

**ASSESSMENT OF A PILOT PROGRAMME  
FOR SUPPORTING PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP  
FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION IN LATVIAN SCHOOLS**

*Dissertation submitted in partial requirement of MA in Character Education*

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Riga, August 2020

# **Assessment of a pilot programme for supporting principals' leadership for character education in Latvian schools.**

## **Abstract**

This dissertation presents the elaboration and assessment of a 9-hour long professional development programme for school principals about the implementation of character education in Latvian schools. The research questions addressed the programme fit and feasibility, and how participants perceived its influence on their knowledgeability of, and their leadership competence for character education. The programme elaboration was based on the analysis of school principals' needs in Latvia, and it was implemented in February-March 2020 in Riga and surroundings. Thirty-five school-leaders participated in this practitioner research, which used mixed methods (questionnaires pre- and post-intervention with rating and open questions, focus group discussion and a reflective journal). The rich data obtained were analysed using SPSS 26, AQUAD 7 and NVivo 11. The results confirmed the programme fit and feasibility and highlighted the importance of combining personal reflection and sharing in the programme activities, of offering professional materials practically useful at school, and of creating a friendly atmosphere of mutual trust and support. Based on the results, suggestions for improving the programme and for further research were put forward.

**Key words:** school principals' training, character education, programme elaboration, programme fit and feasibility, practitioner action research, reflective journal.

## **Acknowledgements**

I want to express gratitude to my supervisor Dr Tom Harrison for his timely and insightful comments on this work, and also to all the staff of the MA Character education for their unconditional dedication to their students. I also want to express gratitude and admiration to my study colleagues in this programme, from whom I have learnt probably the most important lessons.

*Programme implemented with the support of the ERAF postdoctoral research grant "Modernization of school education in Latvia through an innovative research-based program on 21st century competences and virtue ethics development supported by a virtual campus (ARETE-school). Project No. 1.1.1.2/VIAA/1/16/071.*

**To cite this document:** Fernández González, M. J. (2020). *Assessment of a pilot programme for supporting principals' leadership for character education in Latvian schools*. Master theses submitted in partial requirement of MA in Character Education. Jubilee Centre for character and virtues, University of Birmingham.

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# **Assessment of a pilot programme for supporting principals' leadership for character education in Latvian schools**

## **1. Introduction**

This dissertation had a practical and a theoretical goal. The practical goal was to show how a novel professional development programme (hereinafter – the Programme) for school principals, addressing the implementation of character education (CE) at school in a cultural-sensitive way, was developed. The theoretical goal was to assess empirically the Programme fit and feasibility and its effectiveness as perceived by participants. Two research questions guided the empirical study: 1) What was the fit and feasibility of the Programme? Concretely, what was participants' perception of its usefulness, methods, activities, and materials? and 2) How did participants perceive the influence of the Programme on their knowledgeability of the field and their leadership competence for CE?

The structure of the dissertation follows the stages implemented for reaching those goals: The initial review of literature, with a focus on leadership training for CE around the world and in Latvia (section 2) situates conceptually the Programme elaboration and piloting, which was based on the analysis of Latvian principals' current needs and other scientific evidence (section 3). The research methodology, which used a questionnaire, focus group discussions and a researcher's reflective journal, is presented in section 4, and the results regarding the Programme fit and feasibility and its influence as perceived by participants are discussed in section 5. After the discussion of the findings (section 6), conclusions are drawn and practical recommendations for further implementation and research are put forward (section 7).

This introduction addresses the rationale and the context of the study: why is such a Programme necessary? why showing how it was developed? and why investigating the Programme fit, feasibility, and perceived influence? The necessity of the Programme itself can be considered from a global and a local perspective. Globally speaking, the need of supporting school directors for CE is widely recognized. The argument can be unfolded as follows: CE is largely accepted as an essential part of 21<sup>st</sup> century school education (e.g., Fadel, Trilling, & Bialik, 2015; Rubin, 2017; Retnowati *et al.*, 2018). A good character, understood as “a set of personal traits or dispositions that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct” (The Jubilee Centre, 2017:2), includes the cultivation of intellectual, moral, performance and civic virtues, guided by good sense: the meta-virtue of prudence. But educating such character is a challenging endeavour in which families and schools should collaborate, and school principals play a key role in setting

this collaboration and in achieving an integrated whole-school approach to character. For carrying out this specific task effectively, principals need evidence-based professional development: as *Character.org* (2018) argues, one of the main indicators of exemplary implementation of CE at school is that key leaders seek professional development about CE (p. 32). Therefore, globally speaking, the case for providing specific preparation for school principals is well established (Bush, 2010; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2010), and, considering its specificity, “providing comprehensive training programmes for new principals may be regarded as vital” (Bush, 2016: 537).

All this is true also from a local (Latvian) point of view, but, in addition, the offer of professional development programmes in CE for school-leaders in Latvia is quasi inexistent. Moreover, existing materials in other languages are not easily transferable to Latvia, partly due to the language barrier, which is not a negligible obstacle, but, maybe more importantly, due to historical and sociocultural reason. Some background information about how the role of school directors was historically framed in Soviet CE and how it evolved till the present day in Latvia could shed light on why it is crucial to have a cultural-sensitive Programme for school directors in Post-Soviet Latvia.

As Kestere (2005) argued, historical knowledge helps to understand human beings and society, is a source of new ideas, and helps to evaluate recent societal processes (pp. 6-9). In Soviet society, the social and political dimension of CE was central. Since the beginning, Soviet leaders used the language of character and virtues (Iljina, 1971; Jesipovs & Gončarovs, 1948; Stepe, 1962) and gave virtue education the central role for the construction of socialism, placing propaganda at the heart of education (Fitzpatrick, 1969:25). The Communist education system counted heavily on school directors for implementing Soviet virtue education and provided them with the necessary authority to the formation of pupils’ Soviet character. In Latvia also, educational academics supported the idea that “the ideology-driven political and moral upbringing at school ... should be concentrated in the hands of the principal” (Klēģeris, 1962:59). The formal authority of directors was materialized in many different ways: for example, the director was responsible for creating the school climate “using the appropriate words, sometimes congratulating, sometimes using corrosive, or ironic, or outraged words to evoke the appropriate feelings to the situation in the school collective” (Stepe, 1962:93).

After the falling of Soviet Union, and in spite of school reforms, the authoritarian model of school-leadership has often remained untouched in many post-soviet countries, e.g., Azerbaijan (Magno, 2009) and Kyrgyzstan (Joldoshalieva, 2006), or has adopted a controversial role between allegiance to a Soviet legacy or promotion of democracy (Stevick, 2009), as in Estonia or Ukraine

(Kovalchuk, & Shchudlo, 2014). In Latvia also, when the Soviet system collapsed, the political apparatus that controlled school directors disappeared. This increased school directors' formal authority and practical power at school, as they had more freedom of decision. After 30 years, and in spite some recent reforms regarding school directors (CoM, 2017), this situation can still be felt in practice and in the educational policy documents. For example, the State Education Quality Service of Latvia recently stated that, for ensuring the quality of the educational institutions, "the school principal plays a central role, because s/he is the one who takes the decisions, and has to take the responsibility about his/her contribution for the development of each student and of the institution." (SEQS, 2016:15). Considering the presence of this historical and cultural background in Latvian society, it becomes clearer why it is important to provide direct support to school directors, the key actors of any CE initiative, through a Programme such as the one presented here.

The convenience of explaining in detail the process of elaboration of the Program (practical goal) and of addressing its fit, feasibility and perceived influence (the empirical research questions) can be better understood in the light of the recent socio-political developments regarding CE in Latvia, which originated high expectations in the educational sector regarding such programmes. During the last decade, character and virtue education at school have been under intensive discussion, leading in 2016 to the adoption of upbringing guidelines (CoM, 2016), which include twelve virtues to be developed by pupils at school, namely: responsibility, studiousness, courage, honesty, wisdom, kindness, compassion, moderation, self-control, solidarity, justice, and tolerance. Those virtues are intended to facilitate the practice of a number of values considered to be of particular importance: life, respect, freedom, family, marriage, work, nature, culture, Latvian language, and Latvian State. In this law, it is stipulated that the school director is responsible for the implementation of those rules (No. 2), and that the decisions of the School council in this regard are only a recommendation (No. 24). The guidelines of the current educational content reform project "School 2030" (Skola2030, 2017) integrate these objectives and also uses the language of virtues and values.

However, in spite of those political developments, there are not specific courses in the field of character and virtue education for school directors in Latvia. There exist some short one-day seminars and workshops for school teachers about virtue education and patriotism<sup>1</sup>, virtues in the classroom<sup>2</sup> and value and virtue upbringing<sup>3</sup>, and some methodological materials for grades 1 to 6 regarding value education in Latvian language, prepared by the National Centre for Education

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.macibuistade.lv/notikumi/pedagogu-profesionalas-kompetences-pilnveide-valstiskas-un-tikumiskas-audzinasanas-jautajumos>

<sup>2</sup> <https://lmc.lv/lv/macibu-kursi/kategorija/pedagogiem/bernu-tiesibu-aizsardziba>

<sup>3</sup> <https://lpmc.lv/macibas/backPid/7/category/skolu-darbiniekem/article/tiessaistes-macibas-veiksmigas-audzinasanas-pamatprincipi-vertibizglitibas-un-tikumiskaj.html>

of the Republic of Latvia<sup>4</sup>. Currently, the CPD of school directors is centred in the new demands of the school curriculum reform. In this frame, the topic of virtue education is mentioned superficially, only in reference to the current legislation.

In this socio-political context, and given the lack of any programme supporting school directors in this field, it became necessary to establish solidly the scientific foundations of the new Programme, explaining the research-based approach adopted for its elaboration, and to provide evidence regarding whether the Program provided an appropriate ('fit'), realistic ('feasibility'), and useful ('perceived influence') contribution to the field. This context explains also why a separate section of this dissertation was devoted to the description of the elaboration of the Programme (section 4). This decision was taken for highlighting the practical dimension of this dissertation, hoping that further similar attempts of creating support programmes for school-leaders in CE could find inspiration in the process presented in that section. In addition, the empirical research about the Programme fit and feasibility (section 5) would be useful to improve its contents, methods, activities, and materials for further implementation at a larger scale.

This study combines the 'practitioner research' interpretative paradigm, in which qualitative methods help to grasp participants' expectations and beliefs, with more classical empirical research, using quantitative data for capturing the perceived influence of the Programme on participants. Following Pring (2004), this study does not claim to be "a definitive and proven account" (p. 122) of how to teach to school principals about CE. It is rather a context-situated contribution to the world-wide effort of the scientific community to provide evidence-based support to school-leaders for implementing character and virtue education at school.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://visc.gov.lv/vispizglitiba/saturs/dokumenti/metmat/vertibizglitiba/default.html>



## 2. Leadership development for CE: a review of recent literature

The literature review is intended to help to situate conceptually the Programme elaboration and the investigation of its fit, feasibility and influence. The 21<sup>st</sup> century scientific literature on school-leadership development is addressed first, followed by the specific literature about principals' training for CE, which was the focus of the Programme.

### 2.1. School-leadership development

In this section, after an overview of literature about pre-service and in-service principal training, the literature regarding the challenges, strategies, and impact of school-leaders' training is presented, as well as the dimensions of school-leaders' education, with a particular emphasis on its moral dimension, which will lead us to the specific training for CE in the next section.

#### 2.1.1. Overview of literature about pre-service and in-service principal training

The body of scientific literature about school-leaders' education is enormous. Research about principals' training appears regularly in high-ranked scientific journals, such as *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *School-leadership and Management*, *Journal of Leadership Studies*, *Educational Leadership*, *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, etc. There are also number of recent and comprehensive handbooks (Young, & Crow, 2016; Lumby, Crow, & Pashiardis, 2009) and international guides (Slater, & Nelson, 2013) about the preparation and development of school-leaders.

The concept of "principal pipelines" (Syed, 2015; Cosner, 2016) was useful for organizing this review of literature, as it distinguishes three stages on principal education: 'pre-service training', 'evaluation of principals' and 'provision of professional development'. Jensen's (2020) distinction between the terms 'education of school-leaders' (referring to formal qualifications of both aspiring and practicing school-leaders) and 'school-leadership development' (addressing experienced school-leaders without bestowing formal qualification) was also useful.

There are a number of reviews of research on principal (pre-service) preparation (Davis, & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Murphy *et al.*, 2009; Orr, 2006; Orr, & Orphanos, 2010; Browne-Ferrigno, & Muth, 2012), assistant principal development (Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012), principal in-service development (Eger, PISOŇOVÁ, & Tomczyk, 2017; Jensen, 2016; Smylie *et al.*, 2005; Lazenby, McCulla, & Marks, 2020; Mestry, 2017) and both (Daniëls, Hondeghem, & Dochy, 2019; Ärlestig, Day, & Johansson, 2016; Huber, 2004; Schleicher, 2012; Kottkamp, & Rusch, 2009). Some scholars present also comprehensive frameworks for leadership preparation and development (Okoko, 2020; Hall, et al., 2016; Welch, & Hodge, 2018). Recently, Jensen

(2020) has advocated for a conceptualization of school-leadership development as a “boundary work” involving institution boundary crossing between schools, municipalities, and universities. This concept is relevant for this study, which involves a partnership between university, municipalities, and school principals.

#### 2.1.2. Challenges, strategies, and impact of school-leaders’ training

In-service principal training is particularly challenging (Hayes, & Irby, 2020; Miller *et al.*, 2016), partly because of the difficulty for principals to engage in the professional development process (Koonce *et al.*, 2019). As an illustration, Kelley & Shaw (2009) reported that principals’ work is characterized by brevity, variety, and fragmentation: “more than 80% of the principal’ day is spent in verbal interactions, many lasting less than a minute, with little time for reflection and with unexpected and nonroutine problems occurring with regularity” (p. 500).

To face these challenges, principal training uses multiple learning approaches (Huber, 2013; Retna, 2015) and different strategies, such as top-down, bottom-up, anticipation and post-hoc support (Bush, 2011, 2013). ‘Coaching’ is used mainly for in-service principal training (Lindle, 2016; Huff, Preston, & Goldring, 2013; Browne-Ferrigno, & Muth, 2006; Klar *et al.*, 2019). ‘Video simulations’ (Friend, Adams, & Curry, 2011) and ‘computer based simulations’ (Mann *et al.*, 2011) are used both for pre-service (Piro, & O’Callaghan, 2019; Korach, & Agans, 2011) and in-service principal training (Hallinger, Shaobing, & Jiafang, 2017), along with other methods, such as ‘storytelling and narrative’ (Danzig, Wright, & Borman, 2007), ‘structured self-reflection’ (Branson, 2006), ‘action research’ (Osterman, Furman, & Sernak, 2014; McCulla, & Degenhardt, 2016) and ‘transformative experiences’ (Ginsberg, Knapp, & Farrington, 2014). In addition, beyond concrete approaches or strategies, scholarly research looked at how principals learn to lead, regarding both pre-service principals (Byrne-Jiménez, Gooden, & Tucker, 2016; see also the special issue “Learning to lead” of the journal *Planning and Changing*, 2012, Vol. 43, Nr. 1/2) and in-service principals (Torres, Bulkley, & McCotter, 2019; Davis, Leon, & Fultz, 2013; Donaldson, 2008; Zepeda, Parylo, & Bengtson, 2014).

It is generally accepted that school-leadership has an impact on students’ attainment (e.g., Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Tsakeni, & Jita, 2019; Taylor, 2018; Robinson, & Gray, 2019; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). In this context, many studies have addressed the effectivity of principals’ training itself. For example, Kelley & Shaw (2009) argued that there is “limited evidence that existing professional development for principals has the quality and focus needed to produce measurable results in student learning” (p. 501). And academic research has attempted to measure the impact of school-leaders’ training for inclusive education (Kanjere, & Mafumo, 2017; Bush, 2012), social justice education (Goode, 2019; Brown, 2004; Cambron-McCabe, &

McCarthy, 2005; Furman, 2012; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; McKenzie *et al.*, 2008; Shoho, et al., 2006), students' behaviour (Bennett, 2017), and leaders' ethical behaviour (Bass, Frick, & Young, 2018; Fullan, 2003; Begley, 2010; Edmonson, & Fisher, 2006; Larsen, & Derrington, 2012).

Measuring the impact of school-leaders' training is challenging, among other things, because of the difficulty of isolating the programme from other interactions principals have (the 'impurity' of the interventions); the time, expense, and effort that would entail to explore principals' training long term effects on schools or students; and researchers' lack of insight on the complexity of principals' work. Given those difficulties, some studies looked at participants' *perceived* efficacy of training programmes both for principals (Blaik Hourani, & Stringer, 2015; Okoko, Scott, & Scott, 2015) and principal assistants (Barnett, Shoho, & Okilwa, 2017; Mayfield, 2017; Vail, 2018). The lens of 'participant perception' is used in the empirical study of this Master thesis.

### 2.1.3. The dimensions of school-leaders' education

The work of a school-leader has different dimension, which had been conceptualized in diverse ways (e.g., Balyer, 2012; Fullan, 2002; Leithwood & Jantzi; 2000; Moos, 2011). The categorization of Goldring & Greenfield (2002) may be useful because of its clarity: it includes four dimensions: 'moral' (purposes and values of education), 'stewardship' (which demands focus, momentum, and appropriate responses to problems), 'complexity' (facing the unpredictable and creating new contexts), and a 'people-intensive' dimension, which includes principals' 'emotional labour' (Held & McKimm 2012) of facing their own emotions and recognising those of their colleagues.

The dimensions of principals' work also define their moral, administrative, and communicative training needs (Ng, & Szeto, 2016; Breakspear *et al.*, 2017; Kim, 2020). Some scholars argue that, in addition, leaders' personality development should also be addressed in school-leadership development. For example, Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins (2020) claimed that a small handful of personal traits explains a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness (p. 10); and Browne-Ferrigno & Muth (2012), after a comprehensive review of research literature, concluded that leadership preparation is a developmental process requiring not only professional training, but also personal transformation (p. 10). Some recent studies have addressed the impact of school-leadership education on the improvement of such principals' virtues as persistence (Steinberg, & Yang, 2019) and judgement (Duke, 2019). The training needs, challenges, strategies, and the moral dimension of school-leaders' education mentioned in this section are even more specific in the field of school-leaders' training for CE. They are addressed in the following section.

## 2.2. Principals' training for CE

### 2.2.1. Principal's role and effective practices for CE

Several recent studies address the role of school-leader for CE (Asmendri, 2014; Francom, 2016; Danni, 2018; Arthur et al., 2017). For Berkowitz (2011), “the principal in a school is the centre-piece of CE’s quality and success.” (p. 4); and the Character.org (2018) framework for CE suggests that the school’s CE initiative should have leaders, including the school principal, who champion CE efforts (p. 32).

There is a number of studies about the characteristics and effective practices of CE leaders (Francom, 2016; Navarro *et al.*, 2016; Murray, Berkowitz, & Lerner, 2019). For example, Walker, Sims, & Kettlewell (2017) report that successful CE principals highlight the centrality of CE in the culture, values and vision of the school, take a whole-school approach, and exemplify positive character traits in interactions with others (p. 5). Researchers had reported also on the importance of leaders’ own character and example: “Leaders’ and teachers’ own character is frequently their most important resource for CE” (Church of England, 2017:25); and authentic leaders lead by the example, which produces a kind of ‘emotional contagion’ in the school culture (Avolio & Gardner, 2005:326). School-leaders need also specific knowledge of the field: Berkowitz, Bier, & McCauley (2017) have suggested that school-leaders “need to understand character, character development and CE, be instructional leaders for it, model good character, and empower all stakeholders in the school” (p. 42). The literature often refers also to the relational dimension of leadership for character: according to Walker et al. (2017), one of the key features of effective leadership of CE is to ‘maintain focus, momentum and ongoing communication’ (p. 41); and for Bass & Steidlmeier (2005), “a person becomes virtuous within a community. A person becomes virtuous for the community” (p. 196).

Based on those effective practices identified in scientific literature, three main needs in the school-leaders’ training for CE could be highlighted: self-knowledge and personality development, knowledge of the field, and communicative competence. In the next section we will look at how they are addressed in recent leadership models and in current programmes for principal development in CE.

### 2.2.2. School-leadership development models and programmes for CE

Several leadership models directly address leaders’ need of self-knowledge and personality development. For example, transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass & Steidlmeier, 2005; Balyer; 2012) involves leaders’ moral maturity and the moral uplifting of followers. Authentic leadership (Walumba *et al.*, 2008; Avolio & Gardner, 2005) stresses leaders’ high moral character

and their focus on followers' growth. Virtuous leadership theory (Havard, 2007, 2011, 2018) put forward the image of a 'virtuous leader' who seeks to grow in virtue by focussing on the virtue growth of his/her followers. Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1995, 2010; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003; Cerit, 2010; Van Dierendonck, 2011), which is based on the leaders' psychological 'need to serve', has also a focus on followers and their growth, and stresses leaders' virtues such as humility and wisdom. This model was also used in recent studies about school principals (Kasun, 2009; Ekinici, 2015; Salameh, 2011).

Several school-leadership development programmes for CE offered in the USA and UK directly address the principals' training needs for CE. We describe them shortly below as the international background of the Programme presented in section 3.

