

Training in Learning Communities

UNIT 10



DIALOGIC MODEL FOR THE PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

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UNIT 10

DIALOGIC MODEL FOR THE PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

Education centres must be safe spaces for all children. They must be areas in which children learn, grow and relate freely with one other so that learning is within everyone's reach. The dialogic model for the prevention and resolution of conflict, allows for a better coexistence both in the centre and in the education community as a whole. It is based upon dialogue and consensus amongst all parties involved, particularly the student body, regarding coexistence rules.

In this unit, three models which deal with the prevention and resolution of conflict are initially presented and summarised: discipline-based, mediation-based and dialogic. Next, further detail is provided regarding how the dialogic model is organised using the example of the implementation of rule consensus.

Although often difficult to identify, most problems in centres arise as a result of affective-sexual matters. For this reason, the second part of the unit focuses on preventing the socialisation of gender-based violence, outlining certain key errors which can occur when handling such subjects.

To conclude, we provide guidance on specific actions that, based on scientific evidence, are implemented in the schools as Learning Communities to involve the entire community and generate spaces free of violence.

10.1. From the discipline-based model to the dialogic model for the prevention and resolution of conflict

Since the period of the industrial society, the most widespread model used when tackling or avoiding unrest at education centres has been the **discipline-based model**. This is based upon established hierarchies and the role of a particular authority (the staff), who has been considered responsible for maintaining coexistence.

Rules and roles are defined and established in the discipline-based model by the figures of authority. The faculty impose regulations without input from the student body. The regulations then are enforced from top to bottom, that

is the figures of authority make decisions and everyone else must behave accordingly.

In an industrial society, the discipline-based model suited how groups and institutions were managed. For instance, the head of a family (the man) had authority and he would devise his children's timetable and decide which programmes were to be watched on TV. The doctor's authority was not to be questioned either. In the current information society, these hierarchies do not vanish, but they are questioned and are constantly challenged. If someone is not in agreement with a doctor, they are able to ask for a second opinion. Adolescents can discuss their plans and schedule and families, in all their forms, need not sit in front of a TV set waiting to discover what the head of the family decides to do with the remote control. Thus, people interact, participate in and engage in dialogue about activities, plans and family behaviour and question or look for a second opinion in medicine.

For this reason, the discipline-based model cannot work satisfactorily in current society. Although it is fairly common for school authorities to request and listen to suggestions, it is clear that this is insufficient for reducing conflict and guaranteeing coexistence in centres.

In order to ensure that rules are abided by, the discipline-based model applies sanctions against those who breach them or behave disruptively. Punishments may include, amongst many others, banning the offender from class for a few days, sending them to alternative programmes or excluding them from the centre.

Sanctions and disqualifying measures frequently lead to the labelling of specific pupils who already suffer stigmatisation. Those who often suffer stigmatisation include pupils from Roma and other ethnic minority groups and pupils from economically depressed areas and they can be labeled as as defiant, aggressive or poorly mannered. Such prejudices are internalised by the pupils and only serve to strengthen any poor expectations they may have of themselves. Also, school punishments, whether temporary or permanent, increase the time pupils spend outside of their learning groups thereby incrementally increasing the gap in learning between them and their classmates. Removal from classrooms or even from centres does not solve but increases problems and does not provide space for opportunities for collaborative reflection on difficulties provoking that these pupils act the same in the future.

The mediator model represents an improvement on the discipline-based system as it includes all the parties involved in a given problematic situation and in the subsequent resolution process, therefore placing emphasis back on coexistence. This model is characterised by the involvement of an 'expert' who mediates between parties and offers responses according to a established rules. This model uses reactive solutions, that is solutions which arise from responses to a conflict which has already emerged, rather than prevention measures. Even though a framework of rules is generally defined by an 'expert' (the authority), enforcement

is not a top to bottom process, but a dialogue between equals who have a common purpose. Instead of focusing on apportioning blame and responding with punishment, there is a fostering of support between participants.

