



The VALUE learning path Erasmus University College Brussels

AIMS

The primary objective of the learning path is focused on **the creation of awareness** within the ‘educare professionals’¹ about perspectives on ‘education and care in the broad sense’. The internal compass steers the actions of the early childhood professional (ECP). Ideas about education, the professional role and the child image influence behaviour and intentions (Golombek, 2017; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014). With the coaching we want to make the professionals aware of the values that are the implicit foundation of their actions.

The Value path wants to install a climate that enables and valorises **multiperspectivity** and **working in diverse teams**. we strive for installation of concrete actions that facilitate this. (interdisciplinary team consultations, a job description that makes the invisible practitioners visible...). The goal is to give **agency** to all members of the team.

Establishing **Intrinsic motivation** to enhance pedagogical practice and make durable changes. Through the discussion about values and perspectives on education and the role of professionals... we hope to create **pedagogical quality** from within.

METHODS

To reach these aims we created a learning path inspired by ‘narrative and collaborative’ approaches (Stelter, 2017/2018; Drake, 2007; Verhaeghe et al., 2017). Coaching from a reflective perspective. The focus is on the exploration of values and meaning-making. Coaching here is seen as a conversational process through which the coachee gets deeper insight. Narrative coaching tries to obtain a conscious professional identity. Attention for ‘*the role of the coach*’ and the creation of ‘*narrative space*’ are mandatory (Verhaeghe et al., 2017).

Through working on group dynamics and the creation of a shared goal/narrative, we want to establish a culture in which diversity is valued. The involvement of every member of the team is pursued by starting from the narrative and strengths of every person. In this it is important to give voice to the perspective of all team members and have a constant attention to approach the team as a team. We hope to establish a train the trainer in which a core team can continue the process to have durable results.

PROCESS

1. Specific on preparation phase

1.1. The selection of the school

In consultation with OCB (educational centre Brussels) we establish some selection criteria for the selection of the pilot school. Not only the pre-conditions of the value project but also the

¹ With educare professionals we mean all the professionals taking care for the children in de context of the pilot. Teachers, assistants, out-of-school educator connected to the school.



needs of the Brussels education context were taken into account. As a leading partner in the educational field of Brussels, OCB organised a directors meeting of Brussels pre-primary schools in which they informed 12 different schools about the value project. Every schools could express their interest in the project. From the interested schools OCB selected the pilot. They chose a school with *strong leadership* that wanted to facilitated *time and space* to reach the objectives of this innovative project. Another reason to select the school was their *system of 'assistant educators'*.

The next meeting was held with OCB, the educational department of the municipality, the school direction and the value coaching team. In this meeting the project information was transmitted to all the stakeholders. The questionnaire created during the TOT in Ghent was used as a guideline. In this meeting following objectives were pursued:

- Presentation of the value project
- Description of the pilot school (population, vision, culture of CPD)
- Clarification of mutual expectations and opportunities
- Composition of the core team, the selection of the involved professionals and others
- Detection of external stakeholders
- Condition for the practical implementation (action plan)

The next step was the presentation of the project during a preparation day of the teacher team of the pilot. During this gathering the project was presented and first contact with the team was established.

Inspired by narrative coaching we identified the first phase of the project as 'building of trust'. We created opportunities for the team and the coaches to meet in informal ways. The first building trust activity was a cooking event in public space of Brussels together with the children, teachers and educational assistants of the third pre-primary class. Attendance in 'teacher room' and other informal moments created a basic trust to start the project.

The documentation of the preparation phase was done by meeting reports, reflections of the coaches and 'transcription of interesting moments, words...' of the professionals involved.