\* The Center for Character and Citizenship at the University of Missouri–St. Louis (USA), building on the previous project *Cultivating Virtue in Leaders* (2016-2017), has established the Leadership Academy in Character Education (LACE)<sup>5</sup>. This year-long professional development experience for school-leaders includes monthly full day workshops (about servant leadership, 'noble purpose', and servant leaders' virtues – forgiveness, courage, foresight, empowerment, stewardship, gratitude), collaborative reflections (about school mission, vision, and values statements, CE assets, gaps and obstacles, staff climate, stakeholders' involvement and sustainability), the development of a site-specific CE plan, and site visits. The project also includes the CE for Emerging Leaders (CEEL) programme for aspiring principals, which includes mentoring by exemplary CE principals.

\* The CE Institute at North Central College (NCC) at Illinois (USA) has several CE initiatives<sup>6</sup>: in their Educational Leadership Programme for aspiring principals, the Institute is emphasising both leaders' character development and the importance of building a school infrastructure of character; and it plans to launch in 2021 the Cultures of Character Academy for principals and administrative leaders interested in learning how to use CE to facilitate school improvement.

\* The CE initiative CharacterPlus (USA) offers support to schools based on the 11 principles of Character.org (2018) through the programme "The CharacterPlus way"<sup>7</sup>, which is organized in four steps: 'Readiness', aiming at selecting a school-leadership team (SLT) for CE; 'Implementation', including an initial training for the SLT, 'Advanced', and 'Sustainability', offering further training for the SLT, customized professional development based on school needs, and regular updating of the school action plan.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://characterandcitizenship.org/programs/leadership-academy>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.northcentralcollege.edu/character-initiatives>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.characterplus.org/characterplusway>

\* The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue of the University of Birmingham (UK) has recently launched the online free course *Leading Character Education in Schools*<sup>8</sup>, which provides a comprehensive overview of theory and practice of leadership of CE. It includes 6 modules (introduction, character caught, character taught and sought, character outside of the classroom, staff and leadership, school community), containing personal and staffroom activities, self-evaluation tasks and video-interviews ('windows into schools'). This course complements the 3-year distance learning MA CE programme<sup>9</sup>, whose modules include 'Theories of character, virtue and flourishing', 'Research methods in CE', 'History and politics of CE', 'CE interventions in schools and organisations', 'CE leadership in schools and organisations', and 'The virtuous practitioner'.

\* The Association for Character Education (UK) has recently launched the initiative "Becoming a School of Character"<sup>10</sup>, which includes two 6-hour long professional development courses delivered in schools and colleges for leaders and teacher, with the aim to support leaders to achieve an integrated and whole-school approach to their CE. The courses draw on the recent research in CE and provide examples of best practice from Schools of Character Kitemark schools. They have a flexible module structure and provide practical tools and strategies that can be implemented to enhance character provision. Concretely, the course "Character and leadership: Achieving an integrated whole-school approach to character" includes the modules "Developing a school's character framework", "A whole-school approach to character-based curriculum (in-depth)" and "Developing pupil leadership".

*Conclusion of the review of literature.* The review of current leadership models and training programmes for CE illustrated the worldwide efforts of the scientific community to provide evidence-based support to school-leaders for implementing character and virtue education at school. Unfortunately, there is nothing like it in Latvia, excepting some short seminars for schoolteachers and some sporadic reminders about the legal requirement of including virtue education in the new school curriculum. The programmes analysed had inspired the format and contents of the Programme (section 3). However, they are mostly based on Anglo-Saxon cultural contexts and therefore they are not directly transferable to the Latvian context. What is needed in Latvia is rather a context-situated proposal, adapted to Latvian principals' needs and addressing the socio-cultural specificities of Latvia. The literature review helped to situate the Programme as a "boundary work" involving a partnership between university, municipalities, and school

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/2857/character-education/online-cpd-leading-character-education>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/2855/character-education/ma-character-education>

<sup>10</sup> <http://character-education.org.uk/professional-development-training>

principals, aiming to address principals' training needs, and using diverse teaching and learning strategies; and the research process presented in this study adopted the lens of participant perception.

Based on this theoretical background, the research questions guiding the study were formulated as follows:

- 1) What was the fit and feasibility of the Programme? Concretely, what was participants' perception of its usefulness, methods, activities, and materials?
- 2) How did participants perceive the influence of the Programme on their knowledgeability of the field and their leadership competence for CE?

### 3. Programme elaboration and implementation

The elaboration of the Programme was based on the analysis of school principals' current needs in Latvia (section 3.1), which helped to define the Programme goals, structure, learning outcomes and activities (3.2), whose choice was supported by scientific evidence and by the implementer's intentions and values (section 3.3). The practicalities of the Programme are summarized in section 3.4.

#### 3.1. Analysis of school principals' current needs in Latvia

Two sources were used for exploring the specific needs of Latvian principals in this field. The first one was a recent research report (Fernández González, 2019), which addressed the different understandings of character and virtue education within the Latvian education system, and principals' training needs in this field. This information was completed with several interviews and discussions with Latvian principals and heads of educational authorities in Riga and surroundings, which were done some weeks before starting the programme elaboration, in order to grasp principals' needs and expectations directly from the field.

The research presented in the report (Fernández González, 2019) involved more than 2250 respondents from different educational sectors, and the results showed a great diversity of understandings of what means character and virtue education. 159 respondents were school-leaders (n=127) and educational authorities (n=32). 86% of them believed that "schools should develop pupils' characters and encourage good values"; 75% - that facilitating pupils' moral growth is part of teacher's role; and 42% - that teachers were not sufficiently or absolutely not prepared for this work. Regarding the principals' training needs, school-leaders and educational authorities underlined the necessity of offering school-leaders practical educational opportunities based on real situations, in particular regarding the creation of a school culture supportive of CE; of addressing in school-leaders' career development plan the skills of communicating with parents about pupils' character growth; and of facilitating leaders' self-knowledge and personality development, because "*one should start with the improvement of his/her own personality and then s/he will be able to show an example, to inspire, to encourage pupils*" (a school-leader).

For complementing this information, in November – December 2019 two interviews with experienced principals of two public schools of Riga, which were known as being supportive of CE, took place. The goal of those interviews was to get first-hand information about the training needs of Latvian principals in this field. Both directors were supportive of the idea of a CPD programme for principals in the field because there are some individual initiatives, but what is missing is a systemic, well-thought approach. Regarding programme participants, it was suggested that they would be recruited on voluntary bases, and that at least two persons from each school



would come together for ensuring the transfer of knowledge and practices into the school life. It was suggested to recruit participants through an official institution, either a regional authority or a private training company, which would offer institutional support. And to address key players in the field (directors with prestige among their colleagues) for having long term impact. It was also suggested to stress that CE is not only for little schools which have time for it, but for any school, giving examples of larger schools implementing this kind of initiatives. Regarding the Programme contents, interviewees insisted on taking a very practical approach, including examples from Latvia and abroad, materials ready to be used, concrete instruments for assessing the school practices and models of school plans, as well as guidelines explaining step by step how to introduce CE at school. The programme content should also be linked with the current reform of educational content. Some theory would be necessary, but not too much because most of principals already know that it is important, but do not how to start and what to do. Theoretical explanations could be oriented to creating a common understanding of the terminology of CE across the education system, because there are still many differences. Regarding the practicalities, interviewees suggested to distribute the activities in 3-4 sessions of 2-3 hours each, in the afternoons, but not on Mondays (principals may be too busy starting the week) or Fridays (they may be too tired).

Based on this information, a preliminary conceptual plan was presented to two educational authorities (Riga and Riga surroundings). The concept was approved and an official description of the Programme, including goals, target public, learning outcomes, structure, activities, and methods, was prepared for starting the implementation. The main features are presented below.

### 3.2. Programme goals, learning outcomes, structure, activities, and methods

The ultimate goal of the Programme was to support principals for implementing CE at their school. The goal of the pilot trial was to check Programme fit and feasibility for further improvement and implementation at a larger scale (research question 1). An additional research goal was to investigate its perceived influence on participants' knowledgeability and leadership competence for CE (research question 2).

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (ILOs), based on the issues identified in the need analysis and the preliminary interviews, were formulated as follows: At the end of the Programme, participants will improve their leadership competence for CE by acquiring: ILO 1) an enhanced understanding of CE and the language of virtue, and of the importance of school-leaders' role for CE; ILO 2) an improved knowledge about personal and school values and about the way of working on them; ILO 3) the ability of using practical tools for planning, introducing and assessing the provision of CE at their school; ILO 4) the ability of collaborating with partners involved in pupils' CE (parents, teachers, etc.).

The Programme was structured in three sessions: the first one addressed theoretical knowledge and participants' self-knowledge about the language of values and virtues. This session was crucial, because "the limits of one's language are the limits of what one might intend and strive for" (Pring, 2004:130). The second session addressed frameworks and practices for CE at school. The third one, more practice-oriented, focussed on concrete materials and tools for the classroom and for school assessment.

**Table 1:** List and analytic description of Programme activities (by order of implementation)

Activities (source / scientific base)	Topic	Goal	Methods
<i>Day one</i>			
Introduction			
1. 'Control', 'influence' and 'non-control' zones (Covey, 1992)	Leader role	Self-knowledge	Individual reflection / team reflection / classroom sharing
2. Initial questionnaire	Assessment	Self-knowledge / research	Individual reflection
3. "Value list" ( <a href="http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_85.htm">www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_85.htm</a> )	Values	Self-knowledge	Individual reflection / team reflection / classroom sharing
4. "School critical events and values" (Jacques <i>et al.</i> , 2009).	Values	Self-knowledge	Individual reflection / team reflection / classroom sharing
5. Language of virtue – "Lost words"	Virtues	Conceptual knowledge	Individual reflection / explanation
6. Exploration of Jubilee centre's website ( <a href="http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/">www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/</a> )	Tool for school	Practical knowledge	Demonstration
<i>Day two</i>			
7. Sharing week impressions	Non pre-defined	Mutual knowledge	Classroom sharing
8. Framework for CE – analysis ( <a href="http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/527/character-education/framework">www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/527/character-education/framework</a> )	Tool school	Conceptual knowledge	Reading / team working / classroom sharing
9. Presentation "temperament, character and happiness" (Fernández González <i>et. al.</i> , 2019).	Virtues	Conceptual Knowledge	Lecture / classroom reflection
10. "From temperament to character" (Havard, 2018)	Virtues	Practical knowledge	Lecture / reading / individual reflection / classroom sharing
11. School as a character growth organization ( <a href="https://www.skola2030.lv/lv/istenosana/macibu-pieejam/macibu-organizacija-skola">https://www.skola2030.lv/lv/istenosana/macibu-pieejam/macibu-organizacija-skola</a> )	Tool for school	Practical knowledge	Reading / team reflection / classroom sharing
<i>Day three</i>			
12. "The market of materials"	Tool for school	Practical knowledge	Demonstration / reading
13. School assessment with "11 Principle" table ( <a href="https://exchange.character.org/introduction/">https://exchange.character.org/introduction/</a> )	Tool for school	Practical knowledge	Individual reflection / Classroom reflection
14. "Open thinking" activity	Tool for school	Practical knowledge	Individual reflection / peer sharing (long) / individual reflection
15. Final questionnaire	Assessment	Self-knowledge / research	Individual reflection
16. Final roundtable	Assessment	Research	Individual reflection / classroom sharing

The choice of activities was guided by the Programme ILOs, following the principle of constructive alignment theory (Biggs, 2011). 16 learning activities were implemented (see details in Table 1, and a short description of each activity in [Annexe 9.3](#)). Six of them aimed at improving participants' practical knowledge, presenting tools for implementing and communicating CE at school (ILO 3 and 4), and three activities addressed conceptual knowledge about the language of

values and virtues (ILO 1). Five activities addressed principals' knowledge about their school values and self-knowledge about their personal values (ILO 2). Finally, one activity sought to enhance participants' mutual knowledge for enhancing the emergence of a learning community, and three activities provided self-assessment opportunities and allowed data collection for the research.

Each activity included two to four different methods. Overall, 36 methods were used. For reporting them, we used Landøy, Popa, & Repanovici's (2020) classification in three groups of methods: 1) 'student centred or active-participatory methods' were the most often used ones: 23 times, including 'individual reflection' (11 times), 'team reflection' (5 times), 'participants' reading' (4 times), 'classroom reflection' (2 times) and 'peer reflection' (once); 2) Among the 'methods focused on the interaction between teacher and student', the most often used was 'classroom sharing' (8 times); and 3) 'expository methods' were used 6 times, including 'demonstration of materials' (3 times) and lecturing (twice).

### 3.3. Scientific evidence and author's values informing the intervention

Scientific evidence and the authors' experience and initial standing point informed the elaboration of the Programme. As regards the scientific evidence, some of the activities had an explicit scientific background (see Table 1). The Programme emphasized reflective practice, which is widely recognized to be useful and informing (Schön, 1987; McLaughlin, 1999; Loughram 2002). In addition to the traditional focus on principals' environment, behaviour, competencies and beliefs, participants were invited to perform 'core reflection' (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2006), which includes the consideration of practitioners' identity and mission. The inclusion of moral and ethical criteria in the reflection about practical action has been proved to help participants to understand the role of their own character and virtues when dealing with dilemmas (Harrison & Khatoun, 2017:23). In Latvian context also it has been suggested that educational leaders should be encouraged to reflect further on their temperament and character (Upenieks, 2002:92).

The programme facilitated reflecting together with colleagues, which is one of the most effective practices in CPD activities (Lewis, 2017, 0:50-1:50). The implementation of activities allowed for discussing real-life dilemmas brought about by participants (e.g., activity 7), creating 'dilemmatic spaces' (Fransson, & Grannäs, 2013) where dilemmas that have no clear right or wrong answers can be discussed and debated with peers. This *a posteriori* reflection on critical incidents is also an important component in CPD programmes (Harrison, & Khatoun, 2017; Shapira-Lishchinsky 2011).

Some of the activities were inspired by the author's recent learning experiences at the residential of the MA on December 2019 (e.g., activity 14) and in a recent seminar organized in January 2020

by a professional training company at the University of Latvia about ‘Leadership in education’, in which the author participated for learning new methods to use with adult learners (e.g., activity 1, 7 and 12).

The author’s initial intentions and values had also an impact on the elaboration of the programme because, as Pring (2004) put it, “individual teachers could be said to have a great deal of theory implicit within their practice. They come to teaching with a range of beliefs” (p. 128). In the interpretative paradigm of this study, awareness and elicitation of the researcher's preconceptions (Smith, 2010) give a deeper insight into the research process and its findings. My initial intentions and values informing the Programme were:

1) “Supporting” principals emotionally and professionally. I intended to manifest my personal interest in, and respect for them by listening carefully to their personal stories and expectations, and integrating them in the Programme, and creating the feeling that they were heard. I also wanted to provide them useful materials translated into Latvian.

2) Enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the field through lectures, practical activities about the ‘language of virtues’, materials and presentations. I had acquired this knowledge during the MA studies, and I wanted to share it. I also wished to help them to reflect about their own values and virtues.

3) Creating a ‘community of learning’. I wished to enhance their mutual communication and create a pleasant atmosphere in which everybody is involved in learning, working in groups, and exchanging experiences. I also wanted to reproduce some of the good learning experience I had at the last MA residential, in particular during the ‘Open thinking’ activity.

4) Modelling values and virtues during the Programme with my own attitude and work. I was eager to learn much from participants, keeping an open attitude and sharing myself my own experience with practical examples. The virtues that I wanted to display particularly well were humility and respect (they know their work better than I do), hope and joy (they have many challenges at work), sense of responsibility, and gratitude to them for their concern for pupils’ moral education and their effort of taking the course voluntarily.

5) Transforming the whole process in a research process. I was open with them about this from the beginning. I also reminded them this personal goal at other occasions: starting the round table at the end of each session, asking for their feedback about the usefulness of the concrete activities, before filling the questionnaires, etc.

### 3.4. Practicalities

The Programme was implemented by the author. In late 2019 two educational authorities from Riga and Riga surroundings announced it and 35 participants (13 from the municipality of Riga and 22 from Riga surroundings) signed-up on voluntary basis. The program took place in February-March 2020 for the two groups. Each group had three 3-hour long sessions every 2 weeks at its own location. One group in the centre of Riga on Wednesdays from 1 to 3 p.m. with some 24 participants, and the second group in Riga surroundings from 3 to 6 p.m. Each room had a computer with internet and a projector, a white board and other materials (sheet of paper, markers, post-it) for the group work. At the end of the course each participant received an official certificate of participation.

#### **4. Programme assessment: Methodology**

This section addresses the methodology used for assessing the Programme fit, feasibility, and influence. First, the underlying philosophical assumptions and the paradigm of the research are presented. Then the research instruments are described, as well as the data collection and analysis procedures. Finally, the limitations of the study and its ethical implications are discussed.

##### **4.1. Underlying assumptions to research**

The philosophical standing point of this work is that of the realistic transcendental personalism (Polo, 1996, 1998, 2003; Mounier, 1936; Maritain, 1947). This understanding of human beings and their development is based on the centrality of persons' interiority and sense of mission, the person's interpersonal relational transcendence, and virtuous activity as the manifestation of one's intimacy and transcendence. Methodologically, this research adopts a moderate constructivist approach. The idiographic approach was suitable for investigating the Programme feasibility, because qualitative research methods (open questions, focus group discussions, reflective journal) offered unique insights into how participants and researcher make sense of their experience during the Programme (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). However, the ideographic approach was combined with a realistic objectivist methodological approach based on quantitative methods (rating questions and numeric assessment). This use of mixed methods (Creswell, 2014) enriched the perspectives of the research.

This study adopted the practitioner action research paradigm (Efron, & Ravid, 2019), in which practitioners undertake research with the aim to provide useful insights that might improve their future practice. Practitioner action research is used in educational leadership for enhancing professional or organizational development (Anderson, & Herr, 2009:155). Action research is also used in the field of CE for exploring issues related to normative ethics and pupils' flourishing (Walker, 2009). In this paradigm, the involvement of practitioners in the research process is crucial, and the research should be seen as a part of practice rather than an addition to it (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). According to Pring (2004), what distinguishes action research is the kind of knowledge it produces: one that is practical, tentative, and open to criticism. Part of action research is "to delineate those distinctive features of the situation which limit the possibility of generalization" (Pring, 2004:137).

*Curriculum research and feasibility studies.* Within the practitioner action research paradigm, this study adopted the perspective of curriculum research. According to Stenhouse (1975), a curriculum can be defined in research terms. In this study, the Programme was seen as a research project, a "set of tentative prescriptions about how learning might take place and how certain values might be made concrete in the teaching" (Pring, 2004:125). Curriculum action research

considers participants' expectations, beliefs, values and understanding for framing the research: "Context, teacher perceptions and beliefs, learner aspirations and interpretations of the situation, all affect the way in which curriculum intentions are realized in practice" (Pring, 2004:136). Curriculum action research also considers participants' and teachers' values: "Action research, in examining the implementation of a curriculum proposal, involves ... a critique of the values which are intrinsic to the practice. Such a critique will reflect the values which the teacher brings to the practice" (p. 135). Those elements (i.e., participants' expectations, understandings, beliefs, and values) were integrated in the design of the research, and this explain also why the authors' values informing the intervention were addressed in section 3.3.

This study is a pilot and feasibility trial of a programme for school-leaders. Eldridge and colleagues (2016) distinguished pilot and feasibility studies. According to them, a feasibility is an overarching concept about "whether something can be done, should we proceed with it, and if so, how", while a pilot study is a subset of feasibility studies which "asks the same questions but also has a specific design feature: in a pilot study a future study, or part of a future study, is conducted on a smaller scale" (Eldridge *et al.*, 2016:1). Therefore, "all pilot studies are feasibility studies but not all feasibility studies are pilot studies" (*ibid.*, p. 8). In the field of curriculum research, 'feasibility' considers whether it is possible to run a successful program (Arthur *et al.*, 2015:12) and relates to "how successfully the trial was designed and conducted" (Davison *et al.*, 2014:36). In general, curriculums feasibility trials aim also at exploring "how to determine whether there are tangible, positive outcomes" of the program (Davison *et al.*, 2014:5). In this study, those two aspects (usefulness and influence) of curriculums feasibility trials were embedded in the research questions 1 and 2, respectively.

*Methodological choices of the study.* The exploration of the perceived Program usefulness (RQ1) used the case study research approach. Case studies aim "to illuminate the general by looking at the particular" (Denscombe, 2014:54). In this form of action research, an educational activity is carried out and data are gathered using different research instruments. Arthur *et al.* (2015) recommend using triangulated evidence drawn from a mixture of research methods in curriculum feasibility studies (p. 18). This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods, and data were gathered using questionnaires, oral feedback from participants (short-term feedback and a final focus group discussion) and a self-reflective journal. The triangulation of results was expected to generate evidence feeding a 'feedback loop' (Bryman, 2016) for Programme improvement between the sessions and overall.

For exploring the Programme influence on participants' perceived knowledgeability and leadership competence (RQ2), a quasi-experimental approach without control group (Cohen,

Manion, & Morrison, 2011) was adopted, using pre- and post-test. The hypothesis was that Programme would make a difference in participants' perceived knowledgeability of, and leadership competence for, CE. This part of the study did not pretend to establish the Programme influence on leaders' knowledge of and leadership competence development, but, like other similar studies (Arthur *et al.*, 2015:12), it explores participants' perceptions of the Program influence on those aspects.

