback on what is being done and what the next steps will be. If the students come up with powerful 'messages to the school' but these are not seen to be acted upon, disappointment and frustration will result.</p> <p>If you are doing this activity in a non-school setting such as a youth group, think creatively about how to frame it before you start – e.g. do you want to send 'messages to the director', or maybe 'messages to the local government'?</p>
Reflection (after presenting the recommendations at the school assembly)	<p>Understanding the experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? <p>Recognising skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills did you use doing this activity? <p>Relating it to real life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you carry all this learning with you and use it from now on?

ANNEX 1

The list of INDICATORS for skills and values

Taking responsibility for our learning and using our own initiative	
Having an insight into possible consequences of what we say and do	
Using our mistakes as starting points for learning and growth	
Connecting knowledge from different subjects, as a way of thinking about solutions to difficult problems	
Thinking critically about the ideas and information that are given to us	
Having the courage to take a step beyond our 'comfort zone'	
Helping people to solve conflicts, by listening to both sides and trying to find acceptable solutions	
Listening to other people and trying to understand what they really mean	
Acknowledging and incorporating different points of view (e.g. in our thinking, writing, research)	
Finding the courage to be ourselves	
Feeling that we have the power to create change and solve problems in our local communities	
Remembering to use non-violent communication in tense situations (e.g. using 'I feel' statements rather than blaming others)	
Finding or creating safe spaces to express our emotions (e.g. nature, art, music, friendship groups, sports)	
Applying our subject knowledge and skills to understanding problems in our local communities (schools / families / neighbourhoods etc.)	
Thinking about what we buy and what we throw away, remembering that future generations will depend on the same natural resources as we do now	
Resisting the pressure (e.g. from advertisers) to buy things we don't really need	
Caring for our environment - especially endangered species and ecosystems, injured or unwanted wildlife, and damaged habitats	
Learning to be comfortable with who we are	
Having a strong sense of belonging in nature	
Developing our own personal style by getting to know interests, attitudes and sensitivities	
Thinking of ways to reduce waste, carbon emissions and pollution	
Evaluating what's important to us and what isn't	
Looking after ourselves and our families	
Communicating face to face, spending quality time with people	
Accepting others instead of judging them	
Choosing jobs that we love, not just thinking about how much we can earn	

ANNEX 2

Indicators in large font. These can be cut up into separate strips for Activity 4.

Taking responsibility for our learning and using our own initiative

Having an insight into possible consequences of what we say and do

Using our mistakes as starting points for learning and growth

Connecting knowledge from different subjects, as a way of thinking about solutions to difficult problems

Thinking critically about the ideas and information that are given to us

Having the courage to take a step beyond our 'comfort zone'

Helping people to solve conflicts, by listening to both sides and trying to find acceptable solutions

Listening to other people and trying to understand what they really mean

Acknowledging and incorporating different points of view (e.g. in our thinking, writing, research)

Finding the courage to be ourselves

Feeling that we have the power to create change and solve problems in our local communities

Remembering to use non-violent communication in tense situations (e.g. using 'I feel' statements rather than blaming others)

Finding or creating safe spaces to express our emotions (e.g. nature, art, music, friendship groups, sports)

Applying our subject knowledge and skills to understanding problems in our local communities (schools / families / neighbourhoods etc.)

Thinking about what we buy and what we throw away, remembering that future generations will depend on the same natural resources as we do now

Resisting the pressure (e.g. from advertisers) to buy things we don't really need

Caring for our environment - especially endangered species and ecosystems, injured or unwanted wildlife, and damaged habitats

Learning to be comfortable with who we are

Having a strong sense of belonging in nature

Developing our own personal style by getting to know our interests, attitudes and sensitivities

Thinking of ways to reduce waste, carbon emissions and pollution

Evaluating what's important to us and what isn't

Looking after ourselves and our families

Communicating face to face, spending quality time with people

Accepting others instead of judging them

Choosing jobs we love, instead of only thinking about how much we can earn

ANNEX 3

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

This toolkit identifies **to what extent students have already acquired the values**, as well as the skills, knowledge, attitudes and personal qualities, which will enable them **to survive and thrive in the 21st century**. Can they understand more clearly what their own values are, and learn to live by them? In which areas do they need more help?