1.2.The foundations of the CPD-path

The foundations of the CPD path was created in collaboration with the teacher training pre-primary, the bachelor in Early Childhood Education and Care and the knowledge centre Urban coaching and Education of the Erasmus University College Brussels. The expertise in (narrative) coaching, collaborative approaches and group dynamic formed the foundation of the creation of the CPD-path. The translation of narrative concepts to team coaching was the first step. Translating the role of the coach and thinking about how to create narrative space (Verhaeghe et al., 2017). The coaching was translated into the language of education. The



process consisted of three phases through which the role of the coach and the creation of the narrative space transformed:

- **Phase 1:** Getting insight in the subjective reality of individuals and the group dynamic involved (moment 1- lab 1,2)
- **Phase 2:** confronting and contesting perspectives, multiperspectivity (lab 3-4)
- **Phase 3:** making choices, concretizing and durability (lab 5-7)

2. Specific on the learning and action phase

As mentioned above the learning and action phase is based on narrative and collaborative approaches and translated into a 3 phased process. The labs were internal reflection groups in which 7 pre-primary teachers, 2 assistant educators, 1 'child caretaker', 1 coach of OCB and the coordinator of the out-of-school care took part. During the coaching students of Erasmus University college took care of the children. The coaches and coachees will have met 8 times during the period of 9 months. We saw the coaching as a process. The f2f moments were complemented with 'thinking/reflection exercises' to keep the process going. During this period 3 core-team gatherings (consisting of director, 1 assistant educator, 2 teachers, ocb-coach and value-coaches) were held to keep track of the process. The process was documented by photo's, transcriptions of interesting paragraphs of the coachees, reflections of the coaches on role, process...

Phase 1: Getting insight in the subjective reality of individuals and the group dynamic involved.

Coach as facilitator

- **Moment 1:** Building trust activity (sept 2018)
- **Lab 1:** Getting to know you (oct 2018): In this lab we tried to discover the story of every individual and get insight in the group dynamics using 'abstract coaching cards' and 'metaphors'
 - ➔ 'Thinking reflection exercise': 'what do you think' narrative questions
- **Lab 2:** 'Image of the job' and 'image of the child'(nov 2018): in this session we tried to get insight in the internal compass of the professionals through individual and group reflection and brainstorm
 - ➔ 'Thinking reflection exercise: 'the educare professional'
- **Core-team:** 'involving the invisible practitioners'

Phase 2: Confronting and contesting perspectives, multiperspectivity

Coach as confronter

- **Lab 3:** The words we speak and dilemma's (dec 2018): in this lab we confronted the team with their own words. Daring them to pick sights and try new perspectives.
- **Lab 4:** What's in a name? 'assistant educator, child caretaker...' (jan 2019). In this lab we have tried to rethink what was taken for granted. Two groups were made 'teachers – "care-professionals"'. Contesting the perspectives and giving voice to what was silent.



- ➔ Thinking reflection exercise: 'little stories, big value'
- **Core-team:** 'Making choices'

Phase 3 making choices, concretizing and durability

coach as co-creator

- **Lab 5:** The choices we made and what they mean (maart 2019)
- **Lab 6:** The Chameleon got's talent (April-mei 2019)
- **Core-team:** divers team and their strengths
- **Lab 7:** What the future will bring (June 2019)

The coaching is now in the phase of confrontation. This makes that we as coaches are also confronted with some resistance. A natural step in the process. Even though something we can not overlook. During the process the involvement of 'the invisible practitioners' is a constant point of attention.

CONDITIONS

- The **leadership** of the school is conditionally to the success of the process. The implementation of a core-team that involves the director is very important. Some labs the director was present during the coaching, this hindered the process. It breached the narrative space and trust we installed. So there has to be a balance between involvement and trust.
- **The role of the coach and a safe context:** we believe the role of the coach is crucial in the process. Giving voice to all participant, creating narrative space, having insight in group dynamic and use them to benefit the process. The combination of one coach specialised in the sector of education and one in sector of 'care' had a lot of advantages in our process. To speak the languages of both the teachers and the caretakers helped to give everyone a sense of belonging. The change in roles from facilitator to confronter and co-creator is an interesting way to work as a coach. Starting with group dynamic and building trust facilitated the creation of the safe space to speak. Even though during the process we were confronted with some challenges to keep the space safe for everyone.
- **Structural changes will be mandatory.** Now the coaching sessions are facilitated by students. There is need for child-free hours to make the value learning path possible. The director want to install pedagogical meetings for the diverse team every 6 weeks. The involvement of the primary teaching corps will be necessary.
- **After the project:** We want to facilitate durability through a train the trainer of 2 persons of the core team and the involvement of the OCB-coach.

[Stakeholders group](#)

See doc **VBJK**