The use of a randomised controlled trial (RCT), which is the best approach for demonstrating the effectiveness of a novel educational intervention (Torgerson, & Torgerson, 2013) was discarded because the impossibility of providing a solid random allocation and of getting a number of groups big enough for a robust RCT. Interviews could have produce interesting insights about the Programme, but the lack of time of participants due to their statutory obligations made it practically impossible (open questions were used instead, for capturing participants views). Observations were also discarded because this method did not fit well with the research questions, which were not centred on participants' behaviours but on their perceptions of the programme fit and feasibility.

#### 4.2. Research instruments

The research instruments included a questionnaire, a reflective journal, and a focus group discussion. They were designed by the author in alignment with the Programme activities and the intended learning outcomes of the Programme (Biggs, 2011). We describe them below.

##### 4.2.1. Description of the questionnaires

The use of feedback evaluation questionnaire in feasibility studies is quite frequent (e.g., Kuyken *et al.*, 2013; CMFR, 2020), in particular pre- and post-tests of a programme trial, as they allow to compare and quantify the influence of the intervention. The initial questionnaire (see [Annexe 9.1](#)) had 13 questions distributed in the following sections: two initial open questions about participants' strengths and expectations; three pre-test questions (two about participants' perceived knowledgeability and one about perceived leadership competence); one multiple choice question about the role of school in moral education, based on an existing survey (Populus, 2013); six open questions addressing their beliefs about their role as leaders and moral exemplars, their own character growth mindset, and collaboration with families; and the demographic section.

The final questionnaire (see [Annexe 9.2](#)) had 10 questions distributed in the following sections: a battery of 8 items (quality criteria elaborated, validated and implemented in regular bases by the educational authority of Riga) to be rated in a 4-point scale; four general open questions about the most useful take-away of the Programme, the work of the lector, what was missing in the



Programme, and other recommendations; the three post-test questions; a battery of 26 rating items (7-point scale) about perceived usefulness of each activity and material; and the demographics section.

#### 4.2.2. “My reflective journal”

The reflective journal was chosen because this method allows to ‘see’ better the processes in which one is directly involved (Fulwiler, 1986). It also facilitates researchers’ self-knowledge, because its ‘autobiographical approach to learning’ (Hettich, 1976) is appropriate for self-discovery (Dillon, 1983) and for improving metacognitive processes (McCrinkle, & Christensen, 1995). The researcher’s intention writing the journal was to collect fresh evidence about the research question (participants’ values and beliefs, feasibility, and perceived influence of the Programme). It was written in what Moon (2010) calls ‘Level 3 - critical rationality’, focussing on incorporating consideration of moral and ethical criteria into discourse about practical action (p. 17).

Overall, it contained 13500 words (see [Annexe 9.4.](#)) distributed in 6 entries, one after each session. Each entry was structured in the following sections: 1) “Facts”: what was done before and during the session, including author’s feelings and reflections and participants’ feedback about what worked well, what did not work; 2) “shining eyes” moments: what the author perceived as the highlights of the session, regarding participants’ engagement, awe moments, etc.; 3) “the unexpected”: what surprised the author in what participants said or did; 4) “moral and ethical attitudes” the author perceived in himself and in participants; 5) “My take away”: what the author learn from the session, what are the take-away from each session. It could be about the way the session was led, the materials offered, the methods, etc.

#### 4.2.3. Final focus group discussion

Focus group discussion was chosen as research method because it allows to “explore the perceptions experiences and understandings of a group of people who have some experience in common with regard to a situation or event” (Kumar, 2019:193), in this case, the Programme. At the end of the Programme, participants were asked to share their general impressions (see [Annexe 9.5](#)): each one of them was invited to participate, and all made comments about what they liked best, what they missed or what they considered to be most useful. The author was giving the floor to them, took notes of what they said, and transcribed them afterwards.

### 4.3. Data collection and analysis

Thirty-five respondents participated in the research. They filled the questionnaires on paper at the beginning of first session and at the end of last session. The data were entered in an online survey

form created for this end, for facilitating data transfer to the data analysis software and data cleaning.

Regarding the demographics, 33 participants were females. The overall work experience oscillated between 4 and 44 years ( $M=22.69$ ;  $SD=12.18$ ), and they had a school-leadership experience between 3 and 39 years ( $M=12.03$ ;  $SD=11.32$ ). There were six school principals, 23 vice-principals and six teachers. 30 participants worked in public schools and five in private schools. Three participants worked in primary schools (grade 1 to 4), six in lower secondary school (grades 1 to 9), 24 in upper secondary schools (grades 1 to 12), and two in special education schools. 60% of the participants worked in schools with less than 600 pupils, but there were also four participants from school with more than 1200 students and four from schools with less than 150 students. This large diversity of participants and institutions provided enriching insights for the research.

Quantitative data were analysed using MS Excel and SPSS 26. Qualitative data were analysed using AQUAD 7 and NVivo 11, using thematic analysis, attaching codes to text fragments in the data. Open coding was used for the analysis of open answers of the questionnaire and for the reflective diary.

#### 4.4. Limitations of the study

One of its limitations is inherent to the practitioner action research paradigm: given the author's role as Programme creator, implementor and researcher, the question of objectivity rises because "prejudice, self-interest, familiarity, defensiveness would surely distort the research of the teacher" (Pring, 2004:123). In addition, this study was adapted to the time constraints of participants (school directors) and was therefore quite short and of a small scale. The limited sample of 35 participants does not allow for generalization. In addition, their voluntary participation indicates that they had already an initial interest and predisposition for such a programme which could bias their answers. Another possible source of bias is the friendly relation that was established between the researcher and the participants: they knew that the Programme was created by the researcher, and it is therefore possible that they might have omitted to mention aspects they liked less for avoiding deceiving the researcher.

Other limitations are linked to the methods used: this was a study of a pilot program in its first implementation, and therefore the methodology chosen was exploratory rather than evaluative. Reliance on participants self-reports in the questionnaires is another limitation of the study (Duckworth, & Yeager, 2015). The trial was designed as a quasi-experiment without control group, which also limits its reliability. In addition, part of the evaluation of the Programme influence was based in a pre-post-test with only some weeks in between, which limited its reliability because "the correlation may be spuriously affected by the candidate's memory of

having taken the same test a short time ago” (Arthur *et al.*, 2012:50). Finally, the reflective journal was analysed by its own author, which could be a source of bias or blindness in the definition of the themes implicit in the narrative.

#### 4.5. Ethical considerations

In practitioner research, a conflict can arise from holding the dual roles of practitioner and researcher (BERA, 2018): “the personal engagement and insider stance that are central to action research have complicated the effort to develop workable standards for research ethics” (Zeni, 2009:254). For coping with this inconvenient, the research received the supervisor’s required approval for a Practitioner Inquiry in Education (PIE) assignment at the University of Birmingham. Participants’ informed consent was requested using the Consent Form (see Additional file). For confidentiality reasons, analysis was done at group level, not individual level. And for matching pre-test and post-test, each questionnaire had a confidential participant code known only by the respondent and the researcher.

## **5. Findings: Respondents' perception of the Programme feasibility and its influence**

The findings are presented in three sub-sections: participants' initial beliefs and expectations, participants' perceptions of Programme feasibility, and their perceptions of Programme influence. The results are presented by combining quantitative methods (scale ratings, numeric self-assessment, multiple-choice questions) and qualitative methods (open questions, participants' activity reports). At the end of each section, a reflection on the main themes emerging from the data is presented, using different visualizations.

### **5.1. Situating the findings: participants' initial expectations, beliefs, and values**

Participants' initial expectation, beliefs and values were the reference point for their value judgements regarding the Programme feasibility and influence. This background is presented here for situating the findings.

#### **5.1.1. Participants' initial attitude and expectations**

The initial questionnaire started with two open questions about participants' possible contribution to, and expectations for the Programme. Answering to the question "How can I be useful to others during this programme?", most of respondents pointed to their experience (n=26 out of 47 total utterances), their positive attitude (n=7), and their desire to share (n=5). Four participants mentioned their knowledge of the Special education field.

Regarding their expectations for the Programme (53 utterances), respondents mentioned the desire of acquire new tools (26 times), in particular methods to work with students (n=13) and families (n=7). Some mentioned their desire to improve their theoretical knowledge of the field (n=6), to exchange experience with other participants (n=5), and to acquire tools for enhancing collaboration and motivation at school and for facilitating self-growth. Summarizing, three main themes (expectations) emerged: collaborating and sharing, acquiring practical tools, and enhancing professionalism by acquiring new knowledge.

#### **5.1.2. Participants' initial beliefs and institutional values**

The initial questionnaire included four open questions about how participants understood their role as school-leaders in pupils' moral growth, the influence of their moral stance on students, their perceived need of personal moral growth, and the conditions that facilitate them to grow.

Overall, 227 utterances were recorded. Regarding their role in pupils' moral growth (54 utterances), all respondents believed on the importance of their role. In 44.5% of the utterances (n=24) they perceived themselves as role models for students, other teachers, and parents. Ten utterances referred to their leadership role at school level (officially supporting and organizing

moral education, creating a school atmosphere supportive of CE, and enhancing collaboration), and eight times they mentioned directly their role of supporting, inspiring, and motivating students.

Analysing their answer to the question “Do you think that your personal moral stance, your values and virtues, influence the moral development of pupils? Why? (If yes) In what way?”, 48 utterances were found. 20 utterances (41.5%) referred to the impact they can have through the example of their own virtues, in particular being coherent, and 17 utterances (35.4%) addressed the importance of cultivating two-way relationships with students: speaking with them, being open with them about one’s feelings and values, giving them time and attention, adapting to their needs, and providing opportunities for mutual collaboration.

Regarding their perceived need and motivations for personal moral growth (49 utterances), all respondents, excepted one, believed that they need to grow in this domain. Many respondents mentioned that growing is necessary in any field (23 times, 47%). Some of them specifically reported a desire to grow in virtue (8 times), to improve self-knowledge and to get new experiences and perspectives. Some respondents were motivated to grow in order to offer the best to their students (4 times), and others were motivated to develop further due to the need to adapt to the rapid changes in society (4 times).

The analysis of the question: “In what way and under what conditions does your moral development happens best? What are the main obstacles for your moral development?” revealed 76 utterances: 60 referred to growth facilitators, and 16 – to growth barriers. The main facilitator was ‘interaction with others’ (22 times), including speaking with and listening to colleagues and students, collaboration, seeing good examples in others, and meeting inspiring people. Reflecting as a way of growing also was often mentioned (18 times), and this included individual reflection, reading, attending courses, and praying. Another growth facilitator often mentioned was ‘acquiring experience’ (11 times). Some respondents mentioned that they grow better in a familiar environment where they feel sure and supported (4 times), and there were also references to the benefits for personal moral growth of forgiveness, overcoming one’s stubbornness and fighting back egoistic inclinations.

Summarizing participants’ beliefs regarding themselves, several themes emerged: the central role of collaboration and reflection for growing; the importance of a friendly and motivating atmosphere of mutual support and trustful communication; and the importance of their own personal values as role models, in particular – coherence.

As regards respondents’ beliefs about the mission and values of their institution, the questionnaire included a multiple-choice question about the role of school in developing students’ character (see [Annexe 9.1](#) question 3). All except one participant believed that “Schools should develop its

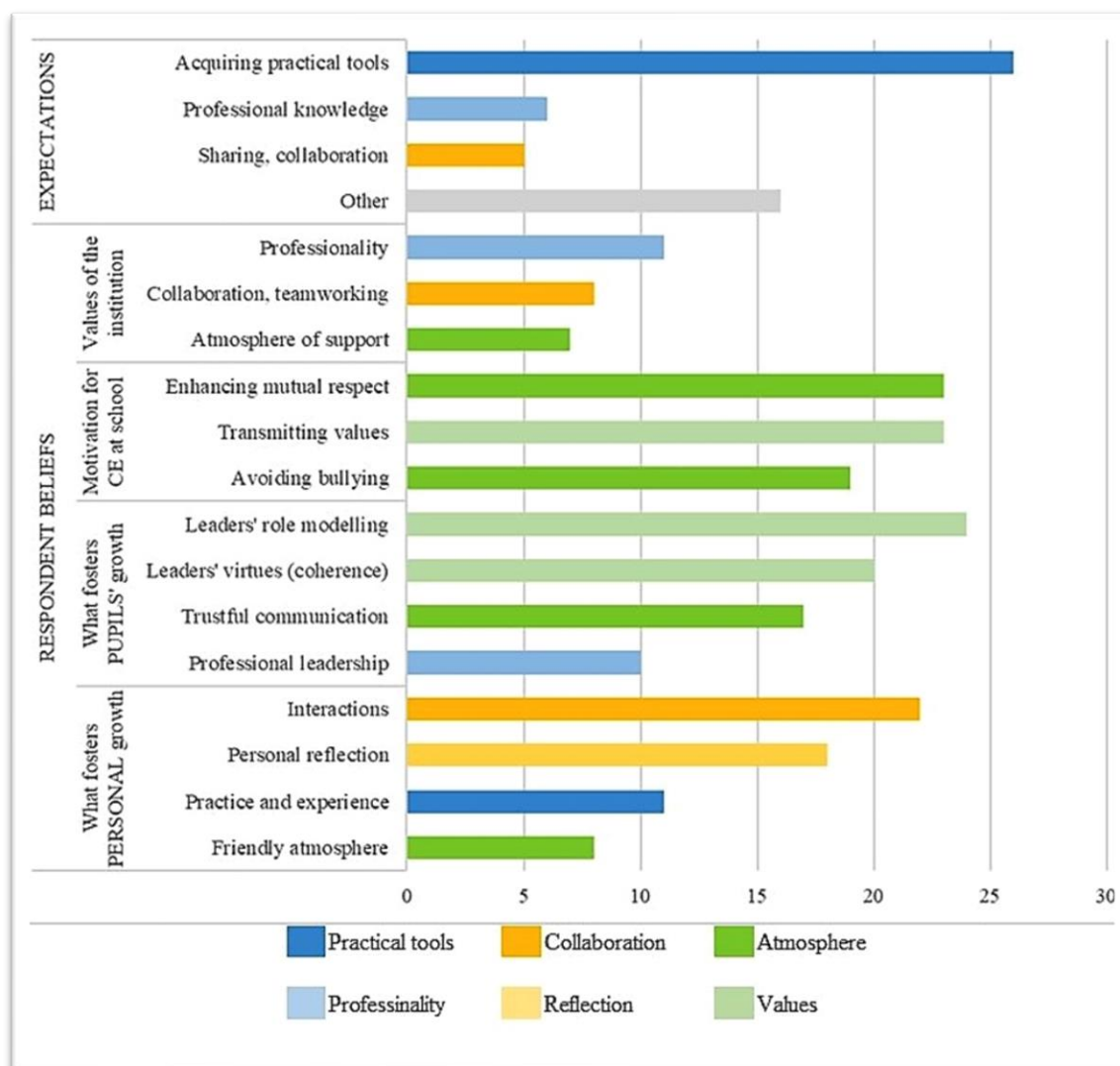
pupils' characters and encourage good values in its students". The most often picked reasons for this belief were that "We all must instil good values in the next generation" and that "Respecting others is especially important today" (23 times each), and that "There are too many issues with bullying etc." (19 times). These three choices point to participants' broad concern about the whole of society beyond the school context, while the remaining choices ("Schools have become too exam-focussed" and "Teachers are role models"), which were picked less frequently (14 and 9 times respectively), were rather school-specific.

In addition to the questionnaires, the activities 3 and 4 (see Table 1) were useful for collecting information about participants' institution values. 47 references to school values were recorded. The most often mentioned value was 'professionalism' (11 times), including 'responsibility' and 'excellence'. Respondents often mentioned 'collaboration' and 'teamworking' (9 times) and other related civic virtues, such as 'mutual support', 'empathy', and 'tolerance' (7 times). Next came 'happiness' and 'joy' (3 times) and 'feeling of security' (3 times). Other values mentioned were freedom, vision, and the ability of introducing changes.

Summarizing the participants' beliefs about their institution, the main themes that emerged were the importance of collaboration and sharing among teachers and with parents; the relevance of a school atmosphere of mutual respect (without bullying); the necessity of working on the transmission of values to the new generations; and 'professionalism' and 'responsibility' as core school values.

### ***Summary of participants' initial expectations and beliefs***

Overall, several recurrent themes emerged from the exploration of participants' initial expectations and beliefs (see Figure 1). Some of them were directly related to professional competence (in blue): acquiring practical tools was one of their central expectations, and their desire of enhancing their professional knowledge of the field appeared both in their initial expectations and in their beliefs regarding how to grow. Another thematic group was related to sharing and communicating (in orange): participants expected opportunities for sharing with colleagues and strongly believed that reflection and collaboration are necessary for personal growth. A third thematic group was related to common values and a friendly atmosphere (in green): participants were motivated to implement CE at school mainly for transmitting values to the young generations and enhancing mutual respect, and one of their strongest beliefs was the necessity for them to embody virtues with coherence and to establish a friendly atmosphere of trustful communication as a condition for pupils' and personal character growth.



**Figure 1:** Participants' expectations and beliefs: frequencies of main themes

## 5.2. Programme feasibility: respondents' perceptions

The findings related to the first research question (*What was the feasibility of the Programme? Concretely, what was participants' perception of the usefulness of its methods, activities, and materials?*) are presented in this section. Three quality criteria of feasibility were used for structuring the account of participants' perceptions about the Programme: participants' overall assessment of the Programme (section 5.2.1), assessment of the Programme materials, activities and methods (5.2.2), and assessment of the lector (5.2.3). Information about those criteria was gathered using questionnaires, a reflective journal written by the researcher, and a final focus group discussion with participants. Those sources were integrated reporting the results of each section.

### 5.2.1. Participants' overall assessment of the programme

Participants' overall satisfaction with the programme was captured from three sources: the retention rate of the Programme, participants' willingness to recommend it to a colleague, and analysing the Programme fit to participants' expectations, understandings, beliefs, and values.

In the final questionnaire, almost all participants reported that they would recommend this program to a colleague ( $M=6.32$  in a 7-point Likert scale;  $SD=0.905$ ), which points to a high satisfaction level. As regards the Programme recruitment and retention rate, which in feasibility studies are key indicators of quality (Davison *et al.*, 2014), in both implementations of the Programme (in Riga and Riga surroundings), the maximum participant threshold fixed by organizers (12 and 25 respectively) was reached in some weeks and new inscriptions could not be accepted. The number of absents per session oscillated between 1 and 4 persons, mostly due to academic obligations at their school and to sicknesses, and the overall number of actual participants was stable in the three sessions (overall 31, 30 and 32 respectively). Three participants in the first session invited to the next session a new colleague from their school. Participants' stability and initiative to invite their colleagues point to their interest in and satisfaction with the Programme, and therefore to the overall success of the feasibility trial.

For analysing the Programme fit to participants' initial expectations, beliefs, values and understandings, two methods were used: participants' rating of a battery of items in the final questionnaire, and open questions. The battery of items captured eight quality criteria that corresponded to possible expectation of participants: clear understanding of Programme goals (A); achievement of Programme goals (B); use of appropriate methods (C); acquisition of new knowledge and skills (D); possibilities for active participation (E); consideration of participants' needs and experience (F); time availability for implementing the activities (G); and acquisition of useful practical knowledge (H). All the quality criteria were rated very positively (see Table 2) with a Mode of 4 out of 4 in all criteria. The higher rated aspects were the opportunities for active participation offered by the Programme (E) ( $M=3.96$ ,  $SD=0.18$ ) and its practical usefulness (H) ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=0.46$ )

**Table 2:** Rating of the Program according to the quality criteria (4-point scale)

Rank	Quality criteria	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
1	E I was given the possibility to participate and use my new knowledge/skills	3.96	4	0.189
2	H I know where how to use my new knowledge/skills in my work	3.71	4	0.460
3	A The goals were clearly understood	3.68	4	0.476
4	C The methods were appropriate	3.61	4	0.567
5	F My needs and experience were considered	3.61	4	0.567
6	D I got new knowledge, understanding, skills	3.57	4	0.573
7	G The time allotted to activities was appropriate	3.57	4	0.690
8	B The goals were reached	3.43	4	0.690

Participants' expectations, beliefs, values and understandings were also captured in their answers to the open questions of the questionnaires. Overall, 171 unities of meaning were coded. 84 utterances (49%) referred to the quality of the Program itself. Among them, 22 utterances gave an

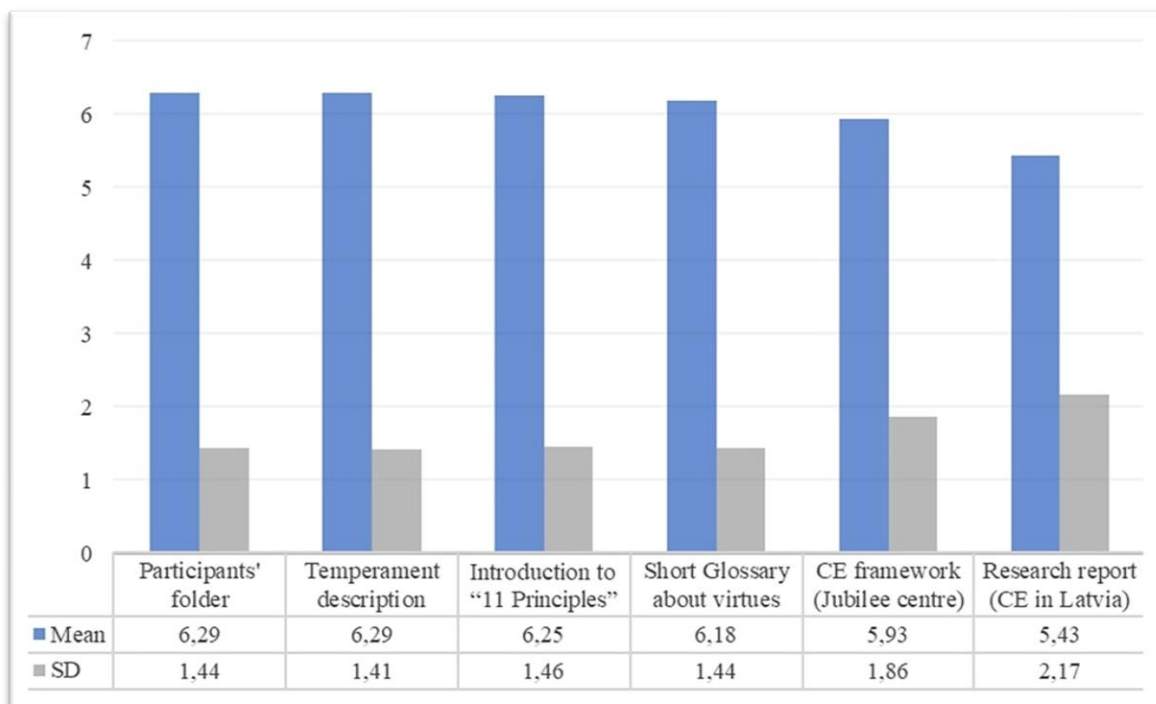


overall positive evaluation of the Programme usefulness and expressed gratitude. The most often mentioned positive points were: the quality of the work (18 references), in particular the clarity of the lectures (“*clear and fully understandable contents and ideas*”, respondent 8), the novelty of ideas and methods, the practical examples and the time given to reflect; the experiences shared by others and the possibility of sharing one’s own experiences and to collaborate (16 references); the resources offered (14 references), including online materials and books; the topicality of the contents (8 references); and the general good atmosphere: as a respondent put it, “*a fantastic feeling of being supported by the colleagues and the lector*” (respondent 11).