The drawbacks in the mediator model lie in restricting responsibility for coexistence to very specific people. Also the 'expert' must be impartial and maintain personal distance and for this reason they use a specific form of language and particular communication techniques. This professionalisation or specialisation of mediation tasks may generate unsatisfactory responses. For example, that the parties involved in the conflict accept the resolution proposed by the mediator without having clear what was the process that led to it or pretends to accept the proposed resolution for fear of the consequences that would have to reject it, among others. These types of reactions may not solve the conflict situation, since both students and family members do not share the same perception of the problem as the expert who mediated the resolution.

The **dialogic model**, however, involves the whole community by means of a dialogue which allows for '*discover the causes and origins of conflicts to solve them from the community itself long before they appear*' (Flecha & García, 2007). Therefore, this approach focusses on the prevention of conflict, by creating an atmosphere of collaboration where members participate in the co-creation of rules, the running of the centre, how conflict is resolved and where there is a greater understanding and meaning by all involved.

In this model, the necessary spaces and conditions are provided so that all people have the same opportunities to express their voice and find joint solutions. To make this dialogue possible it is considered that everybody, regardless of their culture or education level and so on has the opportunity to intervene, give opinions and participate in the search for an agreed solution which helps in preventing conflict. The responsibility and capacity for managing coexistence does not lie only with someone with authority or with an expert, but with all students, staff and people in the community. The objective here is to overcome pretensions of power which are so present in the discipline-based model and allow for valid pretensions and egalitarian relationships.

Dialogue is present across throughout the prevention and resolution of conflict, both in the compiling of rules and in their subsequent implementation and in responding to procedural ethics and deliberative democracy in approaches (Elster, 1998). **Procedural ethics** establish that value of decisions or agreements does not only depend on their contents but on the procedures which were followed when agreeing the rule, the consensus. The higher the number of people and the higher the diversity of said people, the more valuable the rule is due to the increase in perspectives and arguments. **Deliberative democracy**, for its part, is based on the view that dialogue and consensus is preferable to voting for opposing choices (when making democratic decisions. In a vote, two or more options are presented and voted upon so that a majority vote may be used to make a decision. However,

in a deliberative democratic process, the initial viewpoints of those involved in decision-making can alter with discussion and arguments and alternative options are allowed to emerge, thus making reaching a consensus more inclusive.

The generation of dialogue spaces prevents conflict. The involvement of the whole community is necessary, so that all opinions about causes and origins of conflict and its solutions are heard and taken into consideration while the conflict still is latent.

The dialogic model means taking a step further to prevent problems in coexistence. It does not necessarily entirely replace the other models outline above, but these in themselves cannot eradicate the occurrence of problems. When the student body, their relatives and the staff have the opportunity to participate in the management of their centre as well as rule creation and conflict resolution, the quality of coexistence is improved both in the centre and in the education community as a whole. Furthermore, community participation does not contrast with student learning but fully compliments it and fosters instrumental learning.

The following chart summarises the aforementioned models and their concepts:

DISCIPLINE-BASED MODEL	MEDIATOR MODEL	COMMUNITY MODEL
Removing a conflict situation by means of punitive actions	Resolving a conflict situation once it has emerged	Preventing a conflict situation
Authority	Mediator	Community
Top to bottom rules	Dialogue for implementing rules	Dialogue throughout the rulemaking process (procedural ethics and deliberative democracy)
Emphasis on sanctions, exclusions, etc.	Emphasis on support between peers rather than apportioning blame	Emphasis on participation; a clear link to learning

In Learning Communities, the participation of the community in the prevention of conflicts is encouraged in many day-to-day areas. In, for example Mixed Committees, assemblies, family education, the classroom and the library, everyone in the community connects with one another and establishes relationships based on trust which allows them to work together in such ways as to prevent conflict or an escalation of conflict before it occurs.

An education centre which is open to families encourages relationships based on openness so that communication is no longer practised only when problems

occur. Also, when signs of conflict do arise, the situation can be addressed more quickly. When families and other education agents are in classrooms, they help reduce conflict and achieve outcomes which the faculty themselves cannot.