This toolkit is **simple to follow**, containing only the information required. It requires **minimal materials and preparation time** so that it can be used by any group of students in any setting. In depth information about the research underpinning is available online.

It offers a **central core of activities** which guide the students through their own 'journey of thinking and feeling' whilst at the same time being **flexible** so that it can be adapted to suit your own language, culture and social, environmental and economic situation.

The toolkit is addressed to the students. The facilitator who prepares and runs the activities can be a teacher, a parent, a staff member or a student. Ideally, a teacher can facilitate and accompany a group of students first, to train them to become peer facilitators for other groups of students.

Best Practice

- Have the school management to agree to carry out a minimum of 3 of the recommendations presented to them by the students.
- Engage fully with building trust and allow freedom of speech and expression.
- Carry the responsibility of taking the students seriously and respecting their privacy; the discussions can go no further than the room.
- Have a maximum of 10 participants in each group: when running the activities for an entire class, divide them into smaller groups and turn to peer facilitators for help.
- Use the help of peer facilitators: 1-2 students who have gone through the activities beforehand and can assist the participants to get the best out of the sessions.
- Link all the input coming from the students, connect the dots, so that the questions and ideas raised in the beginning will make sense at the end.

The ultimate purpose of education for responsible living and sustainability is to help students to become responsible citizens, respectful of society, the planet and its boundaries. Students need to learn to think critically about world problems and become self-motivated to adopt lifestyles and consumption patterns that are:

- **environmentally responsible**, respecting the need for our civilization to remain within planetary environmental boundaries; and
- **socially responsible**, contributing to social justice with an equitable and sustainable distribution of the limited resources available to the world population, while preserving the planet's capacity to support future generations.

Schools focus primarily on transmitting scientific knowledge and intellectual understanding,

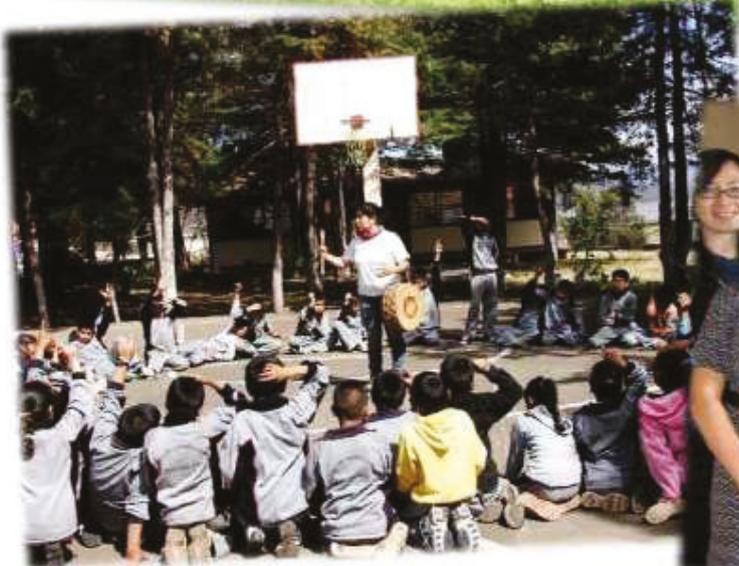
but these are not always sufficient to change behaviour and lifestyles. Motivation and commitment are generally rooted at the level of **emotions and values**. By becoming aware of their values, discovering their skills and discussing about their views the students will be better equipped with living a responsible and sustainable life!

Learning is relatively permanent when it is based on individual **experience**. What makes experiences **transformational learning** is a guided reflection session, where students reflect their experiences in relation to their personal development. This process allows for the absorption of new knowledge and views. Deep reflection provides students with the insights necessary to understanding the consequences of their actions. At its best, **reflection integrates knowledge, feelings and action**.

Reflection sessions depend on having the teachers' commitment to providing a just leadership and **safeguarding the trust of the students**. Whatever the students bring to the reflection session, the teacher has to carry the responsibility of taking that seriously and respecting the privacy of the participants: the discussions go no further than the room.

First sessions are usually quiet and the teacher has to be more active in getting the discussion going. Reflection sessions can develop very quickly, however, when the students feel that the group is a safe space where they can express their current thoughts without being judged. This safe space supports positive learning when people feel appreciated and respected and feel they are being heard, where they encourage each other to develop.





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