Summarising participants’ overall assessment of the Programme, the most relevant themes that emerged were the reflective and participative character of the Programme and the amount of experiences shared; the practical usefulness of the resources and the methods presented; the overall professionalism of the programme; and the atmosphere of mutual support and the values underlining the Programme.

#### 5.2.2. Participants’ assessment of the Programme materials, activities, and methods

Participants were asked to assess the Programme materials in the final questionnaire (see Figure 2). All materials were rated as ‘Very useful’ by most of participants (Mode=7 in a 7-point Likert scale). The participants’ folder and the material about the temperaments received the highest rates ( $M=6.29$ ) with the lowest standard deviation. The highest standard deviations appeared assessing the research report ( $SD=2.168$ ) and the “Framework for character education” ( $SD=1.864$ ).



**Figure 2:** Participants’ assessment of the usefulness of materials (7-point Likert scale)

Information about participants’ assessment of the Programme activities was collected both through the last questionnaire, the author’s reflective journal and the final focus group. As regards the questionnaire, the Figure 3 illustrates participants’ assessment of the 16 learning activities of the Program in a 7-point scale (for better situating the comments to these results presented below, please refer to the analytic description of activities in Table 1).

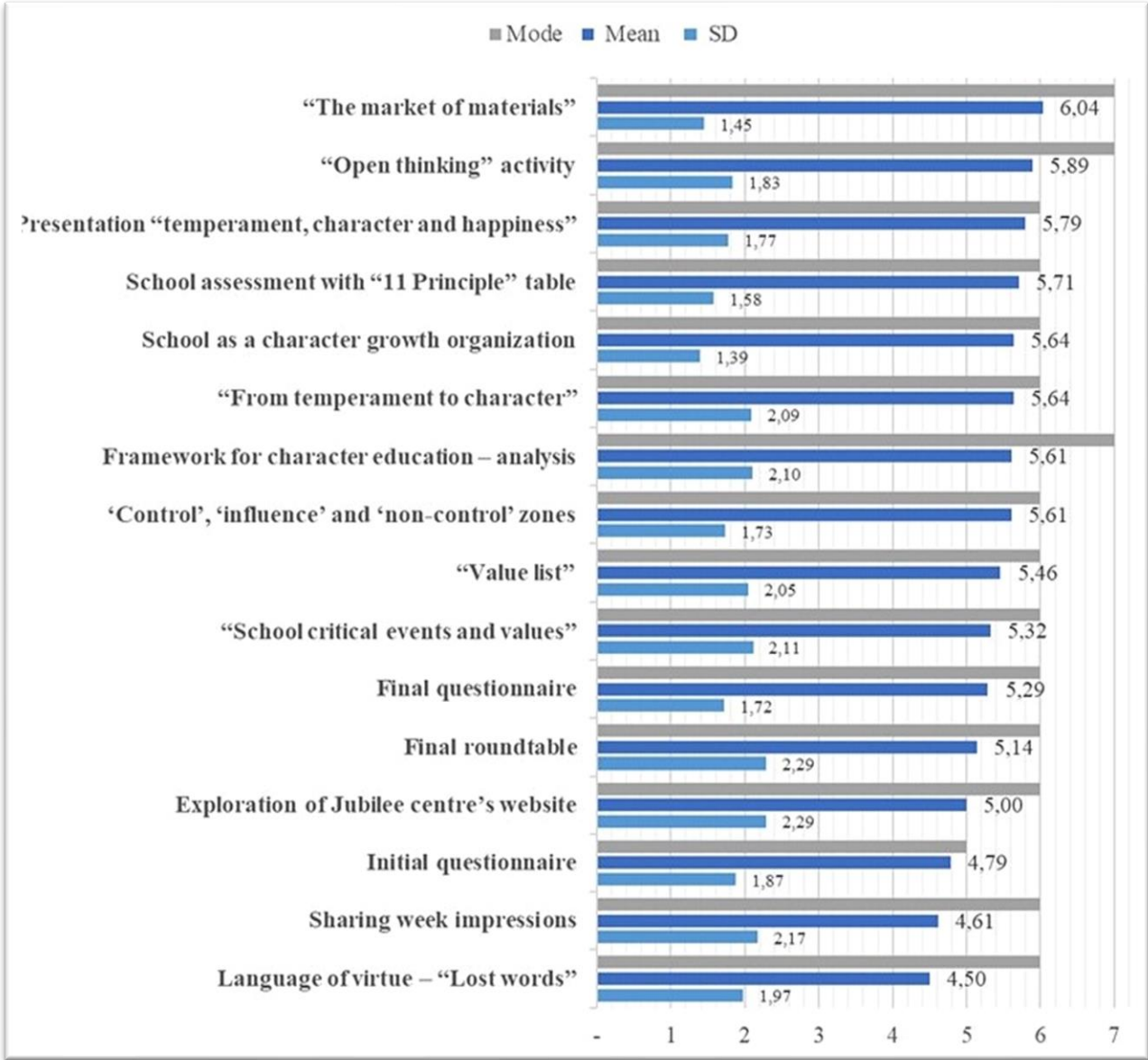


Figure 3: Participants’ assessment of the learning activities (ranked by Mean)

The most appreciated activities were “The market of materials” and the “Open thinking” activity (Mo=7). Both aimed at improving participants’ practical knowledge of tools to be used at school. The first one used the method of sharing lectors’ knowledge and giving participants the possibility of exploring the presented materials. The method of the “Open thinking” activity had a strong

focus on personal reflection and long peer sharing. As a participant commented in the focus group, “*This was an amazing experience ... It was really very useful, because you get many different perspectives to your own problem. It is not so much about finding the solutions right now, but about thinking wider*”. The two following activities (the presentation “Temperament, character and happiness” and the “School assessment with the “11 Principle” table”) presented similar characteristics: the latter aimed at giving practical knowledge of tool for schools, with a focus on individual and classroom reflection methods, while the former aimed at sharing lectors’ conceptual knowledge about virtues using a lecture and a classroom reflection. Finally, the six activities with the lowest rating included all the ‘assessment’ activities and ‘single-method’ activities, and activities using ‘individual reflection’ not combined with sharing.

The researcher’s reflective journal (see [Annexe 9.4](#)) was analysed using NVivo 11 software, reading it through and retrieving keywords which helped to find positive references to the Programme activities and methods (e.g., ‘good’, ‘well’, ‘interest\*’, ‘attenti\*’, ‘like’, etc.). Overall, 26 themes emerged from the data (see Table 3). Twelve themes referred to lector’s attitudes (e.g., ‘listening to participants’, ‘friendly support’, ‘flexibility’), 10 themes – to the methods (e.g., ‘participants share’, ‘reflection + sharing’, ‘lector share’) and 4 themes – to organizational aspects (e.g., ‘preparation’, ‘time management’). Seven themes referred to things to be avoided.

**Table 3:** Frequency of themes (attitudes, activities, and methods) in ‘My reflective journal’

Rank	Themes ‘to retain’	Category	Freq.	%	Themes ‘to avoid’	Category	Freq.	%	
1	participants share	method	29	12.8%	interrupting participants	attitude	3	1.3%	
2	listening to participants	attitude	25	11.1%	materials in English	method	2	0.8%	
3	friendly support	attitude	21	9.3%	bad preparation	organization	2	0.8%	
4	lector facilitates	attitude	19	8.4%	running out of time	organization	2	0.8%	
5	reflection + sharing	method	16	7.1%	scrolling on the screen	method	1	0.4%	
6	preparation	organization	16	7.1%	little friendly support	attitude	1	0.4%	
7	flexibility	attitude	15	6.6%	low participant number	organization	1	0.4%	
8	lector shares	method	14	6.2%					
9	personalized relation	attitude	13	5.8%					
10	lector demonstrates	method	9	4.0%					
11	Participants choose	attitude	8	3.5%					
12	new materials	method	8	3.5%					
13	practical ideas	method	7	3.1%					
14	creating surprises	attitude	5	2.2%					
15	modelling good example	attitude	5	2.2%					
16	smiling	attitude	5	2.2%					
17	self-directed peer sharing	method	5	2.2%					
18	explanation	method	3	1.3%					
19	using video	method	3	1.3%					
<i>Total</i>			226	95%	<i>Total</i>			12	5%
<b>Overall: 238</b>									

Overall, 238 utterances were found. Most of them (N=226; 95%) referred to positive themes. The method with most positive utterances (which was also the highest ranked theme overall) was ‘participants share’ (29 times), followed by ‘reflection + sharing’ (16 times) and ‘lector shares’

(14 times). Three attitudes appeared in the top four ranked themes: ‘listening to participants’ (25 times), ‘friendly support’ (21) and ‘lector facilitates’ (19), followed by ‘flexibility’ (15 times) and ‘personalized relation’ (13 times). The organization theme ‘preparation’, which is conceptually related to the theme ‘professionalism’, also appears quite often (16 times). Among the themes ‘to avoid’, the most often mentioned was ‘interrupting participants’. In the final focus group there were also echoes of those themes, as for example: “*there was a lot of positive spirit during all the sessions*” (respondent 5).

In order to find correlations between those themes in the reflective journal, ‘Node overlaps’ and their Pearson correlation coefficient were analysed using NVivo functionalities (see [Annexe 9.7](#)). Six themes were particularly related to each other (see Table 4).

**Table 4:** Frequency of ‘Node overlaps’ and main correlations in the reflective journal

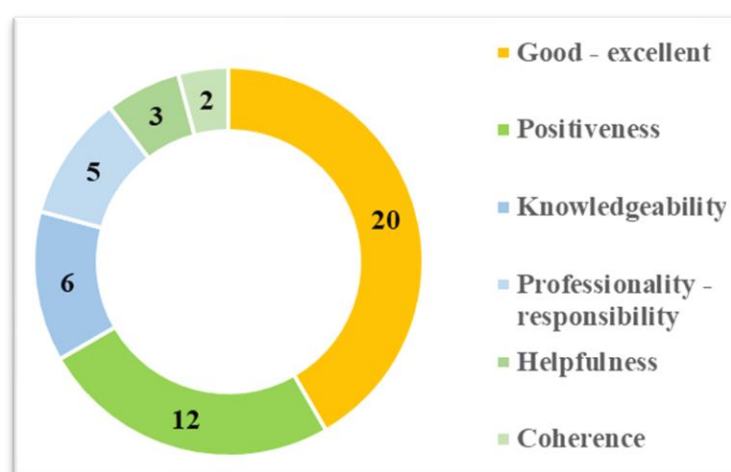
	No. 4	No. 5	No. 6	No. 10	No. 18	No. 24
No. 4: lector facilitates	19	2	1	0	3	3
No. 5: flexibility	2	15	3	1	3	2
No. 6: friendly support	1	3	21	6	0	5
No. 10: listening to participants	0	1	6 (r=.469)	25	2	11
No. 18: reflection + sharing	3	3	0	2	16	1
No. 24: participants share	3	2	5 (r=.423)	11 (r=.636)	1	29
Overlapping occurrences among these 6 themes	9	11	15	20	9	22
Overall overlapping occurrences (with all themes)	15	20	20	25	15	27

The theme ‘participants share’ (which had overall 27 overlaps with other themes) often overlapped and strongly correlated with ‘listening to participants’ (11 times,  $r=.636$ ) and with ‘friendly support’ (5 times,  $r=.469$ ). Friendly support was also recorded in the focus group discussion: “*In other seminars I also learnt many things, but this seminar was special in that, that I felt support from other colleagues, I realised that my problems are also their problems, that I am not alone.*” (respondent 3). These data indicate that ‘participants sharing’, ‘lector listening’ and ‘friendly support’ worked together. In addition, the theme ‘listening to participants’ (which had overall 25 overlaps with other themes) overlapped with ‘friendly support’ 6 times ( $r=.469$ ), which had 20 overlaps overall). The theme ‘flexibility’ (also 20 overlaps overall) overlapped several times with ‘friendly support’ (3 times) and with ‘reflecting and share’ (3 times)..

Summarizing, most of participants highly appreciated the Programme materials, methods, and activities. The positive aspects most often mentioned by them (recurrent themes) were ‘sharing’ combined with ‘reflection’, a supportive and friendly ‘atmosphere’, and ‘professionalism’. Those themes were similar to those revealed in the overall assessment of the program presented in the previous section. They were the most appreciated aspects of the Programme and it seems that their combination made it successful.

### 5.2.3. Participants' assessment of the lector and further suggestions

One of the final open questions addressed the assessment of the lectors' work (see Figure 4). The 48 utterances which were found referred to the lector in positive terms. 20 times he was characterized as 'good' or 'excellent'. The lector's virtue most often highlighted by participants was 'positiveness' (12 times, including such keywords as 'charismatic', 'enthusiast', 'inspiring', 'motivating', 'openness'). As a participant commented in the focus group, "*the smile with which you lead the whole seminar was very encouraging. This is the thing I will take with me*" (respondent 6). Other virtues mentioned were 'knowledgeability' (6 times), 'professionalism' and 'responsibility' (5 times), 'helpfulness' (3 times) and 'coherence' (2 times). One of the most personally relevant comments for the author was: "*Very interesting personality, a man whose narrative does not contradict his very essence as a person*" (respondent 12). As it can be seen, the aspects respondents put forward are coherent with three of the themes ('atmosphere', 'professionalism' and 'values') revealed in the previous sections.



**Figure 4:** Participant's assessment of the lector (frequencies)

In the final questionnaire, 36 utterances (21%) contained respondents' suggestions for improving the Programme. Most of them (22 times) suggested to address more in detail the methods to be used in the classroom: using more real examples and video materials, presenting concrete methods for dealing with families, assessing the implemented activities, improving teachers' self-knowledge, and introducing a warm-up activity at the beginning of each session. Several respondents suggested to extend the duration of the Programme (5 times), because 9 hours seemed too little for going more in-depth. As a respondent put it: "*there was somehow too little time. One more lesson [of 3 hours] can be added :), because everyone was very involved in the process*" (respondent 27). Others suggested to invite practitioners with different background (bigger schools, international experience), and to organize a similar program for parents at school. There

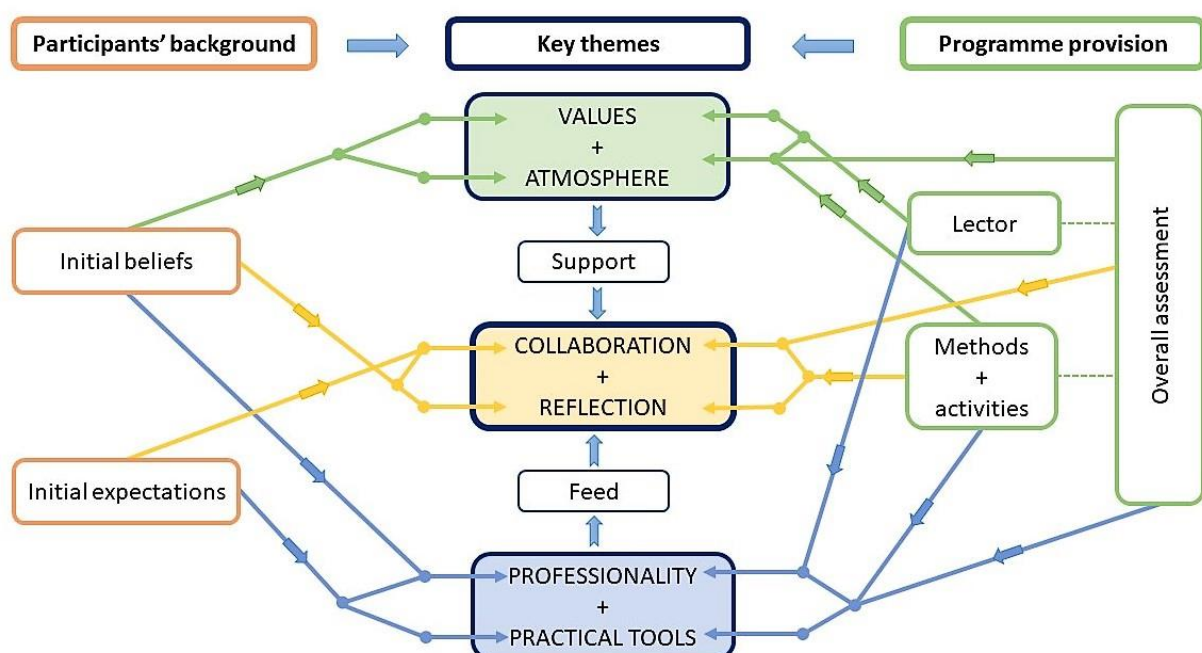


were also some rare, non-unanimous comments about the balance between sharing experiences and explaining more theory, and about the difficulty of implementing all they had learnt.

**Key findings regarding the Programme fit and feasibility: summary and reflection**

There were six recurrent themes in the data. The key to the success of the Programme seems to be the combination of participants’ ‘reflection’ and subsequent ‘collaboration’ and sharing. Those two themes were already present in the initial beliefs of participants and, as least regarding collaboration, in their expectations; and, as the final evaluation showed, several methods and activities successfully combined those two aspects. Two other recurrent themes were ‘professionalism’ and ‘practical tools’, which were also present in the initial expectations and beliefs of respondents, and whose provision was highly valued during the assessment of methods and activities, respectively. The provision of practical tools was also positively highlighted in the overall assessment of the Programme. Finally, the themes ‘values’ and ‘atmosphere’ of friendship respect and mutual support were also interwoven through the data, in particular in participants’ initial beliefs, and in their assessment of the lector, the methods and the Programme overall.

A reflection on these findings revealed that the six themes were conceptually interconnected (see Figure 5). The Programme ‘professionalism’ and ‘practical tools’ provided the necessary material for ‘reflection’ and ‘collaboration’, which in its turn were facilitated by the ‘values’ and the friendly ‘atmosphere’ of the Programme. Summarizing, it can be said that the Programme fitted participants beliefs and expectations, providing a variety of methods and activities led by a lector who, sharing professional knowledge and practical tools, enhanced participants’ personal reflection and sharing in a friendly context with underlying values of coherence and responsibility.





**Figure 5:** Key themes and their interconnection

### 5.3. Perceived influence of the Program

In addition to Programme fit and feasibility, this study addressed its perceived influence on participants' knowledgeability of the field and on their leadership competence for CE. Two convergent methods were used for comparing each aspect before and after the Programme: a quantitative one (a numeric self-assessment pre- and post- intervention); and a qualitative one (for knowledgeability – a comparison of pre- and post- self-generated definitions of key terms; and for leadership competence – a self-generated rationale for the numeric self-assessment).

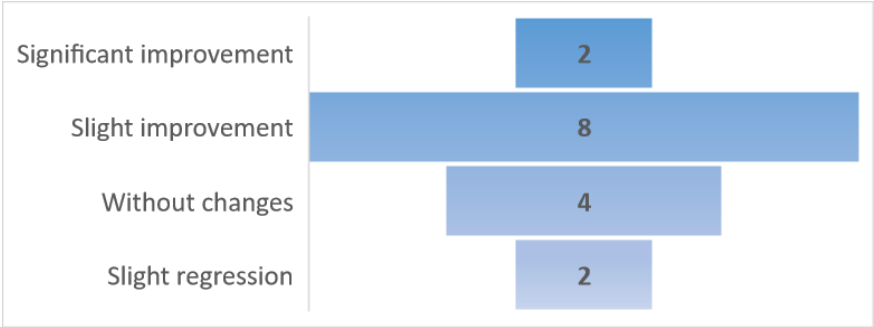
Respondents did the self-assessment regarding perceived knowledgeability by answering to the question “In your opinion, to what extent are you knowledgeable of the basic concepts of moral education (character, morals, temperament, moral habit, etc.)?” in a 7-point Likert scale (Figure 6). At the beginning of the Program the Mode of the data set was 5, but at the end of the program the Mode was 6. As regards leadership competence, respondents made the numeric self-assessment by answering to the question “How competent do you feel now in the field of leadership for values and virtue education?” in a 10-point Likert scale. The Mode increased from 7 at the beginning of the Program to 8 at the end of it (Figure 6).