Some Learning Communities have a Mixed Committee whose role is to focus on coexistence. In this Committee, the student body, their relatives, the faculty and other professionals oversee potential conflict situations. For example, in one particular Learning Community, one such Mixed Committee mentioned that in the third year of primary school there was a particular child who was dominating some of his classmates and behaving as if they were disliked and not accepted. Some of the other children supported his actions, partly to avoid becoming victims themselves and others were upset about the problem. The Coexistence Committee decided to speak to the parents of the third year and, in particular, the leader child's mother. The child's mother who was used to the dialogue approach of the school community, conceded that her son behaved in such a way. The school year parents together decided that, rather than punishing the dominating child or even implementing mediation, they would go into the classroom to talk to the children and participate in several Interactive Group sessions which fostered changes the various relationships of the group.

In the dialogic model, a particular procedure may be used to reach a consensus on rules within a community as detailed below.

The consensus procedure for establishing rules:

The consensus procedure for establishing rules consists of a deliberation by the whole education community and starts with one which everyone can commit to meeting.



Source: Escuela La Paz, Albacete.

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Characteristics of the rule to be agreed upon:

There are various examples of the implementation of rules which Learning Communities have agreed upon. Choosing a suitable rule according to the inclusion of all viewpoints is done by meeting certain conditions. Here, these conditions are illustrated by the following example of a rule adopted by one particular Learning Community: *No child can be insulted or attacked for the way he/she dresses.*

1. *The rule can be clearly agreed upon by everybody regardless of their point of view or age:* Even if someone does not agree with the wearing of a particular garment, for instance a mini skirt, a veil, or a hat, they agree that this is not a reason to insult or attack anybody.
2. *The rule is directly related to an area of the children's lives:* A rule must be directly related to the children's lives and be part of solving real coexistence problems. Most proposed rules focus on needs which are perceived as important by the staff and other adults, for example punctuality and treating school materials with respect. Despite the importance of such issues, they may not initially have a clear impact on the children themselves whereas being insulted or attacked because of clothes, or indeed witnessing how other children are attacked, causes clear emotional distress and has consequences on behaviour, safety and freedom in various contexts aside from just at school.
3. *The rule has clear verbal support from the society not just in the classroom and centre:* The wider community is prepared to support and uphold the rule outwardly in the way they interact and communicate with others even when opinions might vary. E.g. Society is against aggression regarding how to dress (although there can be controversies about dressing codes).
4. *Repeated breach of agreement:* In spite of verbal support, there are rules which are repeatedly breached. Unfortunately there are many cases at school centres of boys lifting up the skirts of girls. Also some are insulted on account of wearing veil or because of the style or quality of their clothes.
5. *The rule must respond to a behaviour which can be eliminated:* The rule has to be sufficiently limited as to provide clarity in its adherence. Therefore it must specify one particular clearly recognisable behaviour which can be modified. It is more difficult to eliminate feelings, attitudes or very general behaviours as in the case of 'any form of verbal abuse', for instance.
6. *That with the fulfillment of the norm, the school become an example for society, families and students:* By agreeing on a rule, not only is a specific problem solved, but also the community learns that it is capable of resolving future conflict situations. This serves as an excellent basis and motivation for creating further rules and becoming aware that mutual understanding is possible.

Steps for ensuring the participation of and dialogue between the whole community

In order to decide on a rule and respect it, a dialogic process is proposed which may occur over a few weeks. This process is based on seven steps and involves the participation of the whole community as follows:

1. A Mixed Committee of teachers, families and students debates and proposes a rule for the consideration of the whole community.
2. The rule is considered and debated by the staff and a community assembly with the maximum possible participation.
3. Members of the Mixed Committee disseminate the proposed rule to all classrooms from which class representatives collect reflections, comments and suggestions for change or ideas to achieve the compliance with the rule.
4. Delegates from the student body debate the final setting of the rule with the support of members of the Mixed Committee.
5. Representatives from the student body call an assembly to explain the results of their deliberations to the staff, their relatives and the community. They also gather the responses of these agents and return to their respective classes accompanied by teacher or tutor plus a representative from the Mixed Committee.
6. The whole community observes the implementation of the rule and ensures its continuous review, there is not delegation of it. The overall process is overseen by the classroom delegates and the Mixed Committee.
7. The process works alongside training in the form of Dialogic Gatherings, discussion of texts, video-forums and other activities as deemed necessary.

