

Curriculum Framework EVALUE (European Values in Education)

The EVALUE-project aims at increasing people's understanding of different individual perspectives about controversial issues and fostering European Citizenship and Participation. It uses data from the European Values Study and other related surveys [link], which represent individuals' responses to questions about their values, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. The developed tools [link] and teaching materials [link] intend to support teachers in lessons about controversial issues and invite students to reflect on their values and to underpin their point of views by arguments in discussion with others. To do so, we consider the following guidelines as helpful.

Controversial issues provoke strong feelings of disagreement, which can be about the events happened, the causes for the current situation, the desired outcomes, the ways of actions to be taken and the possible consequences of these actions. For a number of contemporary issues such as migration, democracy, tolerance, environment, and solidarity, the developed tools help to address controversy in several ways: The responses to questions depicted in maps and scatterplots show the diversity (or unity) between countries as well as between respondent groups. Furthermore, students can position themselves on values dimensions related to the issues mentioned above, and compare their views with the views in their class as well as the views of respondents/respondent groups from all over Europe.

With respect to values education, EVALUE seeks to encourage values clarification and values communication. Values clarification focusses on the various reasons why individuals might have different views on a controversial issue. Based on social science research, some explanations can be given why the opinions of various respondent groups vary. These explanations, or in other words concepts or big ideas which have been developed within disciplinary communities, prove to be very powerful in the development of students' understanding concerning controversial topics as well in the development of disciplinary knowledge. However, these theoretical perspectives cannot explain all variations in opinions of respondents, and the place and/or context dependency of the results depicted in maps and scatterplots have to be emphasized. With respect to values communication, some teaching strategies of values education have shown to be helpful: distancing by analogies and parallels, introducing compensatory new information, empathetic activities, exploratory enquiry based activities, de-personalising by the use of society- instead of person-orientated language, and engaging by personal relevant materials or activities.

The developed materials [link] will not only use the teaching strategies mentioned above, but will also address, in a separate section, tools for teachers in order to help them with problems they face when teaching controversial issues. The materials will align to possible teaching styles, as well as deliver background information in order to tackle the problem of lack of expert knowledge. Furthermore, they will address the issue of a safe classroom climate, which is key in values education.

Teaching controversial issues is an important part of citizenship education. This should not be seen as something extra, which has to be realised on top of the teaching in schools, but as connected to the curriculum. Therefore, the different themes and questions of the web-tool as well as the developed teaching materials have been linked to the intended written curriculum of the participating countries as well as the perceived implemented curriculum by teachers. In a curriculum matrix [link], teachers can easily look up suitable topics or materials for their lessons, so that they can replace currently used materials (or can complement them).

Lessons or lesson series using the offered EVALUE materials should be guided by a focus question that challenges the students for an answer (creating a need to know). In order to structure lessons, the "E-approach" which is based on the learning cycle model [link] proved to be beneficial. It can encompass up to

seven E's. However, it is not always necessary to address all seven E's, depending on the topic and your teaching aims:

- Elicit: Making visible the understanding students have about the issues to be discussed , in order to detect their personal views
- Engage: Making it possible for students to relate to the issues, which are presented in the data of the maps or scatterplots, stimulating prior knowledge.
- Explore: Giving meaning to the data by questioning them, recognising and describing differences as well as similarities.
- Explain: Using disciplinary concepts and theories to deepen the understanding of why differences (and similarities) in views exist in order to question the data offered.
- Elaborate: Making sense of the data and discovering patterns, but also verifying (and reformulating) the theories.
- Evaluate: Developing critical thinking by verifying explanatory theories and appreciating the subjectivity, assumptions and place dependency of the data.
- Extend: Relating students' own perspectives to the discussion of the controversial issues and thinking and discussing about possible, probable and preferable solutions for these issues.

The aim is that through a lesson with EVALUE, students will develop a critical understanding of an individual's responsibilities in a diverse society and society's responsibility to the individual, and by that a growing sense of what it means to be part of Europe's future.