Pre-test	VS	Post-test
Mode = 5/7 (Mean = 5.39 SD = .61)	 <b>Knowledgeability</b>	Mode = 6/7 ↑ (Mean = 5.52 SD = .75)
Mode = 7/10 (Mean = 6.85 SD = 1.13)	 <b>Leadership competence</b>	Mode = 8/10 ↑ (Mean = 7.04 SD = 1.20)

**Figure 6:** Perceived knowledgeability and leadership competence (pre- and post-test)

The qualitative assessment of changes in participants' knowledgeability confirmed the results of the numeric self-assessment. This qualitative assessment was done by asking participants, both in the initial and in the final questionnaire, to explain in their words what are 'values' and 'virtues' and what are the differences (if any) between those two concepts. 16 valid pairs of definitions were analysed by two different researchers, which rated independently the changes in knowledgeability in a 4-point scale, 4 meaning 'significant improvement', 3 – 'slight improvement', 2 – 'without changes'; and 1 – 'slight regression' (see the criteria used for assessment in [Annexe 9.6](#)). According to the consolidated rating, 72.5% of respondents (n=10) improved slightly or

significantly their understanding of those notions, 25% (n=4) were without changes, and 12.5% (n=2) performed less accurately at the end of the Programme (see Figure 7).



**Figure 7:** Changes in participants’ knowledgeability (occurrences)

The open questions regarding participants’ rational for their numeric self-assessment of perceived leadership competence for CE pre- and post-intervention, revealed participants’ beliefs about what facilitates and hinders the acquisition of this competence. Overall, 50 utterances were found: 30 utterances about what make them feel competent, and 20 about their shortfalls. What made them feel competent was their own experience (11 times), their personal qualities, values, and virtues (8 times), and also their knowledge and personal background. The things that hindered their feeling of competence were the rapidity of changes in society (7 times), and their lack of practice (5 times). Younger respondents pointed also to their lack of experience and of deep understanding of the field. In their comments, all respondents who perceived themselves as more competent after the Programme referred to an improvement in their theoretical knowledge of the field. Most of them also say that they need to learn how to put into practice what they learnt. As one of the respondents put it, *“ideas are clearer now, but it is not yet clear how to implement this at schools in a sustainable, productive, meaningful way”* (respondent 16).

Summarizing, and taking into account the limits of the methods used in this section, it can be said that most of participants experienced a slight positive influence of the Programme: they perceived and showed themselves as more knowledgeable about the basic concepts of moral education and with an enhanced leadership competence for CE.



## **6. Discussion and interpretation of the findings**

In this section, in the light of recent literature, some of the key findings are discussed. Given the practical goal of the dissertation, the process of elaborating the intervention is also discussed. And a final reflection about the use of a reflective journal as a methodology for programme assessment is presented because of its novelty.

One of the most relevant results, which was found in questionnaires, the reflective journal and the focus group discussion, was the unanimous approval of activities combining personal reflection and classroom or peer sharing. The reflective and participatory dimensions of those activities was supported by the lector's attentive listening and questioning, friendly support, and respectful facilitation of exchanges. Collaborative learning is widely used in both school-leadership preparation (Orr, & Barber, 2006; Shaked, Schechter, & Michalsky, 2018) and development (Hauge, & Norenes, 2015). The integration of reflection and collaborative learning has been proved to be very useful in other professional development programmes. For example, Loughran (2002) argued that working in groups helps to see practically that one's colleagues also engage in personal reflective efforts, and how others' perspectives enhance critical thinking and help to avoid rationalization (p. 35). The practitioner action research paradigm of the study contributed to the successful combination of reflection and sharing during the programme because action research uses a specific inquiry method, including "deliberation and judgement in the light of evidence, critical reflection in the light of observation and analysis, reappraisal in the light of discussion and advice" (Pring, 2004:122-123). From the beginning participants knew that the lector was there to learn also from them, and that the teaching and learning process was understood as a shared, reflective, and practically oriented inquiry.

Another aspect highlighted by participants as a key to the Programme success was the emergence of an atmosphere of mutual support, optimism, and respect. It was created by considering participants' needs during the Programme elaboration, and by acknowledging their experience and expertise throughout the Programme. In adult learning, the importance of a friendly atmosphere is widely recognized (Terehoff, 2002, Tennant, 2019), and in particular the feeling of being appreciated, which is "the most social of the needs" (Knowles, 1980:85). In addition, Latvian principals may most sensitive to experiencing how to create a friendly educational environment because Latvia, as revealed by the recent PISA results (OECD, 2019), is one of the countries in the OECD with the highest Index of Exposure to Bullying (IEB) (Mean IEB in Latvia=0.37, the highest in the EU; the index oscillates between -1 and 1; OECD average=0), and with 35% of students who reported being victims of any type of bullying act at least a few times a month (OECD average=23%). This could explain the importance principals gave to mutual respect and avoiding

violence at school. In the context of the recent pandemic, the question whether it would be possible to create such a friendly and supportive atmosphere in an online environment remains open. In this regard, it would be interesting to investigate the recent online CPD programme “Leading CE in Schools” of the Jubilee Center, looking at e-students’ perception of the educational environment (Mousavi *et al.*, 2020) for discovering possibilities of creating such feeling of belonging and recognition, beyond the provision of online resources, opportunities for reflection, and one-way-sharing experience through videos.

Another relevant finding, which is related to the Programme atmosphere, was that, when reporting their perceptions about the lector, participants highlighted virtues and moral attitudes such as ‘helpfulness’ and ‘coherence’, along with professionalism and positiveness. In this regard it can be noted that, traditionally, in social cognition research ‘warmth’ and ‘competence’ were seen as the two universal dimensions of person perception (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007:77), but more recently, moral character has been found to be a more important driver of impression formation regarding other persons (Goodwin, 2015:38). This thesis is supported by the findings of this study, in which participants refer to moral character qualities to describe their perceptions of the lector.

One of the keys to the Programme success was its perceived practical usefulness: the implementation of different innovative methods was perceived as one of the most enriching part of the Programme; and the same can be said about the work sheets, translations, and school assessment tools for direct use at school. This practical concern about ‘what works in CE’ and how to teach character is present in scientific literature (Berkowitz, Battistich, & Bier, 2008; Harrison, Arthur, & Burn, n.d., section 3 ‘Character taught’); and participants’ interest about new methods is coherent with recent research in the field (Istiharoh, & Indartono, 2019; Dewantara *et al.*, 2020). The Latvian historical and political background, which makes principals to feel particularly responsible for anything going on at school, including CE, and the recent legislation related to virtue and value education at school (CoM, 2016), could also explain their high expectations about the professionalism and practical usefulness of the programme.

In an overall reflection, the key findings of the study could be put in parallel to the three categories of ‘Personal leadership resources’ (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020), namely, cognitive resources, social resources and psychological resources (see Table 5). Maybe one of the keys to the success of the Programme was that it provided school-leaders precisely with those three kinds of resources and was therefore perceived by them as useful and successful. The findings also can be related to the transcendental personalism understanding of human beings: the Programme successfully addressed the three dimensions of human growth (interiority, relational

transcendence, and virtuous activity) by proposing respectively reflective professional knowledge, collaborative sharing, and practical contents in a value-loaded atmosphere (see Table 5).

**Table 5:** Relation between key findings, leadership resources and transcendental personalism

<b>Personal leadership resources (Leithwood et al., 2020)</b>	<b>Key aspects of the Programme</b>	<b>Transcendental personalism (Polo, 1998, 2003)</b>
Cognitive resources (problem-solving expertise, domain-specific knowledge and systems thinking)	Enhanced knowledgeability Professionalism, practical usefulness	Interiority enrichment Sense of mission
Social resources (perceiving emotions, managing emotions, acting in emotionally appropriate ways)	Reflective participation Sharing, mutual learning	Interpersonal intimacy Relational transcendence
Psychological resources (optimism, self-efficacy, resilience, and proactivity)	Positive working atmosphere Values, coherence, responsibility	Virtuous activity Interpersonal values

Given the practical goal of the dissertation, the discussion of the elaboration process of the intervention in the light of recent literature could be useful. The Programme development started with the analysis of school principals' current needs; then the goals, learning outcomes, and structure were designed and, based on constructive alignment theory (Biggs, 2011), activities, methods and materials were developed, implemented and assessed. This process corresponds to recognized good practices in training material development. For example, Hamza (2012) suggests five steps for the elaboration of a training program: need analysis, design, development, delivery, and evaluation. The design of training courses for adult learners is challenging, and therefore it can be useful also to discuss the elaboration process in the light of the principles of adult learning (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005; Linnenbrink-Garcia, Patall, & Pekrun, 2016). Principals were asked to bring in and share their experience and knowledge, which enriched the Programme and enhanced their feeling of belonging; the lector was a 'guide on the side' rather than a 'sage on the stage' (King, 1993), because school-leaders are decision-makers and self-directed learners; while personally relevant and active tasks were proposed, the Program had also the necessary flexibility so that participants could address their own 'generative themes', i.e., the concerns and issues most important for them. The Program clearly addressed adult learners' specificity and was coherent with those principles. The elaboration of the intervention also observed the key overarching principles of programme design ("the 4Cs"): clarity, capacity, consistency, and commitment (Hamza, 2012:8-9): the purpose, target group, learning outcomes, activities, and research activities were clearly fixed in participants' folder from the beginning; respondents valued the lector's capacity for designing, implementing and delivering the Programme; the activities, methods and atmosphere were consistently focused on the main purpose of the Programme; and implementer's and educational authorities' commitment during the whole process was key to its

success. Therefore, it could be expected that the elaboration process presented in this dissertation would inspire further similar attempts for supporting school-leaders in CE.

*The lector's reflective journal: Methodological discussion.* The evaluation of this kind of Programme is a challenging endeavour. In this work, in addition to traditional assessment methods (questionnaire, focus group discussion), a reflective journal was used. Reflective journals are often used for enhancing students' ethical competence (Balan, 2020), including in teacher training for CE. For example, the project "Teacher Education: Character and the Professional Development of Pre- and In-Service Teachers"<sup>11</sup> used a reflective journal called 'My Character' for pre-service teacher training. However, the differences between the two approaches are substantial. While 'My Character' aims at enhancing teachers' structured reflection on personal character strengths, by asking teachers to tick each day three character strengths from a list of 24 virtues which were most important to them, and to make a short written reflection at the end of each week, the primary goal of the reflective journal used in this study was to improve the Programme itself, by collecting after each session fresh information about what worked well, what did not work, the highlights and surprises of each session, and the moral and ethical attitudes present in the programme. In addition, 'My Character' was written by participants themselves, while 'My reflective journal' was written only by the researcher, in order to avoid overloading principals, already very busy, with extra-work after the sessions.

The question about the appropriateness of this method could be raised. In research, reflective journals are used for creating transparency and as a critical self-reflection for improving the research design (Ortlipp, 2008), and feasibility studies use different reflective techniques (e.g., Theodoulides, & Kormancová, 2014); but: is the reflective journal an appropriate methodology for a feasibility study? On the one hand, because its inherent subjectivity, this method is insufficient for providing reliable data about the Programme quality and should therefore be complemented with other sources of information from participants themselves or from external observers. On the other hand, the experience gathered during the study shows that the reflective journal contained both retrospective 'reflection on action' and instant 'reflection in action' with immediate significance for practice (MacLaughlin, 1999:14), and provided fresh, unique insights about the day-to-day of the Programme and precious data about the implementer's perception of its quality and reception by participants. Overall, with the convenient complement, the use of reflective journal for assessing this kind of studies seems to be a valuable method and the modalities of its use could be researched further.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1757/projects/current-projects/teacher-education>

## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

One of the aims of this action-research study was “leveraging good practices through key lessons learned” (OECD, 2017:35). This study had shown that, in the elaboration of principals’ training programmes for CE, the consideration of their needs, expectations and values is absolutely necessary. In addition, such programmes should give the participants the possibility of creating a true learning community, where they feel respected and listened to, and are co-creators of the knowledge and experience shared in the Programme. Moreover, a key to the Programme success was to provide them practical tools ready to use at their school for implementing and assessing the provision of CE. Participants’ answers point almost unanimously to their interest in and general satisfaction with the Programme. In the questionnaire, the Programme practical usefulness and participatory dimension were highly appreciated by participants, along with the appropriateness of its goals and contents, the innovative methods used and its general organization. Activities aiming at improving participants’ practical knowledge combined with personal reflection and classroom or peer sharing were the most appreciated ones. Those findings were confirmed during the analysis of the reflective journal, in which the positive aspects of participants’ reflection and sharing were often recorded. In addition, the lector’s attitudes facilitating this reflection and sharing process, such as attentive listening, friendly support and facilitation of reflection and exchanges, were referred to most positively. Finally, regarding the perceived influence of the Programme, the results also suggest that, at the end of the Programme, most participants had increased their knowledgeability of the basic concepts of moral education and felt more competent leaders for values and virtue education. Given the practitioner action research paradigm of this study, reading those conclusions, one should “be satisfied with small-scale and rather tentative and provisional theoretical positions” (Pring, 2004:128), which can however “illuminate or be suggestive of practice elsewhere ... [because] no one situation is unique in every respect” (p. 133).

One of the issues to highlight in this conclusion is the influence of the Program on myself as a lector and researcher. By providing support and knowledge to principals, I became an active part of the learning community created during the Programme. Some of the things I have learnt (and fixed in my reflective journal) were that the quality of listening is central (*‘I tried to keep attention to every word they said, and it paid off, § 27*), and that it is *‘better to respect the rhythm of their talk than to impose the rhythm of the session’ (§ 49)*. This demanded from me *‘self-control to avoid intervening when they presented their opinions about the Framework’ (§ 78)*, and patience (§ 109). I also learned that *‘I do not have to be afraid of speaking, people liked it’ (§ 26)*, and that *‘starting the session with something personal is a good thing’ (§ 80)*, which demanded some courage from my part. And I also observed that participants liked ‘surprises’, like changing the room disposition

of playing flute at the end of the Programme. In the section “The unexpected” I also recorded some great lessons for me. For example, how “*the way a principal opened herself about her difficulties was surprising and pleasant for me. It was a fullhearted conversation in which I learnt a lot about the reality of the schools*” (§ 44). I also experienced ‘*How eager they are to speak about their experience... At the beginning of the session I had to force myself to start working on the topic of the day!*’ (§ 104). Summarizing, the Programme was an intense self-developing experience, and my understanding of the field was greatly enriched. It was also my first time writing a self-reflection journal, during which I could experience the different ways of thinking about oneself and about one’s work that emerge from this method.

Based on this research, some key recommendations could be put forward: In the future implementation of the Programme, more space should be given for addressing more in detail the methods for communicating and involve with families, for example, discussing CE contents and tools for parents’ meetings, possible channels of communication, etc. In addition, more methods for enhancing teachers’ self-knowledge and mutual communication could be practised during the Programme. Probably one more session should be added in order to have time enough to address those issues.

At the level of education policy in Latvia, during the Programme it became clear that the current legislative efforts need to be completed with concrete educational opportunities for principals in this field, and with more financing for translating and adapting existing classroom materials and tools for involving the whole school in the CE initiative. School-leaders need inspiration from policy makers, a clear recognition of the importance of the educational work they do, maybe through an approach to school assessment based not only on academic results, but on the quality of the provision of CE.

As regard suggestions for further research, in order to test the reliability of this study, it would be advisable that someone different from the researcher and creator of the Programme implements it, and in different settings and with more participants. Another suggestion is that distancing more the pre-test and post-test could help to get stronger evidence about the intervention impact; and it would be advisable to use a control group for enhancing reliability. It would be also convenient to attempt a longitudinal study for investigating the intervention impact over time (6 months or more) and following up on principals’ actions for the actual implementation of CE at the school level (Kelley, & Shaw, 2009:501). In future research, it could be convenient to involve several researchers and critical friends who could discuss the conclusions and challenge the perspectives presented in this study, for “checking with other people as to whether those interpretations are the most appropriate ones in the light of the data” (Pring, 2004:137)

This study could be significant for different educational sectors. Teachers and school principals could benefit from the practical usefulness of the Programme, including a variety of methods for exploring and explaining values and virtues, materials in Latvian for use in the classroom and for personal reflection, and practical activities. It is also relevant for CE researchers, as it represents a pioneer research in Latvia about school principals' training using mixed methods, which included innovative methods for research on programme fit and feasibility, such as the reflective journal. The study is also relevant for improving the practice of principals' training for CE, as it revealed some key factors of success (combination of reflection and sharing, professionalism, supportive friendly atmosphere), and showed in a practical way how to implement them. It can be expected that the further implementation of such Programme, with adequate improvements, may have a positive impact in character and virtue education at school, and subsequently, on the flourishing of individuals and society.

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## 9. Annexes

### 9.1. Initial questionnaire

#### Research about the programme “Supporting principals’ leadership for implementing character education in Latvian schools” feasibility and perceived influence

Dear colleague!

We are requesting your voluntary informed consent to participate in a study about the feasibility and perceived influence of the program “Supporting principals’ leadership for implementing character education in Latvian schools”. This questionnaire is anonymous. You may choose not to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Your answers will be processed anonymously and only the joint results will be published.

If you agree, please, answer the following questions and share your thoughts! Please feel free to contact us by email if you have any question: (author’s email). Thank you for your willingness to help in this research! The research team

#### Please share your thoughts before the program starts

What can I be useful to others in this program?

What do I want to get during this program? Why is this important to me?

#### Please answer these questions. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. In your opinion, to what extent are you knowledgeable of the basic concepts of moral education (character, morals, temperament, moral habit, etc.)? (Please use this scale: 1 = Absolutely not knowledgeable; 2 = not knowledgeable; 3 = rather not knowledgeable; 4 = neutral; 5 = rather knowledgeable; 6 = knowledgeable; 7 = Absolutely knowledgeable).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Could you please describe briefly what are values and virtues, what is similar and different in these concepts?

3. Which of the following statements do you agree with more? (Choose only one option: A or B)

A -  Schools should develop its pupils’ characters and encourage good values in its students.

Please, comment your choice: why? (you can choose several answers).

We all must instil good values in the next generation

Respecting others is especially important today

Schools have become too exam-focussed

Teachers are role models

Too many issues with bullying etc.

B -  Schools should focus on delivering academically and not try to shape a student’s character

Please, comment your choice: why? (you can choose several answers).

Children learn their good values at home

Everyone has different ideas of 'values'

It is not government’s role to guide a child’s life

It is a waste of school time

I have doubts about its effect

None of these

4. How competent do you feel now in the field of leadership for values and virtue education? Rate yourself on a ten-point scale and briefly justify your self-assessment.

**Please give your personal opinion on these issues**

5. What do you think is your role as a school management representative in the moral development of pupils?

6. Do you think that your personal moral stance, your values and virtues, influence the moral development of pupils? Why? (If yes) In what way?

7. Do you feel the need to further develop your own moral skills? What would be your motivations for your own moral development?

8. In what way and under what conditions does your moral development happens best? What are the main obstacles for your moral development?

9. How would you rate the current level of school collaboration with parents about pupils' value and virtue education? (Please use this scale: 1 = None; 2 = Very low; 3 = Rather low; 4 = Neutral; 5 = Rather good; 6 = Good; 7 = Very good)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Please identify the main factors that facilitate and hinder cooperation with parents in your school in this field.

**General information about you and your school**

Your position: Seniority: Overall ..... years and in the current position ..... years

Brief description of your educational institution (levels of education imparted, number of pupils, kind of institution)

Many thanks!!

Dr. Manuels Fernandezs ([manuels.fernandezs@lu.lv](mailto:manuels.fernandezs@lu.lv))

## 9.2. Final questionnaire

***Continuous professional development programme  
“Supporting principals’ leadership for implementing character education in Latvian schools”  
(9h)***

**ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

Period: 12.02.-11.03.2020.

Lector: M. Fernandezs

Dear Program Member! By completing this questionnaire, you will help to determine the quality of the Program. The results of the survey will be confidential and will only be used in an aggregated manner. Thank you!

### 1. Evaluate this program by marking with X

	Completely agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Completely disagree
<b>I clearly understood the objectives of the programme</b>				
Comments: z				
<b>The programme goals were achieved</b>				
Comments:				
<b>The working forms, methods and techniques used ensured that the objectives were achieved</b>				
Comments:				
<b>The lessons gave me new knowledge, understanding, skills</b>				
Comments:				
<b>I had the opportunity to actively participate and apply the acquired knowledge/skills in practice</b>				
Comments:				
<b>My needs and experience were taken into account</b>				
Comments:				
<b>The time spent on activities was sufficient</b>				
Comments:				
<b>I know clearly how/where I will apply the acquired knowledge and skills in my work</b>				
Comments:				

**2. The most significant benefits of the programme were ...**

**3. I value the lecturer's work ...**

**4. This programme could be supplemented by ...**

**5. Comments/Recommendations ...**

**Please reply to the following questions (the same ones were already in the original questionnaire):**

1. In your opinion, to what extent are you knowledgeable of the basic concepts of moral education (character, morals, temperament, moral habit, etc.)? (Please use this scale: 1 = Absolutely not knowledgeable; 2 = not knowledgeable; 3 = rather not knowledgeable; 4 = neutral; 5 = rather knowledgeable; 6 = knowledgeable; 7 = Absolutely knowledgeable).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Could you please describe briefly what are values and virtues, what is similar and different in these concepts?