An example of prevention and resolution of conflict:

An example of prevention and resolution of conflict at CEP San Antonio is described here by the centre project coordinators, M^a Carmen Vega Lorente and Marta Sánchez-Beaskoechea Gómez:

http://utopiadream.info/ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/CEP_San_Antonio_prevenccion_de_conflictos.pdf

(Checked in February 2019).

Melgar, P., Pulido, M.A. & Valverde, B. (2016). Modelo dialógico de resolución de conflictos. *Revista Padres y Maestros*, 367 <http://revistas.upcomillas.es/index.php/padresymaestros/article/view/7120/6953>

(Checked in February 2019).

10.2. Preventive socialization of gender violence

Violence is a devastating reality that affects schools all over the world. UNICEF (2017) indicates that 130 million students between 13 and 15 years old suffer violence in the school environment; that 1 out of every 3 European and European students in this age group experience bullying on a regular basis and that approximately 1 in 10 admits having intimidated other classmates. In addition, new forms of harassment such as cyberbullying are expanding the scope and intensity of the problem.

The consequences of violence and bullying have been studied in depth (Farrington, Loeber, Stallings & Ttofi, 2011). We now know that students who suffer violence in the school context are more likely to experience dropout and school failure. In addition, the serious repercussions that this has on the physical and psychological development of the students have been highlighted, including disorders such as depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts. Unfortunately, in recent years numerous cases have been identified at the international level of young people who have ended their lives as a result of prolonged situations of bullying and cyberbullying (Smith et al 2008, Whittaker & Kowalski, 2015).

This situation contrasts with the reality perceived by many teachers and members of the educational community since studies point to the fact that the existence and consequences of school violence are often trivialized. For example, Goldman (2007) states that teachers spend more time with students, but identify and report fewer situations of violence. In addition, in many cases the teacher improvises to respond to situations of school violence and on numerous occasions, when in doubt about what to do, he refrains from intervening. At other times, aggression is justified by diminishing importance or naturalizing, saying that "they are children's things" or "part of learning". Frequently, the teacher puts an end to the conflict situation by inviting the aggressor and victim to give each other a hug, a kiss or remembering the importance of being friends. What message are we offering to children when we encourage them to establish affection with someone who assaulted or dismissed them? Should we be friends with those people who treat us badly? Or should we learn to reject them and choose those that treat us well?

Positioning against violence and the ability to choose nonviolent people with whom we establish relationships takes the involvement of the entire educational community. In addition, if socialization begins at birth, preventive interventions against violence must begin at an early age. As stated by Oliver (2014) 'we must show tolerance 0 to violence from 0 years'. To understand how we can offer this type of socialization it is necessary to identify the existence of a major socialization (although not unique or exclusive) that promotes a link between attraction and violence. In addition, it will be necessary to adopt preventive approaches. These elements are developed in the following section.

To find out more:**Guide for the Educational Community of prevention and support to victims of cyberbullying in the school context:**

<http://blog.educalab.es/cniie/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/05/Gui%C3%81a02.pdf>

(Checked in February 2019).

Articles:

Martín, N., & Tellado, I. (2012), *Violencia de género y resolución comunitaria de conflictos en los centros educativos*. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, 1 (3), 300-319. doi: 10.4471/generos.2012.14.

Oliver, E. (2014) *Zero Violence since Early Childhood*. *The Dialogic Recreation of Knowledge, Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(7), p. 902-908

What is the preventive socialization of gender violence?

Several studies indicate that a great majority of problems of coexistence that occur in schools have their origin in affective and/or sexual relationships between the students, although in many cases teachers and society as a whole (educators, family members, etc.) perceive it as another type of problem (Puigvert, 2014).