3. How competent do you feel now in the field of leadership for values and virtue education? Rate yourself on a ten-point scale... and briefly justify your self-assessment....

**Please evaluate course activities and materials using the following scale:** “-” = cannot say; 1 = absolutely not useful; 2 = not useful; 3 = rather unhelpful; 4 = neutral; 5 = rather useful; 6 = useful; 7 = very useful.

<b>(day) Programme activities</b>	-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(1) Initial circle: Who am I? How can I be useful? what do I want to know?								
(1) “Control, impact and outside the control area” (with formula N + A = R)								
(1) Presentation on temperament, character and happiness (scheme)								
(1) Value clearance (long list; about oneself; about school and sharing)								
(2) At the beginning: sharing the impressions of the week								
(2) Positive/negative school events and associated values; sharing								
(2) Task “Language of virtues” (missing words)								
(2) Viewing the “Jubilee centre” website								
(2) Working in groups on parts of the Framework (large pages, sharing)								
(2) “From temperament to character” (temperaments, virtues, sharing)								
(3) About 11 principles (school self-assessment)								
(3) Material market (Identifying different materials)								
(3) School: learning organisation								
(3) Introduction to the research								
(3) Summary: “what works, what does not work”								
(3) Refinement of the main issue (Open Thinking Method)								
(-) Assessment in a circle at the end of each lesson								
(1) Introductory questionnaire								
(3) Final questionnaire								
<b>Programme materials</b>								
Participants’ folder								
“Framework for character education”								
“11 principles fo effective character education” (introduction)								
“Short glossary” (with definitions of virtues and schemes)								
“The moral education of pupils in Latvians schools” (research report)								
Temperament description								
<b>Would you recommend colleagues to attend this programme? Use the same scale</b>								

**General information about you and your school**

Your position: \_\_\_\_\_ Seniority: overall ... .. years; in current office ... .. years  
 About your school: education stages, number of pupils, authority: .....

### 9.3. Short description of activities

#### **Introduction**

Goal of the Programme

Schedule, modalities of work

Topics

Research – consent

#### **1. Control', 'influence' and 'non-control' zones**

Moral upbringing in school: 1) What can I control (C), 2) what can I influence (I), 3) What I can't control? (N)

Method: 4 groups, 4 people. Writes 4 examples for each of those questions (C, I, N) for 7-8 minutes.

Each group stick them on a blackboard (3 columns) and comments on each idea.

Final comment: go to "attitudes" ... Presents formula: Event + attitude = Result

*The leader's question: What can I do (and practically do) in this situation?*

- development: improving our skills we can increase the control area. [transition to next activity]

#### **2. Initial questionnaire**

#### **3. Value list**

##### **Personal values of school leaders and values of educational establishment**

Method: Give the large value list

**Task 1:** At first, each one thinks individually. Look at the list of virtues, choose 4-5 main personal values (3 minutes). At first: if there was only one to choose? then if would be only two? ... Will not share it (self-reflection).

**Task 2:** On your institution's current (not desirable) values. 3' to choose individually. Then by groups of 3 people (one or 2 schools). Each group selects 4-6 main values and adjusts them by importance, notes on the stickers (by rank). Next to it, it shall be recorded how it actually appears at work.

They are stuck on a blackboard (top most important, down less important). In retrospect, everyone tells how it works at school. When Team 1 sticks, the others listen. The lector asks questions (capture the value/virtue differences).

Are those values the same/not the same as the personal ones?

#### **4. School critical events and values**

##### **School Value Clearance: Activity**

Method:



1. Each shall assess and identify the major events of the school in the last 3-4 years (with a level). (3 ')

2. What was important for school in these events (in terms of values)? What values appear in these events? (5 ').

3. Share in small groups (by school) 5 '. Then two options:

=> explain to others. The lector writes on the blackboard, commenting. 10 '.

= > two small groups together report to each other, then the total feedback about the methodology as such.

Conclusion: Various values (grouped by blocks of virtue?)

## 5. Language of virtue – “Lost words”

At first: What are values?

My explanation: the difference between virtues and values; between character and temperament. Character blocks.

Issues for differentiation (activity)

Look at the misunderstandings:

values with virtues, because you often have the same word to describe both value and virtue (honesty)

habits and virtues, because the same word can be described as both a morally neutral habit and a virtue (courage; work virtues)

everyday concepts are given a different meaning than in the language of virtue ethics (habit); concepts are understood narrowly (“morality”; “nature”).

## 6. Exploration of Jubilee centre’s website

### DAY 2

## 7. Sharing week impressions

**Summary of the last lesson:**

Each says what s/he reminds

Value-finding activity: school events

Exercise: “Lost words” Reminder

## 8. Framework for CE – analysis

To start, talk about the Jubilee Center (home page). 5 '. and on centre for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> R

Present the table of contents of the Framework, tell about the introduction.

Method: 6 groups (2 people), each exploring one topic, notes the main ideas on a large page (creatively ...), hang on the wall (10 minutes).

Then each presents the main lessons in 2 minutes for everyone together. [10 mins]

Question for reflection: Is it worth distributing this framework in Latvian schools? How do you better do it?

## **9. Presentation “temperament, character and happiness**

## **10. From temperament to character**

### **Temperament and character**

Method:

Dispense sheets about temperaments (1 for two people): reading (4-5 minutes).

Then a presentation about the fundamental virtues of character. All together – think of the necessary virtues for each temperament.

Then each group says: What is the primary virtue needed for someone with such or such temperament? What more virtues would be needed? – name another one, two ...

Pedagogical moment: what could be started? In the classroom? At school? ....

## **11. School as a character growth organization**

### **School: learning organisation: 30 mins**

Activity: School culture formation

Present 4 components (from Skolas2030) highlighting the moral component [Involving them in explaining]:

1. A vision of the involvement of all pupils (in their own moral growth) - including the Skola2030 vision of pupil engagement.
2. Teamwork and mutual learning (in the area of moral education)
3. Culture of knowledge and innovation (in the area of moral growth)
4. Leadership support for (moral) development.
5. [personal self-driving skills]

Method

Presentation: 5 minutes

For each of the components of the school culture, working in groups (4 teams) with three questions

What should I start at my school? What do I need to stop? What do I need to continue?  
[buttons]

Think and write down on the big sheets (10') sticking to the wall. Then each team explain them everyone (10').

## DAY 3

### 12. The market of materials

**Viewing various materials: 25 minutes**

#### *General materials*

- PSHE Handbook + Presentation
- Character education evaluation handbook for schools (Jubilee center)
- David Isaacs

#### *Cooperation with families*

- Improving parental competence in support of pupils
- Lions quest
- Parent-teacher partnership

#### *Materials for use in class*

- Character education. Methodological recommendations.
- uzdevumi.lv
- Teaching character through subjects
- Materials from Jubilee center: Teacher guide and Student handbook

#### *Planning*

- Catholic gymnasium plan

#### *Other projects and books*

- ARETE Page
- The Character project

### 13. School assessment with “11 Principle” table

**About 11 principles: 25 minutes**

11 principles: introduction: tell where they come from using Character exchange material

#### **Principle groups.**

- 1-2 on definitions
- 3-4 on the school community
- 5-6 on school offer
- 7-8 on engagement
- 9-10 on promoting cooperation
- 11 - for evaluation

#### Method:

Short introduction 2-3 minutes (see Table of Contents)

By school, each fills out a page (10 mins). Describe things that are not clear, how can it be improved?

Then comments together on the criteria. Tell about the supplemented version. **Discussion:** Where to start? [Here two videos?]

## **14. Open thinking” activity**

### **Clarification of the main issue: 20 mins**

Where to start? Ask yourself the main question about the introduction of character education programmes at school (think through).

#### Open thinking methods:

1 - Everyone writes on a one-page a question, what is the most important issue you want to find out in the joint discussion? (2-3 minutes).

2 - Go to a colleague individually with your question: the colleague does not answer the question (does not give his or her opinion), but raises a “question” (fine-tuning, open ...).  
Can go to different colleagues: 10 mins

3 - Everyone reformulate their question using colleagues' thoughts on one's issue. The final version shall be recorded on a new sheet (4-5 minutes).

[glue to large panel] -

4 - Leave the sheets on the round table. Each member shall have two votes (points). [5 minutes]

5 - three issues that have scored more points are being selected. They are written down on big pages.

## **15. Final questionnaire**

## **16. Final roundtable**

#### 9.4. My reflective journal

**Why do I write this journal?** My research question is about the feasibility and perceived influence of the seminar.

The information that I want to record is first related with what worked well, what did not work, what was planned and what was done. I will call it 'facts'. It will be a rough material

A second kind of information I want to record is related with moments of "shining eyes" moments: what did I perceive as the highlights of the session, when participants were really engaged. I will call it 'shining eyes' moments

A third thing I want to record is what was surprising for me in what the participants said or did. This that I would not have expected. I will collect this information from my memories of the session but also from what the participants wrote in the initial and final questionnaire. I also want to reflect about it. I will call it "the unexpected".

I want to include also a section called 'moral and ethical attitudes' from myself and from participants. [From Moos 2010: "Level 3 - critical rationality 'focused on incorporating consideration of moral and ethical criteria into discourse about practical action. The central question at this level was which educational goals, experiences and activities'"]

And a final aspect that I want to record is what I learn from the seminar, what are the bullet points to take away from each session. It can be about the way I led the sessions, the materials offered, methods...

[Note – all the names recorded are fictive]

05.02.2020

#### **Facts**

1. The first session happened on February 5<sup>th</sup> from 13:00 to 16:00. 24 participants came, only one man. different ages, from 26 to 65, most in their 40ies.
2. I was really on time in order to prepare the folders for the participants.
3. [About the folders, I took the idea from a previous seminar I participated in, which was organized by the University of Latvia during January. It was very professional, the teachers did not use at all PowerPoint, they made us speak a lot, everybody was happy. They gave us at the beginning folders with the basic information and place to take notes and reflect on what we heard].
4. I also asked the regional authority of the surroundings of Riga to prepare card with names. Bet they were really not useful, because they names were written in too little letters. I had time enough to finish the presentation, to go through the plan of the day and to organize the chairs and tables as I wanted.
5. The distribution of the classroom was in U form with tables grouped by for participants, but at the beginning everybody could see each other. There was light enough in the classroom, and even in the afternoon the sun was shining, and I was afraid that the screen will not be seen well
6. It was very pleasant that both the director of the regional authority and another employee were taking care of everything and stayed with me all the time. I had met them previously. I was happy they were there, because I was a little afraid of how things will go on. It was my first seminar for school directors.
7. I was well prepared (I even worked a bit during the night a couple of days the previous week for preparing the materials...). I had also quite a lot of good materials that had been translated recently. In addition to the folders, I had printed the translation of the UoB framework, a paper with the main concepts and virtue definitions, and also some exemplars of my last research.

8. I also had prepared the questionnaire on time, and the language was revised by a colleague who helps me a lot with Latvian language. I had also the consent form. with me.
- 
9. At the beginning the director of the regional authority presented me. Then I spoke shortly about my family, my professional path, what I am passionate about, and how I came to the moral education field.
10. Then I gave them one by one the course materials. It was a good idea to see them personally and give this 'gift' to each of them.
11. The first activity was to reflect 2 minutes about 3 questions: who they are, what can be their contribution to the seminar, and what do they expect from it. Then a volunteer started, and each one spoke. Some of the contributions they mentioned were related with their 'positive spirit', 'professional experience', competences in math, special needs, etc. About their *expectations*, some mentioned 'to learn from others', some concrete expectation was "how to combine the values of different generations" in the classroom, or 'how to speak with youngsters (because a good deal of participants do not have any longer children in school age), tools for doing better character education. When they said *who* they were, some identified themselves as a woman, a wife, a mother, a teacher, etc. Most of them just as a teacher or school director. At the end of the session everybody was amazed about the quality of participants, and eager to exchange.
12. Then we had a short introductory activity about the zones of control or influence a director have. They worked in groups of 4 persons (by schools) for 6-7 minutes about 2-3 things on their control zone, 2-3 on their influence zone, and 2-3 out of their control. Then they put their ideas on the blackboard, explained them, at the end I explained that they can control themselves, influence others or the atmosphere, and the formula  $N+A=R$  (events + attitude=results)
13. I had foreseen to continue with my explanation about the language of virtue, but I decided to ask them to fill que questionnaire before I start to speak. They did it quite fast and almost at the same time. When they finished, I gave them document about the lecture that will follow, while taking their questionnaire personally.
14. They followed the lecture about the language of virtue. They listened attentively.
15. Coffee break.
16. Then more materials about the language of virtue. Then we passed to the definition of values. They used the list, had to choose first 4 most personally relevant, then 3 from the school, then to speak about the school virtues with the other members and then they have to come and explain them, and to say how it appears practically at their institution. After each intervention I put some question to make the examples more concrete and reflect about their values together.
17. At the end I just mentioned the 11 principles, read a little introduction I had prepared. And showed them where they can find the material.
18. The session finished with a short roundtable where each participant was asked to say in one phrase what they took away from the seminars (section "instrument" of the materials).

### **Shining eyes' moments**

19. *When I spoke* about the main concepts, they were really attentive. in particular they were very receptive when I spoke about the centrality of love in moral life. And about the importance of rejoicing for the good things and being sad about the bad ones.
20. When I did reference to their expectations (for example, how some ground values are intergenerational and can be a basis to speak about other more generation-specific values)

### **“The unexpected”.**

21. They almost all knew each other very well!
22. Some of them in the initial presentation said that they can contribute with their positive vision to any situation! It was a surprise for me, because I had the idea that Latvian people are in general rather negative. Quite a lot of participants told that.
23. In the last round, when I asked them to formulate in one phrase the ‘take away’, some of them mentioned phrases I said during my short lecture about the main concepts.
24. With ‘control zone’ I wanted to refer to things that happen and that depend totally on them: their own response to the events. But most of them understood ‘control zone’ as what they can check or punish (controlling what others do, through rules and observation). It was interesting, maybe I will try the same wording next time, to see if it repeats again... It could be an indicator of Post-Soviet mentality?

### **‘Moral and ethical attitudes’**

25. [I introduced this section after the second session, so I did not record this in the first log]

### **My ‘take away’**

26. I do not have to be afraid of speaking, people liked it.
27. The quality of listening is very important. I tried to keep attention to every word they said, and it paid off.
28. Make people speak about themselves at the beginning. This helps them to know better each other.

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### **12.02.2019 - RIIMC**

29. I am writing this log 5 days after the session, so probably I will forget some information. Better late than never!

### **Facts**

30. Some days before the first session I had a phone call with the leader of the group to explain her the materials I needed her to prepare for the session. I prepared the session carefully in the morning of the session day, even if I had done it already the previous week.
31. The day of the session I came to the venue more than one hour before the beginning of the session. I saw that the questionnaire had been copied on booklet format and the letters and spaces for answers were too narrow. I asked the responsible to copy them again, in order to make it easier to the participants. I saw that the same problem happened with the folder for participants, but I did not insist on changing that because it would have been too big work for the employee. I tried that those inconveniences do not put down my mood.
32. When participants started to arrive, I tried to connect with them shortly. Once the session started, the responsible for the group made a short introduction and then she let me the floor. and she went away to her office. She returned after one hour or so just for 4-5 minutes, to see if everything was going OK (kind of control).
33. 11 directors participated in the session. First, I presented myself (with the help of a slide about Asturias). Then I gave them one by one the course materials. Then we did the traditional round table where each one explained who they were, what they can give to others and what do they expect from the seminars. This gave the opportunity to know better each other. At the end I commented that the group was very heterogeneous, because there were 2-3 directors from schools for children with special needs, others from professional schools, others from private schools and others from big State schools. Some of participants tended to speak too much, I tried to give the word to the others with tact.

34. Then we did the exercise about the control/influence zones, it worked well. This time I explained better what 'control' means. This was a good experience about how to break the ice. I discussed the formula  $N+A=R$  (events + attitude=results) with some examples.
35. Then I asked them to fill the questionnaire. They agreed and filled the consent form and the questionnaire in 15-20 minutes. We also started the coffee break at the end of this activity. When someone finished, I took the questionnaire and gave them the materials about the lecture that was going to follow.
36. After the break I explained the theory about virtues and temperament and happiness. They listened quite attentively, but at the end, when I started speaking about happiness, I felt that some of them wanted to say something. I gave the floor to Janine, who spoke for 10 minutes from the bottom of her heart about the difficulties she encounters at her school, with a very intense eye contact. I was standing in front of her, I tried to listen very attentively, looking her at her eyes. She explained that she considered that she could not love children who do not give nothing in exchange. She fought for her own child (with some success) but cannot do so for a whole class. She explained the problems her pupils have with drogues, sex, violence, lack of respect of herself, and the real difficulties that she has to give love to children and the necessity of being strong and strict. The general tone was quite pessimistic (realistic?). When she finished another young participant commented on some positive aspects.
37. When I started speaking after Janine's talk, I only could say that I had not experience with those situations and that I felt quite incompetent to say anything about them. When Janine commented that I spoke 'from theory' I reacted immediately to say the no, I do not speak from theory, but from my own good experience, for which I am really grateful. Janine was thoughtful and after some time she said herself another story much positive about how she helped a concrete student. She was a bit ashamed to tell it and repeated that she did not say the story for gaining admiration from their colleagues. The story was really nice, showed her courage, determination and big heart to help those youngsters. The ambiance on the room was very good.
38. Other teachers told concrete stories about how they help children with sand therapy; the teacher who works with blind children said about the importance to make them feel closeness and skin contact. Once the ambiance was calmer, I propose to show them a short video (the end of 'Ferdinand') that I used to comment on the importance of early experience and the necessity of sawing, even if we cannot be sure about the results. This was a good way of closing the conversation and passing to the next activity.
39. Then we worked on personal values. They worked on the list, first thinking about themselves individually and then about their school on groups of 2 or 3. They exposed the priorities they saw in the blackboard and shared with others concrete examples of how it appears. I helped them to be concrete when telling their examples of values and virtues, in order to enrich the conversation.
40. The time passed very fast and I had not time to introduce the 11 principles. We had 30 seconds to do the last tour: each one said what they took away from the session. Some said that Janine's openness helped them to understand that the situation at their school is not so bad as they thought and that it was good to see how others react. Others want to try the method with the list of virtues at their school.

### **Shining eyes' moments**

41. This time it did not happen when I presented the theory, but when I said after Janine's talk that I spoke from my own good experience and that I was grateful for that.
42. Another good moment was when after Janine's talk, I said that a surgeon can cut with or without love, and that a teacher can be strict also with inner love. I used also one idea of



one of participants about the inner self that no one can influence and that is in our exclusive control zone.

#### **“The unexpected”**

43. It was amazing for me to see that one of the participants said exactly word by word what I wanted them to hear about the control zones (what one can control, influence...) She even went further to explain more things that one can influence. Like in a book!
44. The way Janine opened herself about her difficulties was surprising and pleasant for me. It was a fullhearted conversation in which I learnt a lot about the reality of the schools.
45. Another unexpected thing was that the empathy of the youngest participant (Inga) who took on the talk to say some of her good experiences. This put some better atmosphere in the room, and I was grateful for that.
46. Paradoxically, during the last round table, the two directors that spoke the most (Janine and Inga) were unable to say immediately what was their ‘take way’. I skip them both and I came back to them at the very end. first Inga said about the importance of stating with oneself, and the Janine, about the necessity of continuing working.

#### **‘Moral and ethical attitudes’**

47. The quality of listening was very good. All participants said goodbye personally with a very good smile. Participants were honest. I tried to be so also, acknowledging that there are things I cannot be a good adviser for.

#### **My ‘take away’**

48. Give them opportunities to speak and ‘listen, listen, listen’ attentively.
49. Better respect the rhythm of their talk than impose the rhythm of the session.
50. Present my vision of moral education as a proposal. It has its limits. it is important to know as well as possible the context of participants.

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18.02.2020 Pierīgas - 2

#### **Facts**

51. I prepared the session quite conscientiously. I read the reflective journal of the last session, tried to remember the main characteristics of the group. I went through the timetable that I had foreseen and started working on each part of the session. I prepared some new materials and a presentation. I arrived at the venue one hour and a half before hand for preparing everything and making some copies. Just before they arrived, I took the sheets they had filled the first day and read the question about their expectations for the seminar, in order to have it in mind during the session.
52. Some 22 or 23 teachers came. There were only 2 newcomers. One of them before the beginning asked me about concrete materials for moral education. I said her that I will speak today about that.
53. I decided to start telling them what I had experienced in with the other group. I spoke for 5 minutes about my emotions. Then one of the teachers was very moved, said about her bad experience with the police raids looking for drugs at school. She started crying while she spoke. one colleague next to her encouraged her. I did not know what to say, tried to recomfort her. I gave the voice to other colleagues, who supported her. Also, some of the colleagues insisted that those raids were necessary and that not all of them happen with bad manners. A director stressed that she appreciated the work of the police and that for her the raids were very useful, even if sometimes the dogs made mistakes. Some teachers stressed the importance of the families in the moral education of children, and the impossibility of replacing them. The conversation was very rich and lasted for 30 minutes (I had foreseen 5 minutes).

54. I decided to continue practising with them a new method for clarifying values that I could not use the previous week. (The method using the positive and negative events that happened during the last 2-3 years. They were well engaged. First, they reflected individually on the events, then on the values underpinning them, and then I asked them to say the values that came up one by one. I wrote rapidly some of the values on the blackboard, but I stopped doing so after 5-6 had spoken. I was close to the one who was speaking to hear attentively and put some questions eventually. All spoke and appreciated the method. It took some 20 minutes.
55. We went rapidly through the exercise about the language of virtue, in order to remind the main concepts. This was quite easy and they could use it during their lessons.
56. The I presented them the website of the Jubilee centre on the screen. We went through the main parts, and I put more emphasis in the section ‘character education, showing the materials of “teaching character through subjects”, and the materials for families. This was a good introduction for the Framework. The presentation took some 10 minutes.
57. Then I gave them the “gift”: the framework for character education at school. I made a short introduction and asked them to work in groups of 3-4, each group on one specific part of the framework, drawing the essential contents in a big paper that they put on the wall. I had prepared 7 sheets of paper with the 6 main parts and asked them which part each one wanted to take. One said that I should have made a poll (izloze) for distributing the topics, but some were happy to have the possibility to choose. They worked for 15 minutes on their own section. During that time, I tried to be attentive to their needs and to facilitate their work. I was happy that everybody was working hard.
58. As the time of the coffee break was close, I asked them if they wanted to make the break or to present. We decided to present immediately, because everything was fresh in mind. Each group presented to the others the content they had prepared. I had to control myself to avoid interrupting them with questions or comments, because I did not want to make the session too long. When they all finished, I just made a short comment on each part of the Framework to highlight the essential things that I saw there. It was already 15:50 when we had the coffee break.
59. We finished the session with one question: is this framework useful for Latvia? Is it worthy to send it to the schools? One teacher said that if someone comes to the school and presents it, it can be useful, but if it is just sent without more explanations, nobody will use it. Others said that it makes things more structured, because they know those things, but the framework put a useful structure on those things. Another said that it could be very good for speaking with families: for example, one could choose a part of the framework and send it to parents asking them to reflect on it, because the whole school was going to say what they thought about it and to join efforts in one direction. Another director added that the same thing could be done with students in the classroom, to help them to think about those issues and to get involved in the collective reflection at school level.
60. The director of the department arrived in the middle of the session with one of his employees. They seemed to be quite happy about how things were going on, and this was encouraging for me. During the break we were speaking very friendly. The last 5 minutes I went back to my papers to think carefully how to use the last part of the session.
61. After the coffee break, I told them that we were going to speak about temperament and character following the book of A. Havard. I let the book to them to pass it from one to another. Then I gave them a description of the four temperaments: one temperament for 2 persons (sometimes one), so there were 2 or 3 teams working on the same temperament. I

gave them 5 minutes for exploring their sheet. Then I explained them that I was going to speak about 6 important virtues and asked them to think about which of those virtues were the most necessary for the person having the temperament they had explored, while I was speaking. I made a short lecture using a PowerPoint presentation about the 4 cardinal virtues a plus humility and magnanimity (following the framework of A. Havard). There was 1 slide per virtue, with a summary of the contents of the virtue. Then I repeated the question (which virtue (s) is the more necessary for the temperament you explored?) and I went through all the slides once more without speaking, just to help them to reflect. Then they were given 2-3 minutes to reflect again and to get ready. Then I asked them to say what they thought, first for one temperament (2-3 groups successively), then the next temperament and so on.

62. This was a good experience; they were able to explain why they choose the virtue in question. At some moment one of the newcomers, a quite experienced director, asked why we wanted to make everybody similar: he used the image of different birds, and that we do not need birds made out of stone. It was a good occasion to explain again the importance of respecting people as they are and to know them to help them to be at their best. One teacher said about how he create teams of pupils putting different temperaments together and that this was a very good way of creating teams because they were complementary, and they got very good results in the central exams. I explained again that the point of virtues is not to 'compensate' temperaments to make everybody similar, but to help people to love better. I liked the idea that was in the materials that thee temperament influences how we do thing, not the thigs we do. The interruption helped to create a good common discussion.
63. At the end I explained that it is important to know the temperament of the people you work with, in order to give them the most appropriate works and to communicate better with them. Everybody was making funny comments about how different temperaments appear. Some of them asked to receive the materials about temperaments and virtues in the email.
64. At the end of the session I told them that they had a task to do for the next time: to read through the 11 principles and to think if it they could be useful in Latvia.
65. We did a last round table about what are the takeaway from this session. I showed them where in the materials they could write their thoughts, and then we started. The first parson spoke for 2 minutes, so I reminded that the idea was to say something really short so that everybody could say something. The thing that they kept in mind were the initial method (about the events and the values) and the one about temperaments and character. Some said also that the way we worked with the framework was a useful method for using at their school. Some stressed the richness of the discussion.

### **Shining eyes' moments**

66. When I told them about my own experience the last week.
67. When one director said that he made teams of pupils with different temperaments.
68. When we spoke about the practical ways of using the Framework with parents and students, they also were very attentive.
69. Also, during the feedback about virtues and temperaments they listened very well.

### **"The unexpected"**

70. When the director started crying at the beginning of the session... I also did not expect that the teacher next to her was so proactive in consoling her colleague.
71. The beginning of the session was very rich, when they spoke about their problems and about the relation with the authority.

72. Some teachers were very eager to reflect about their own temperament. They preferred to choose it rather than being assigned a random one.
73. When one director said that it was not necessary to work on one's temperament. It was challenging. But it helped to clarify things.
74. One of the participants seemed to me not to be particularly interested this time. But at the end she made very nice comments about the session overall. She did not look happy, but she was...
75. They made again an applause at the end of the session...

#### **'Moral and ethical attitudes'**

76. When I gave the framework, I did it one by one trying to look at them in the eyes and to say thank you.
77. When the session started, I tried to respect their feelings, to listen carefully, to let them speak, even if it was not in the plan.
78. I needed self-control to avoid intervening when they presented their opinion of the Framework.
79. Compassion in the way one teacher cared about the other.

#### **My 'take away'**

80. Start with something personal is a good thing.
81. Directors have much to say about moral education: let them speak.
82. The key of success is good preparation and high-quality attention to what they say.
83. **For the next session** I am wondering if it could not be better to make a festival of existing materials and methods: JCCV curriculum; through subjects; uzdevumi.lv; about one of the methods we used together (comparing for example the paper method and the temperament method); ... I also want to use the Open thinking method. And to make a lecture about the different kinds of leadership; and about families; and to discuss the 11 principles... And to make the final evaluation, focus group and questionnaire. Let's think!

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### **26.02.2020 - RIIMC**

#### **Facts**

84. I prepared the session the previous day. I was a bit afraid, because this group is less numerous and so I had the feeling that I had to prepare more materials. The day before I received the news that the translation of the 11 Principles was not yet ready, so I decided that I will not speak about them, but I had to think some additional activities.
85. One of the things I did was to finish the work of transcribing all the main information from the LU seminar about leadership I attended in January. It was a hard work to do, but I had a guideline (a list of the main places to look at in the materials) and I was motivated by the success of the methods I had already used during this seminar. I went through systematically and I was able to finish it during the morning. I prepared a summary of the paper of Linkona and Bier about "what works in character education", and I also did a presentation and prepared an outline with the main information. I went through the whole schedule once more and printed the papers I needed.
86. The day of the course I decided not to attend a seminar at the LU about project preparation, in order to spend more time preparing my seminar. It was a difficult decision to make because I should start thinking about writing projects for the future, but I was happy, because I really needed more time. During the week I had transcribed all the materials of the initial questionnaire, so I read it again carefully to have in mind what they expected from me. I was also praying as usual so that the seminar could be really useful for the participants.

87. I arrived only half an hour ahead. The classroom had changed. The organizer found a new room. I checked everything. I decided not to change the places of tables. I tried to connect with the newcomers instead. I also spoke with one of the participants, Anastasija, a sport teacher, who told me about children in first class who are quite excited, and how they have lessons with children of different ages, where the older (grade 3) help the younger. I also organized all my papers on my desk. Before the start of the session Janine told me that she and her colleague had to go at five, I said that it was OK, and I reorganized the session so that they can have the maximum of info. When the time came, we started punctually.
88. I first asked them to think about the last session and to comment on something that maybe was particularly useful during this period. I started myself telling them the experience of last week and how the other group also had much to share. They continued speaking for twenty minutes, it was difficult to stop them. I also said about the picture my sister sent regarding the place of Latvia in bullying. (very high). They gave different interpretations of this. Some said that now bullying news is a trend and that they are not so useful. Janine told the story when one pupil wanted to call to the antibullying aid number, and she helped the boy to think through what was going to happen next, step by step, and this persuaded the boy not to call. Laura said that children have a very big deficit of attention from their parents, and that the emphasis on external support for antibullying pushed pupils to try to compensate this deficit with the aid number. She thinks children need to learn to cope with conflicts by themselves and illustrated this thought with a personal example: when she was 13, she was already quite tall. Other kids made jokes on her “how does it look like over there? She answered, ‘jump if you can, to see it by yourself!’” and the jokes were over. Another teacher added on the importance of avoiding dramatizing situations.
89. At some moment I asked both Daces to say something, commenting that they had been very silent. One of them was a bit surprised and commented that she had been speaking much during the session. She was not angry, but I understood that my perception and her own about what means to participate were different.
90. Then we did the activity of “critical events of the school” for clarifying values. It worked well, was not too long. They were quite active naming the values. Some of them started naming the event, even if I had said that this was not necessary. I was writing on the blackboard the values they mentioned, it was a good moment. At the end I told them that the exercise could be used in the classroom, or with parents, or in other different ways. I had the impression that they appreciated the whole activity.
91. Then I distributed the Framework. While I was doing so, I remembered that I wanted to show first the website, but anyway... Then I showed the Jubilee centre page. I had prepared at home what I wanted to say, and the page was ready on the computer. We went through the different parts and I put a special emphasis on the section ‘character education’. I also showed them the centre for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> R from ASV. I had the impression Janine was a bit sceptical about American practices, but I did not address the topic there. Once I had finished, some (Inga and her colleague) asked me to tell them the address of the website, because they were really interested.
92. Then we started working on the Framework. I gave each group of 2-3 persons two parts to study (instead of one, as I did with the larger group) and to present to the others. They had 15 minutes. As the group was not so big, I took myself also a part to read and describe (the character evaluation assessment). I gave each group two big sheets of paper to prepare their presentation. When a group finished, I gave them some of the materials I

had about teaching character through subjects and about [uzdevumi.lv](http://uzdevumi.lv). I made them circulate. When everybody was ready, we started the presentations. I suggested that we present first all the sections and then we discuss, but they preferred to have a short discussion after each part, and I agreed.

93. The presentations were quite creative. One teacher made a flower; another teacher a whole story about psychology of moral education with drawing of children who at the end of the story get married. When a group finished their presentation, I asked if anyone wanted to ask something, but they did not. Then I put some accents. Regarding the section about “what is what is not character education” I stressed how important was to define the terms because people have very different understandings. About the Psychology section, I stressed that each child has a different path. About the classification of virtues, which was very creative with flowers and so on, I stressed that there are a lot of virtues and that they work as a piece of fabric: sometimes we need to push up from the strong ones and at other times we need to work on the weaker ones. About the components of virtue, I said that each virtue has all those components and that all are important. About the ethos of the school Anastasija commented that this word was difficult, she challenged me to explain it. I said that it is like the culture of a class or a family, a set of values and a way of relating to others. She had found in the Internet a very complicated definition... I stressed that character education is for everybody in the school. About the section on teachers, Dace commented that it is difficult to know what means to be a ‘good person’. I wanted to say something, but I let her go on. Then she referred to an example I gave: if a parent says to his children to rejoice about stealing, it would be more difficult to the child to have the right virtue emotion. Finally, I presented about the assessment, stressing that we need to be very careful and to think about why we want to assess character. Now I realize that I was too focussed on the contents and I did not give positive feedback to the participants for the work they have done...
94. Then I asked them if the Framework could be useful at school and if it was worthy to disseminate it. Janine spoke first to say that it was not so useful, that there was nothing really new over there. I listened with patience, and instead of telling myself how it could be used, I gave the word to the rest of participants. Another college said that it was well structured maybe a little bit too long but with some cuts it would help. Another said that she thought that the length was very good, the contents useful, and that it could be used for reminding colleagues things they already know, to actualize the discussion among teachers or students, even with families.
95. Then I said that the time for the break came (it was already 17:10), and they said that it would be better to have a short break and then to finish sooner. I agreed to have a 5-minute break. Janine and her colleague left. During the break I proposed to have a look to the materials about teaching character through subjects to those who had not did it yet. Anastasija was showing me a poem that she uses in her classes to help pupils to think.
96. After the break we worked on the section ‘from temperament to character’. I proposed them to choose their temperament to analyse. I explained the whole process at the beginning, so that they can have a meaning for their task. Then I did my short lecture about the cardinal virtues, while they were reflecting about which virtue could be the most necessary for their character. Now I think that the next time I will be more creative, and we will put a name to each temperament... They were participating well, I did not do too much intervention, as they were completing each other. Just at the end I explained them that in a school team aiming at launching a character initiative, everybody can have

a place. I reported the experience of Kaspars from the other group, who made successful teams with pupils with different temperaments.

97. We started the final round about the take-away. It was a pity that 3 out of 8 teachers were gone, but still it was interesting. Several teachers said that the framework was a good contribution and liked it. One teacher said she liked the method of the events with values, and that she had in mind a bunch of different situations where she could use it, not only at school.

98. Another teacher (Elita, the new one) said that the phrase that stuck to her mind was that doing something, you do something to yourself also. She said that she liked a lot this phrase, that is was a very useful perspective when speaking with children. I added that this is the essence of the virtue ethics approach. Inga and others commented on the idea of mixing temperaments. I also said that I learned much from them and we left the session.

99. I was grateful that Anastasija other teachers was helping me to put in order the room and the materials.

### **Shining eyes' moments**

100. when I told them the experience of last week with the other group and how they had much to say about the problems at school.

101. When Laura said her episode about the boys trying to bully her.

102. When I told a about the importance of the methodology (during the physics lesson) and about the work I did with udevumi.lv for 'extracting' the virtues from their methods.

103. When I reported about the experience of mixing temperaments in teams.

### **"The unexpected"**

104. How eager they are to speak... At the beginning I had to force myself to make them start working.

105. I did not expect that Janine would say that the Framework was not going to be very useful at schools...

106. The enthusiasm of Anastasija about the poem she showed me during the break.

107. The high appreciation of the website of the Jubilee center. They wanted to know the precise address and started checking it...

### **'Moral and ethical attitudes'**

108. I told them about the reflective journal (sincerity), about my fight for letting them speak and not to disturb them with my interventions.

109. I had to fight against impatience when Laura started speaking. She has very interesting ideas, but I found that she speaks too much...

110. I had to cut the big sheets of paper, but they were not pre-cut, so I was making noise. I tried not to disturb them while they were working on the framework. I looked for scissors but anyway, I was noisy...

### **My 'take away'**

111. the ideal number of participants could be 12-15. If they are more than that, each exercise takes longer if we want all of them to participate. If less, the discussions are not so rich. The more they are, the less they can interact together.

### **For the next session**

112. maybe use the poem of Angelica?

113. Less talk at the beginning. plan very well to show a maximum of materials and to have time to the final discussion.

114. Maybe use the movie about the four temperaments?

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**Facts**

115. I prepared the seminar a couple of days before. I had prepared and printed the new version of the 11 Principles. I also took a lot of books to show them and went through to present the. An important part of the preparation was the elaboration of the final questionnaire. I had received from the RIIMC the questionnaire they usually use for assessing this kind of seminars. I decided to use it in full, because it was well thought and has a practical value for the organizers. All their questions were also relevant for my research. I completed the questionnaire with two sections: one was composed of three questions that appeared in the initial questionnaire, in order to compare the results before and after. For choosing them, I went through their answers that I had transcribed, and I decided to use the questions where it could be expected some visible change: one about their knowledge of the concepts; another one asking them to define virtues and values; and a third one about their perceived feeling of competence for character education. The second section was a list of all the activities we had done during the course, that they had to rate in a 7-point Likert scale. I added also a question about their readiness to promote this seminar among their colleagues. The demographic information also was duplicated, because some of them had not provided it at the beginning.
116. As always, the director of the municipality service was very helpful and smiling. He was there a lot of time with us and he and her assistants helped with everything that was needed. I arranged the room like an amphitheatre with two rows, so that they are closer to the screen and checked all the materials before the start. I had written the schedule in detail, but I did not know if I should start with the theory about the 11 principles or about the materials. At the end I decided to start with the materials, and it was a good idea. I called the activity “the market of materials”.
117. When the first participants arrived, I suggested them to start having a look to the books. Some did, some did not. When the participants arrived, some commented that it was a very good idea to change the disposition of the room, and that now they understood better why pupils like so much to change the places of the tables. It created the sensation of novelty, of something unexpected and interesting.
118. After a couple of welcoming words, I told them that today we will work 2 hours on a row and then, after the coffee break, we will do together the assessment of the seminar. I started presenting the materials (the “market of materials” activity). I had prepared a thematic PowerPoint to guide me during the presentation. I tried to speak slowly, because I wanted to show them many things and we had only 30 minutes for that. I had prepared the activity going myself carefully through all the materials I wanted to show in order to earn time. I started with general materials: first showed a book in Latvian about Social emotional education. I had printed the table of contents and I showed the different section on the screen. I also showed the sections with instruments for assessing SEL at school and self-assessment tools for directors. Some knew the book and were making positive comments about it, others did not know and were grateful. Then I showed in the same way the Character education evaluation handbook of the Jubilee center. I had a printed version, copies of the list of contents and the digital version. As many of them do not speak English, the interest was not so big. Anyway, some of them came and had a more detailed look at it. I also spoke about the D Isaacs book and the table about the classification of virtues by age.
119. Then we spoke about collaboration with families. Some materials were already mentioned in the SEL book, but the main source here was the guide “families as partners” elaborated by the “Lyons Quest program. I gave them also the table of contents



and presented it with some detail on the screen. I also showed them the research of the JCCV “Parent-teacher partnership”.

120. The I presented the materials for the classroom: First I showed the paper version of a document in Latvian elaborated in a previous project with classroom activities. I had found it when preparing the seminar, and it is not still available online. They seemed well interested. Then I said that there was a big project about teaching character through subjects in the Jubilee centre database. I showed them the paper version of some of the materials. I also said that the most important thing were the methods used for delivering the content. and I showed them on the screen the example of a company (uzdevummi.lv) with which I worked on the unfolding the virtues that appear using their platform. I also showed them the paper version of the Jubilee centre curriculum for KS2 and KS4, both the student handbook and the teacher guide. Overall, I got the impression that the barrier of the language was quite big and they were not so interested in materials in English. This could be a good experience for other groups
121. I also showed a short presentation about the catholic gymnasium of Riga and their program for character education, with a matrix moth per month and the teacher responsible for each school activity related to the virtue of the moth. Finally I showed them the web page of my project, where many of these materials are available. I had also explored the Oxford character project, but I decided that it was not directed to them directly, so, as it was also in English, I skipped it. At the end I promised them to send an email with all the materials of the seminar. (I have still to prepare it). The activity lasted 30 minutes, as foreseen. I commented that maybe they were tired and it was not so engaging for them. We moved ahead to the next activity. I was happy to do it, because, as I told them, those are the materials I have been working with and that I like, so I wanted to share them with them.
122. I started the presentation of the 11 Principles giving to each one an exemplar of the translation I had prepared, as a gift that I take for them every week. I explained shortly the context of the principles and how to use them. I gave them also a copy of the assessment table and asked them to fill it, thinking about their own school. They had 10 minutes to do it. They could use the materials I gave them, were each criterion was explained more in detail. While they were doing so, I was moving around to see if they had any problem. A couple of participants were not doing the work, they just read the table, but most of them were making this self-assessment. At the end I asked for their comments, and they said about the work “kalpošana” (in the expression “service learning”) which sounds too religious. This confirmed the comments of the translator, who had suggested a better translation. They also commented about the word “internalizācija”, they think that nobody understands it. We decided that it would be better to replace it with a clearer periphrasis.
123. Then we started the activity “School as a learning organization”. I showed on the screen the components of a learning organization. I asked the participants to create by themselves 4 groups. Each group will work on one component, thinking about three questions: in order to improve the profile of their school as an organization that enhance character education: 1) what to start doing? 2) what to stop doing? and 3) what to continue doing? The 3 questions were visualized as three buttons of a media player, that I draw on the blackboard. They had some support material: the definition of each component of a learning organization, i.e., a short paragraph describing the features of each component, that they could read on the perspective of a “character education organization”. For the creation of the 4 groups, I asked them to do it by themselves. It

was a bit difficult for them, and at the end there were only three groups, but one of them was quite big, so I gave them two components. They choose “supportive leadership” and “students’ self-involvement”. The other groups had just one component each (“team building” and “knowledge and innovation culture”). They had to write in big sheets of paper their answers to 3 question: The activity worked quite well, each group hang the papers on the walls and expose their ideas t the others. The presentations were interesting, and the other colleagues made comments about the topic. For the first group, one colleagues stood up and explained it for everybody. In the second group they all stayed sitting, and they commented their ideas together. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> group choose a representative who explained their ideas to the others. I tried to be close to the panel that was being presented and to keep a good eye contact with the whole classroom, but it was not easy because the chairs were still in the amphitheatre position. Maybe a goo experience for this activity would be to change the disposition of tables and chairs before the activity...