Let's take a frequent example. Marta, a 13-year-old girl who had a brief relationship with Toni, one of the most popular boys in her class, who in the past used to go out with another girl in the group. Initially she feels proud of her conquest, that of going out with such desired boy in her class. Even when Toni loses interest in Marta she feels that she has entered the realm of the successful girls because there are also other boys who are now interested in her. She now listens to what some of her girlfriends tell her and decides to do things she would have never dreamt of doing before. She goes out with various boys of her own age or even older and agrees to take daring photographs for them. Sometime later, however, Marta's feelings of success turn into bitterness and distress as other boys and girls start saying nasty things about her. They write insulting messages on the walls about her and send her obscene messages. They share the photos she took and tell rude jokes about her on *Facebook* and apps such as *Gossip*. When Toni starts going out with another girl, the situation worsens further for Marta who now feels that going to school is a nightmare. One day at break-time, she is insulted in public and Marta tries to defend herself by shouting back at the girls who, in the past, were her friends.

The staff believes that this argument is simply a conflict between a group of girls and Marta's attitude is read as disinterest in school and bad behavior. They are unaware that the fight is just the tip of the iceberg of other problems. Perhaps the staff decides to punish all the girls or just let them make peace between themselves. Since they are not aware of the underlying problems, the staff may do little to address any of the real feelings involved or help to resolve the conflict.



The frequent lack of awareness among staff regarding the socialisation processes involved in affective-sexual relationships in the student body impedes both, the detection and identification of day-to-day problems in classrooms and to offer an appropriate response to them. At the same time, it makes it difficult for girls and boys to have the opportunity to live in violence-free relationships, with the relevance that this has for their learning and for the rest of their lives. As Jesús Gómez said:

'All children have the right to an education which will allow them to develop satisfactory affective-sexual relationships which do not condemn them to a problematic relationship which then acts as a precursor to an unsatisfactory life'. (2015:114)

To enable young people to receive such an education, it is necessary to consider contributions from current research and international feminism regarding affective-sexual relationships in youths to prevent the frequent and dreadful mistakes and incidents which otherwise occur in this matter.

Overall, there is serious confusion in schools when they foster coexistence programmes and gender-based violence prevention programmes for adolescents and youths because the affective-sexual relations which underlie most conflict are not recognised and their impact on lives is not acknowledged. Such misunderstandings even start at the level of official administrative definition. Despite being an example of great progress, even the Law against Gender Violence of 2004 in Spain considered gender violence in only past or current stable relationships as follows:

Article 1. Purpose of the Law

1. *The purpose of this Law is to act against violence that, as a manifestation of discrimination, the situation of inequality and the power relations of men over women is exercised over them by those who are or have been their spouses or whose are or have been linked to them by similar relationships of affectivity, even without living together.*

The international scientific community does not consider gender-based violence as necessarily being a result of stable emotional (loving) relationships, but as consequence of every kind of relationship whether stable or casual. Also, gender-based violence is often learnt and developed during sporadic dates or brief relationships.

If available scientific evidence had been consulted when the law was compiled (by various political parties), would have included without a doubt casual/brief relationships in its definition of gender-based violence. In fact, subsequent autonomous laws have since included this form of gender-based violence (Valls, Puigvert, Melgar, García-Yeste, 2016).

The staff must be aware of the fact that scientific evidence shows gender-based violence being common among young children/adolescents, frequently occurring in brief and casual relationships (Aubert, Melgar, Valls, 2011; Oliver & Valls, 2004). Aside from the serious impact of the abuse and the attacks themselves, such gender-based violence also has a massive influence on the young people's subsequent relationships. Therefore several researchers have concluded that those who suffered violence during adolescence are more likely to suffer violence again in their youth and when adults. Some researchers also consider the possibility that becoming a victim of gender-based violence as a youth is more strongly correlated with initial emotional experiences than with possible child abuse (Oliver & Valls, 2004; Smith, White, & Holland, 2003).

How can we prevent other "Marta's" from being "hooked" by those who later insult them? How to prevent from having frustrating and humiliating first experiences? How to eliminate from our educational centers sexist behaviors and aggressions against the freedom of girls and adolescents? Situations than can end tragically or impede the happiness of our current students.

An argument in the yard at break time is just the tip of the iceberg, of something unseen by adults until there is a display of distress in public. Behind well-known and terribly sad cases such as the murder of a 17-year-old girl (Marta del Castillo) by her ex-boyfriend in 2009 or the other case of another young woman killed on a date on a summer's night are situations which are frequently invisible. Also, the fact that sometimes the murderers of these young women, such as the person who killed Marta del Castillo, even have fan clubs, shows that there is a tremendous amount of work still to be done.

Fortunately, the social sciences and feminism provide us with options for intervention. For many decades, the social sciences have produced studies on the social aspects of the emotion 'love'. This is, we fall in love with some people, not with some others, not through a biologic determinism but based on cultural and social interactions, from which we learn our socialization.

The pioneering research of Jesús Gómez (2015) about socialisation in love and attraction, especially amongst adolescents, for the first time presents the concept of attraction being a result of social interactions. It demonstrates the existence of a primary socialisation process (although not unique or exclusive) which often fosters a connection between attraction and violence. Many agents of socialisation, including films, music and advertising in the *mass-media* produce relationship models where it is transmitted that violent relationships or potentially violent are harmful but thrilling, convey excitement. Egalitarian relationship models are convenient and safe, but boring. As a point of reference, many a TV serious will effectively try to sell viewers a model of masculinity as the lead character. However, how often is he the most caring character who is open to discussion or how often is he closed and conflictive or aggressive? Films and novels which feature intense or passionate relationships often show conflict and even violence as part of their interactions. It is less common to see dialogue and relationships based on respect presented as passionate and exciting. Mass-media are a clear example, but above all reflect this majority socialisation in which all interactions have their influence, family too, educational centre and mainly the group of peers and those sexual-emotional relations that are being established by the people (Flecha, Pulido, Christou, 2011).

However, since love and attraction are a result of social interactions, this means that the common socialisation processes which link attraction and violence can be altered. As an alternative to socialisation in gender-based violence, Gómez (2015) proposed the model of merging friendship and affection with excitement and desire in relationships, regardless of duration. Gómez clarifies as follows: *'Dissatisfaction in relationships based either on 'flirting' (passion without love) or stability (love without passion) can only be overcome by uniting affection and excitement, friendship and passion and stability and madness in the same person.'* (Gómez, 2015, p. 77)

Preventive socialisation of gender-based violence consists of creating social interactions which foster attraction towards egalitarian models and the rejection

of aggressive models (Gómez, 2015; Puigvert, 2014). Of course it must be said that not everybody is socialised in attraction to violence although there is a general trend towards it. Hence it is about fostering said socialisation that transmits equality as exciting and thrilling. Furthermore, the preventive socialisation of gender violence then also can influence and modify the preferences of people who are already socialised to find violence appealing. Also, if love and attraction are in fact social, dialogue will allow for the transformation of an attraction for violence into a preference for a more egalitarian models.

Ethics and desire language

However, preventative socialisation of gender violence cannot be achieved through using the language of ethics only. Another error of educational programmes in co-education and prevention of violence is that of trying to foster egalitarian relationships and egalitarian young men using the language of ethics only which is that of values and concepts of 'good' and 'bad'. Whereas in the language of ethics the focus is on, for example, not being sexist, having respect or perhaps distributing housework equally between boys and girls and so on which is not appealing language, is not the desire language that adolescents use. Also, at the same time as these programmes are being developed, the majority of socialisation (mass media, films, nets, friendly conversations) reinforces attraction towards violence and aggressive men. The connection between attraction and violence is fostered, in part, as stated previously, by the distinct separation between what is safe, and boring and what is unsafe but exciting. If the language of ethics is used which tends to convey the 'convenient' or 'not convenient', the root cause of the problem is never challenged, that of relationships based on gender-based aggression being exciting and therefore attractive. (Castro & Mara, 2014; Duque, 2015).