124. Now reflecting a bout this exercise I realize that I should have been more concrete when explaining how to transform the support text on a “character education text”. For me maybe it was quite obvious, but if you have never done so... I did this work with them at the beginning, when I was explaining the name of the components: for example, the “vision of a student who involves in his/her own learning” became “the vision of the student who involves in his/her own character growth”. The second one was “teamwork and peer learning” and I added “for character education”. The 3<sup>rd</sup> – Knowledge and innovation culture” (added: “in the field of character education”), and the 4<sup>th</sup>: “leadership support for development” (added: of character education at school). I could have read with them the beginning of the explanatory paragraphs and making together the necessary transformations, to show them how to go about it.
125. An interesting episode in this activity was that one of the colleagues asked: “what means “character education program”? I explained that is was a program for education character. She asked if we needed to introduce an additional program at school. Because they already have career education, in which one of the modules is about the character of the students and their self-knowledge. I said that each school could take her own approach for helping students. There are many possibilities, for example, SEL also. I said that the advantage that I see in having a character education program is that it can be more universal. If the perspective for educating the personality is based on the career choice, many students can be disengaged, if they have already chosen their career or if they are not yet interested in doing so. But the development of personality is a value by itself for every child. I realize now that a good argument could be also to say that character should not be instrumental for the profession, even if having a good character has a positive impact on the work life. Character is a value by itself. Regarding the SEL perspective, I commented that it is very valuable and practical\*oriented, but that in my opinion the character perspective is wider, because it includes not only emotions, but also reasoning, behaviour, sensitivity, etc. But in fact, both are very close. During this conversation other teachers were intervening, with their views on how the character education program can be very variated.
126. An unexpected problem was that, when I was writing on the blackboard the three buttons, a gum stuck to my shoes and I was making noise when I walked, I tried to ignore it and to keep the good mood. As it was noisy anyway, I sat down while they were working and tried to remove it, but is was not so easy... I was ashamed of doing so in from t of them while they were working, but I did what I thought I should do, so that I do

not distract them with the noise. After a while I succeeded in removing most of the gum and I could forget about it.

127. At the end of this activity I asked them if they wanted to take a short break of 5 minutes before doing the last activity, because they could be quite tired, but they preferred to go ahead. As the time run ahead and I wanted to experiment with them a new method (Open thinking) that I learnt in Birmingham and I could not practice last time with them, I decided to speak very shortly about my research: I just gave them the printed exemplar of the report (one per school, but two schools did not get it), and said in 2 minutes what was it about. Some were very interested and asked if it was available online for free. They were happy to hear that it was so. I also decided to skip completely the presentation about what works and what does not work in character education. It was a pity, because I had prepared it well the previous week for the other group (I did not have time either with them, but I will have one more chance). But I think they would appreciate better the practical activity than a theoretical explanation. I will send them the presentation by email anyway...

128. So we started the *Open thinking* activity. I told them that this will be the last activity of the course. I distributed them a sheet of paper and asked them to write down the main question that they have in mind now, after all they have heard, in order to start their character education program at school. They had two minutes to do so, then I asked them to stand up and to go to look for another colleague randomly, with which they will work for 3-4 minutes: that had to read their question to the colleague, and then the colleague has not to answer the question, but has to put a question about the question. The activity went off, and they started speaking. After some minutes I suggested them to change the direction of the conversation. Then to look for another colleague. I had foreseen 10 minutes, but they were very enthusiastic about the whole process and they did not want to stop. I tried to stop them speaking loudly, but it did not work. Then I wrote n the blackboard that when they had reformulated their question using the knowledge gained in the discussion, they could start the coffee break, and I went group by group to show them what I had written. Even so they did not stop talking and talking. I went to the director of the municipality; he was quite happy about the whole process. I told him that I had my flute and that I was going to play; this could maybe help them to go to the coffee break... I did so, and I played for them two pieces of Vivaldi with a recorded orchestra accompanying me. They were surprised, liked it very much, took their coffee and sat down to listen to the music. I also felt very happy to ply for them, the flute was sounding well...

129. This was a very good transition to the last part of the seminar. The ambience was very good, they seemed relaxed. I asked them to reorganize the tables in "U" form, so that they can see each other, and asked them to fill que questionnaire, writing also their number on the top so that I can compare the answers before and after. They had 15 minutes to do so, which was quite enough. After that I sat in the circle with a desk in order to write down their comments about the seminar. I reconstructed the contents of their intervention based on the notes I took while they were speaking. The ambience was fantastic, we were all really happy of sharing our good memories. They did not say anything to improve during this round table (They had been given the opportunity to do so in the questionnaire), so they just highlighted what they liked best in the seminar.

130. After that, the assistant of the director gave me the diplomas to distribute among the participants, and I gave them one by one personally, standing and shaking hands, as

we usually do in Latvia. I also received a gift from the organizers: a book and some honey with berries. We said each other goodbye...

### **Shining eyes' moments**

- 131. When they said to each other the good experience with the last activity and with the seminar overall.
- 132. When I was playing the flute

### **“The unexpected”**

- 133. Their happiness about the new disposition of tables.
- 134. Their comments about the work “internalizācija”, they think that nobody understands it.
- 135. Their interest about receiving the link to the research
- 136. They were a little lazy to change places, but with humour
- 137. The success of the last activity was unexpected. They did not want to stop.
- 138. Many things they mentioned in the last round table were unexpected to me (felt support; importance of smile and example; speaking about my own experience...)

### **‘Moral and ethical attitudes’**

- 139. Responsibility preparation of the course and the assessment.
- 140. Courage to play the flute.
- 141. humility to remove the gum
- 142. Elasticity and detachment to let aside a some of the work I had prepared to offer them a new method, that is more interesting for them than the new content.
- 143. Care, positioning myself in different places to keep eye contact and attention.
- 144. Joy, simplicity acknowledging the good things of the seminar. Giving thanks to them personally.
- 145. two or three participants left before the end. I was a little bit sad, because I will not have their feedback, but I tried to go over it rapidly and to concentrate on those who were there.

### **My ‘take away’**

- 146. to ask first if they want to know about what exists in other languages.
- 147. I think that the discussion about the necessity/convenience of a CE program and how it fits on the school activities is very important and should be addressed directly in the course. The best way of doing it could be at the beginning of the 3rd session, once they have already a good knowledge of the language of virtue and an idea of the Framework for character education and about temperaments, and before explaining the 11 principles. The main contents of the presentation should be the comparison of CE program with having CE somehow in other activities of the school but without a real plan. And as a practical activity they could reflect in groups about what activities they already have that integrate character education, and if it could be convenient at their school to start a specific program. So, to differentiate between “character education” that happens at any time anywhere, and a real program that acknowledges all those opportunities and integrates them in a larger educational framework.

### **RIIMC March 11<sup>th</sup>**

- 148. For the preparation of the seminar I was very careful, as usually. I was a bit nervous about the group: I did not know if they were going to be happy with the seminar. The previous day I gave for printing the necessary materials. I read once more their initial comments about their expectations. I also went through the whole schedule of the session. I checked once more the presentation about the materials and also the other activities that I foresaw to do. For preparing the session I had also made a list of the

materials that I was planning to send them when the seminar finished so that they can have access to them.

149. I arrived at the session one hour ahead the at time. The leaders of the institution were not present at any time this time. I met them just when I arrived, they had prepared the copies and asked me to give the diploma and to take the list with the signatures. She made a copy for me of the previous sessions, for my research.
150. I went to the room and I moved the tables to create an amphitheatre so that they can see the screen well. Then I put the materials on the tables, and I checked my computer to see if the projector worked well. Then they started to arrive.
151. Anastasija was one of the first to come. The previous day I looked for a poem in Russian that Anastasia had suggested me and, when she arrived, I showed her the Google translation into English, and we went through once more. I think she appreciated this. I also put on the screen the title of the first presentation: the “market of materials”. She made a comment about the translation. I correct it the title and she was happy about that.
152. This time 12 participants came. There was not place enough in the amphitheatre, and so I helped the two ladies who came last to find a table for them. They were happy about that.
153. I started to present the materials. Janine said that she does not speak English at all, but there were other colleagues who were fluent in English, I presented anyway also the material in English. The whole presentation took quite a lot of time, 40 minutes. I think they were interested. I had prepared also the copies of the tables of contents of the three main materials I was speaking about, so that they can follow better. I think they liked the presentation of the book about social emotional learning and also the guidelines of the project lion quest about collaboration with families. I thin k they were particularly interested in the materials in Latvian about character education in the classroom I had scanned and also about the work I did with the company uzdevumi.lv. The English-speaking teachers were also making photos of some of the materials. I think that the section about “planning character education at school” was not well prepared. I just show them the Catholic gymnasium plan, but it was not so compelling. I also show the webpage ARETE of my project. I hope it will be useful for them.
154. What could be improved in this activity? I could try to involve them in the presentation of materials: for example, giving them the materials the previous session and asking them to prepare a short presentation at home for the others, so that they can reflect more. This could help me also to see what they put forward, what they are interested in. Another thing to avoid is to scroll the documents on the screen. I think they do not like this. Better to have a ready presentation for each document with the pages I want them to see. It would ask more reflection from me, but it would be a richer experience for them, because each person would look in a different way to the materials. Another thing to try is to prepare an activity where they make a concrete “character education plan” for their school. This is difficult, because a serious plan cannot be improvised, I have seen some materials that are available online and they are very professional. A whole seminar could be organized just about this issue...
155. When the presentation of materials finished, they looked quite tired. The presentation took around 40 minutes longer than I had expected.
156. In order to make the transition to the next activity, I said that I was going to give them a gift as I do in every session. It was the translation of the introduction of the 11 Principles for effective character education. I gave an exemplar to each one of the participants one by one. I explained shortly the contents and I asked them to fill

individually the table of school assessment. They were given 10 minutes to do it. I asked them also to mark the things that were not clear in the form, so that I can improve it with their help. When they finished, I commented two or three criteria that were especially relevant for me (for example the one about creating a team that leads the character education program, or the one about involving students themselves in the whole program). We also discussed shortly what to do next with this evaluation: the different decisions they could make based on the scores they got for their school. I also asked them if they thought that it was a useful form for their school. Some were silent, but one or two teachers said that it's a good tool for enhancing reflection at School.

157. As they were quite tired after this activity, I proposed them to look a short video (Saving mummy's time"). I asked them to think about the virtues and values they saw in the movie. Janine made some interpretations a bit surprising, like for example that the boy was acting egoistically... I let her speak and waited for the reaction of other colleagues. Some were surprised about her interpretation (I felt that Inga was even a little bit angry...), but they enhanced the positive things they saw in the video. I tried to look at this diversity with good humour, making some funny comments. People was also laughing, and the atmosphere was again quite relaxed.
158. Then we started the next activity: "The school as an organization that enhance character education". I show on the screen this schema of the School2030 project, and I explained them how we could adapt this schema for thinking about character education. I also gave some examples about how to read the explanations of each component of this schema in this perspective. Then I asked them two create four teams of three persons each (they were 12). They had to choose a component of the schema to discuss about. They had to present their work as usual on the big sheets of paper using the three buttons :what to start what to stop, what to continue. one team had special difficulties 2 speak about knowledge and innovation in the field of moral education. I was helping them to find ideas. I also was moving around 4 teams, in order to understand if they had problems. some of them ask questions And made precision's about their work . I also suggested each group to be very concrete and to give practical examples of what they are proposing to do, not just general considerations.
159. Then I look at my watch and I saw that it was a very late: 17:05!! We had only 55 minutes left. I asked them to present very shortly their thoughts. They did their best, they had very practical ideas. I tried not to interrupt them. A couple of times I was looking at my watch, but I tried haerd not to do so, in order to keep all my attention on them. It was hard, but I succeded quite well. The discussion was quite interesting, but it took more time than foreseen initially. Laura said that it was very important to understand how the children with visual needs felt, how accurately the perceive others mood just by the way they move or they speak, or how they let their handbag on the chair or on the ground. Some shared about the collective teacher activities that they have at school. Some were commenting the necessity of focussing only on the negative aspects at school. Another difficult moment was when the two young participants were presenting their work in a very 'mechanical 'way. Here I tried to focus on what they said and to put some short questions to show them my interest and to make the full thing more 'receivable' for the others. Eye contact with the presenter was difficult, but I succeeded at two or three times. I think she was happy about being listened to. Overall, I think this was an enriching moment, as always when they speak.
160. I definitively think that in any kind of activity I have to speak less and to let them reflect and share. For example, this time, when presenting the materials or when working

on the 11 principles, I think we did not have time enough to share thoughts about that, or that the proposed method was not so good to bring out the best of them.

161. It was already 17:25. We were running out of time and I did not know what to do. I decided to skip the presentation of my research, and the section ‘what works, what does not work’, as well as the final round table, even if I expected them to say nice things about the seminar. I gave preference to giving them time to fill the questionnaire and to finish the session on time. I definitely wanted them to experience the Open thinking activity, but we were running out of time to do the coffee break and to have the final assessment in good conditions. I decided to expose them the problem plainly, and to ask for their advice to solve the problem. They decided that we could go for a short coffee break right ahead and then to do the Open thinking activity and the assessment. I agreed and the coffee break started.
162. The Open thinking activity worked very well. We started at 17:30, I wanted to explain things quickly, operatively, and I was a bit in tension, too serious, when I explained the rules. I realized that and tried to be more smiling. Once they wrote their initial question, I suggested them to rise up and to look for a colleague to continue the activity. They all choose the colleague who was next to them. After a while I went pair-by pair to suggest them to change the partner, to look for other advices. Sometimes I had to interrupt their conversation to make this suggestion. It was not very pleasant for me, because they were very engaged in the conversation, but I wanted to help them to take the maximum of the activity.
163. One of the participants was not moving at all, at some moment she stood alone looking at her telephone. I suggested other colleagues to go to her, then she received them kindly, but she did not move herself. This was the exception. Most of them (even Janine!) were very happy of exchanging with colleagues, and I think their conversations were really rich, even if I could not control them. I had the role of pointing to the free participants where there were free colleagues to speak with.
164. About the general organization of this activity, maybe it could be better to write the instructions in the blackboard, because, specially once they have started to speak and to take pleasure on the activity, it is very hard to make them stop, or to explain that they should reformulate their question with the insights of the other colleagues...
165. As they were so engaged and the time was running (17:40...), I decided to start giving the final questionnaire one by one to those who had just finished a conversation, instead of interrupting everybody at once. This worked well: some started filling the questionnaire sooner, other later, but everybody had time to speak as much as they wanted with colleagues. When I gave the questionnaire, I asked them to do it carefully, so that it could be useful for me. I also asked them to put the number they received the first day to compare their answers.
166. After ten minutes (17:50), I decided to play the flute while they were completing the questionnaire. I thought that maybe this would disturb them, but I decided to try anyway. All were surprised, but then they continued working while listening. When I finished I asked if they needed more time, and they all said that I could play another piece while they finished their questionnaire. This gave a more relaxed tone to the end of the session and was a good transition to the delivering of the diplomas.
167. I started giving the diploma (17:55!). I suggested them to say some words if they wished when they received it. The first one could not come in front of the others, so I went to her place. The others were happy to come to the ‘stage’ and some said some words: Janine said that this was the only course where she was given the possibility of

telling her own opinion. I was joking about her “wrong opinion”, and she also answered with a joke. Inga said she was grateful for the big amount of materials and the interesting experience. Other teachers were thankful to others for sharing their own experiences.

168. Of course, this time their final comments were not so rich as in the usual “round table”. I consoled myself thinking that maybe they had already wrote what they thought in the questionnaire... We will see.

169. At the end I thanked them for the whole seminar, I said I had learnt very much about them, and that I was available if they were thinking about starting something at their school. I also said that I was impressed by their eagerness to learn and to work during the sessions, even if they had already been working during the morning at their school.

### **Shining eyes’ moments**

170. When they saw the materials in Latvian, the platform...

171. Some were very engaged in the last activity (open thinking).

172. Some of the comments to the short video were very good.

173. When I played the flute

### **“The unexpected”**

174. Only one absent because a school event she could not omit!

175. Janine’s unexpected comments about the video. She also said that she had watched it already...

176. Janine’s gratefulness and her interest in the last activity

### **‘Moral and ethical attitudes’**

177. Responsibility for the preparation.

178. Overcoming my tiredness and tension.

179. Helping them to feel well at the beginning (finding a table, changing my plans for the disposition of the room)

180. Care about their rest: put a video even if after the time will be shorter.

181. Putting attention: not looking at my watch, trying to reformulate their thoughts...

182. Take their opinion into account for solving the problems of timing and organization.

183. Difficult; not interrupting their conversation, even for a good reason... I have to be more patient, less directive.

### **My ‘take away’**

184. Plan every activity so that they can speak.

185. Play flute whatever happens!



## 9.5. Notes of the focus group discussion

1. "Playing the flute was very good, this should be included in the next seminar! Absolutely!"
2. "This seminar gave me a lot of inspiration. I knew a number of things, but I was really inspired with many little things during the seminar".
3. "I felt support during the whole seminar. In other seminars I also learnt many things, but this seminar was special in that, that I felt support from other colleagues, I realised that my problems are also their problems, that I am not alone. I felt like as part of a friendly and supporting community."
4. "We were on the same wave. There was a lot of positive spirit during all the sessions. At the beginning of the seminar several colleagues said that they can contribute with their positive spirit, and it was really so. We were drawn up by the atmosphere of the seminar".
5. "I liked a lot the methods we used during the seminar, and in particular the last one. At the beginning, when you said that we should go with our question to speak with other colleagues, I thought "well, this is as always, let's see...", but when you said that the other colleague does not have to answer to my question, but to put a question about my question, que 'question my question'.. it changed everything. This was an amazing experience. I had my question, and after speaking with other colleagues I had a full page of very interesting questions". A colleague added "yes this activity was the best. We should use it in this way at school, speaking with other teachers and in the direction meeting, and with parents and with students... It is really very useful, because you get many different perspectives to your own problem. It is not so much about finding the solutions right now, but about thinking wider, with more open perspectives. I was happy to hear this and I told them that I was going to share this experience with the colleague that taught it to me.
6. "The smile, the smile with which you lead the whole seminar was very encouraging. This is the thing I will take with me. The atmosphere, the way of listening to others, the smile and positive attitude all the time: this is what I will remember in the long term from this seminar"
7. Another colleague commented that the seminar was a kind of meditation, like in a church, where we had time to think inside ourselves, to go deeper, to take time to meditate calmly about the important things in our life and in our profession.
8. "What I also liked a lot is that you spoke about your own personal experience. You told us many things about yourself, about your own experience, about what you have done and experienced. This gave a particular atmosphere to the seminar. Other lecturers speak more about theory, but it is important to share your own experience as a person and as a professional".
9. "You also gave a personal example about virtues and values leading the seminar in the way you did it. This way of giving a personal example is the thing I want to underscore from this seminar".
10. When I said that after all they have said I would need to work on the virtue of humility, one of the teachers said: "it is very good! To feel well when doing things well, that this is what you taught us about virtues and emotions: to rejoice about the good things, isn't it?"
11. After the session ended, another colleague came to me to say that it was very good, and that he had taken many ideas for his own work at school.

## 9.6. Criteria for the evaluation of definitions

Key words:

Concept	Specific	Common
Values	Concepts, ideas / lead the deeds	Socially recognized / can be learnt / are personal
Virtues:	Habits / practical / acquired by doing	Socially recognized / can be learnt / are personal

4 = significantly improved (from misperception to correct understanding with key words)

3 = slightly improved (basically awareness does not change but new key words are used)

2 = unchanged

1 = remained more unclear

## 9.7. My reflective journal - Matrix Coding Query - links overlapping

### My journal Matrix Coding Query - links overlapping

	A: creating surprises	B: demonstration	C: explanation	D: facilitate	E: flexibility	F: friendly support	G: giving good example	H: I share	I: interrupting	J: listening to them	K: Materials	L: materials in English	M: not friendly support	N: personal relationship	O: practical ideas	P: preparation	Q: preparation bad	R: reflection + sharing	S: running out of time	T: scrolling on the screen	U: self-directed peer sharing	V: smiling	W: they choose	X: they share	Y: too little participants	Z: using video		
1: creating surprises	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2: demonstration	0	9	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3: explanation	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4: facilitate	0	0	1	19	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	
5: flexibility	0	1	0	2	15	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	
6: friendly support	0	0	0	1	3	21	1	0	0	6	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	
7: giving good example	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
8: I share	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	14	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
9: interrupting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
10: listening to them	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	1	0	25	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	11	0	1	0	
11: Materials	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
12: materials in English	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
13: not friendly support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
14: personal relationship	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	
15: practical ideas	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	
16: preparation	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
17: preparation bad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
18: reflection + sharing	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	16	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	
19: running out of time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
20: scrolling on the screen	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
21: self-directed peer sharing	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	
22: smiling	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	
23: they choose	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	8	1	0	0	0	
24: they share	0	0	0	3	2	5	0	1	0	11	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	29	0	0	0	
25: too little participants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
26: using video	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	
Number of overlapping occurer	0	4	2	15	20	20	4	7	1	25	3	0	0	8	7	7	0	15	0	2	5	4	5	27	0	1		