The following statement from research previously referred to by Gómez (2015), reflects the dichotomy between ethics and desire language and is provided by an adolescent girl in *Ragazza*, a women's magazine: *'My parents tell me to marry a good man and I take good notice of them; Until I have to get married, I have fun with bad boys.'*

This example expresses the double moral that occurs repeatedly: on the one hand, there is the language of ethics of what it represents that is "right" that say the father and mother, and on the other, what in this case is girl wishes and how she will act accordingly. Desire language refers to what is liked, what is desirable and attractive. This is conveyed in films, advertising, songs and so on and through many personal interactions too. This is why it is necessary to work with desire language in order to make both violence unattractive and alternative egalitarian models more attractive. The idea is not for people to suppress their desires by accepting what is 'safe' or 'convenient' but not attractive. The challenge is to generate attraction and desire towards this 'safer' models and

to convey the idea that what is 'good' is also 'exciting'. However, such desire language is not normally changed from teachers, families or experts on training programmes, but language and desires can be changed from the young people themselves through their interactions with peers, friends, brothers and sisters and volunteers of a similar age. For this reason, for the development of a preventive socialisation of violence in relationships, the dialogic model is highlighted in which spaces for subjects related to the children's lives can be considered alongside the participation and dialogue of all education agents of a similar age within their community. Transformative dialogue occurs when a variety of women take part (Aubert, Melgar, Valls, 2011; Oliver, Soler, & Flecha, 2009; Padrós, 2014), so that not only the language of values is introduced (necessary) but also the language of desire. This dialogue with multiple participants is the most effective option for learning about developing emotions and feelings even though it contradicts other approaches currently being used in emotional education.

Models of masculinity and its relation to the prevention of gender violence

Gender violence prevention must also consider perceptions of masculinity in terms of rejecting violent masculine models and encouraging violence-free models. Again, this topic has frequently been developed with the language of ethics which is less attractive for many young people and inefficient in overcoming gender violence.

Starting from notion of the existence of a form of socialisation which fosters appeal towards violent masculine models, if programmes fostering egalitarian masculinities are implemented from the 'ethic language', but the existence of the above appealing model is ignored, the result is disastrous. These programmes foster masculine roles with egalitarian behaviours such as task distribution and non-violent interactions (ethically needed) which result in models which are neither attractive nor exciting. Henceforth it is once more conveyed with the language of ethics that a 'suitable' man is one which is egalitarian but not exciting. As a consequence, many young males do not wish to become the egalitarian who is ignored by the opposite sex, but to be the 'non-egalitarian' who is socially regarded as more attractive. An adolescent said the following after a workshop on masculinity where he was educated in not being violent, to perform housework and to take care of women: *'I like all that very much, in fact I do it, but my question is, why don't I pull anyone?'*

To consider masculinity from the perspective of gender violence preventive socialisation it is firstly necessary to start with some basic principles. In heterosexual relationships there are three clear models: the traditional dominant masculinity, the traditional oppressed masculinity and new alternative masculinities (Castro Sandúa & Mara, 2014; Duque, 2015; Flecha, Puigvert, & Ríos, 2013).

Traditional dominant masculinity is based on power and contempt towards women. It is the form of masculinity which creates gender violence and double standards. The link between this model and attraction generates relationships which are founded on gender-based violence. The traditional oppressed masculinity describes men who have egalitarian relationships with women which contain no excitement. In most cases these men are perceived as “good and egalitarian” but are not attractive to most women. Theories and actions which are only based on the language of ethics and ignore the language of desire foster this type of masculinity. These two traditional masculinities (dominant and oppressed) have always existed. Sometimes, the non-violent oppressed masculinity, has been mistakenly identified as a new masculinity, when in fact it is not new and has always existed. Neither is it an alternative masculinity because it is in fact the other side of the same coin of the traditional dominant masculinity. Oppressed masculinity is not the cause of gender violence and cannot be blamed, just as the victims of the gender violence cannot be blamed. However, its oppressed position means it does not serve to overcome gender-based violence but in fact to feed the existence of a dominant masculinity. Just as violent masculinities are attractive, there must also exist an unattractive egalitarian masculinity. To be ‘unsuitable’ men regarded as exciting, there must be ‘suitable’ men void of excitement.

The new alternative masculinities break with this dichotomy of the oppressor and the oppressed to propose a ‘suitable’ and ‘exciting, egalitarian and attractive’ model. These masculinities represent a diversified model of men having egalitarian relationships based on both love and desire. They are attractive men who neither exercise domination nor contempt. They are egalitarian men who do not accept being oppressed by either the dominant masculinity or by some women. They are men who do not reject values like strength or courage which appear as elements of dominant models. In fact they are strong and courageous in confronting instances of gender-based violence for they protect victims and stand up to aggressors. They are men who reject any form of violence in relationships. Also, in terms of affective-sexual relationships they do not accept relationships with women who look at them as a ‘good man’ for after having had ‘fun with the bad boys’ as acted out in the role of the oppressed masculinity. It is a masculine model which only has relationships with women who are attracted to them and who get excited through egalitarian treat. This alternative model of masculinity is one which in fact overcomes gender-based violence as it breaks the bond between attraction and violence.

In conclusion, the fostering of masculinities which are viewed as exclusively ‘good’ or ‘bad’ or the ‘right’ man or the ‘wrong’ man, does not generate appeal for young women in non-violent masculinity, neither does it generate a wish in young men to take on such an image. This again, highlights the need for work from the desire language with young people.

To find out more:

Gómez, J. (2015). *Radical love. A revolution for the 21st century*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Flecha, R., Puigvert, L., & Ríos, O. (2013). The New Masculinities and the Overcoming of Gender Violence. *International and Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(1), 881-13.

Oliver, E. (2014) Zero Violence since Early Childhood. The Dialogic Recreation of Knowledge, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(7), p. 902-908.

Puigvert, L. (2014) Preventive Socialization of Gender Violence Moving Forward Using the Communicative Methodology of Research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 20(7), p. 839-843

Frequent errors in emotional-social education

To achieve the changes mentioned above, it is necessary to avoid some of the errors and confusions generated by some emotional education programs that are delivered without being based on scientific evidence.

Do not contemplate feelings

Currently, there are educational interventions in the classrooms that focus on emotional education, leaving aside the importance of feelings. It is clear that feelings are different from emotions. Eric Kandel, Nobel Prize in Medicine and main contemporary author in neuroscience, makes a clear distinction between these elements. In addition, it describes the different circuits and brain responses that come into play in the case of feelings as well as emotions:

"We use the term emotion to refer to the first of the two states: The set of physiological responses that occur more or less unconsciously when the brain detects certain challenging situations. These automatic physiological responses occur within both the brain and the body proper. In the brain they involve changes in arousal levels and in cognitive functions such as attention, memory processing, and decision strategy. In the body proper they involve endocrine, autonomic, and musculoskeletal responses. We use the term feeling to refer to the conscious experience of these somatic and cognitive changes. In a certain sense feelings are accounts our brain creates to represent the physiological phenomena generated by the emotional state. In sum, emotions are automatic, largely unconscious behavioral and cognitive responses triggered when the brain detects a positively or negatively charged significant stimulus. Feelings are the conscious

perceptions of emotional responses". (Kandel, Schwartz, Jessell, Siegelbaum & Hudspeth, 2013: 1079)

Following Kandel's analysis, several authors have affirmed that what differentiates human beings from other living beings is not the ability to experience emotions (both animals and humans have emotions), but feelings, since these entail a conscious experience of which only human beings are capable. Therefore, from education it will be essential to work in the sphere of feelings to reinforce positive emotions and transform negative emotions.

For example, feelings such as friendship and love have a huge influence on the subsequent personal, academic or professional life of children (Dunn, 2004). Emotions that are opposed to love and friendship quickly generate negative emotions (jealousy, frustration, distrust) that deteriorate the interpersonal relationships and the life of those who experience them. Therefore, emotional education that contributes to key aspects such as overcoming sexism and gender violence is one that is closely linked to education in feelings such as friendship and love.

It is important to mention that those feelings are not 'taught' in particular sessions but are created and nurtured in day-to-day attitudes and activities in the school. For example, in Learning Communities, feelings such as friendship and solidarity are worked on a daily basis through the implementation of Successful Educational Actions, which are based on equalitarian dialogue and equality of differences. One of the examples that we find in those schools are the Interactive Groups in which pupils understand and help each other on a daily basis and act so that no student is left behind or excluded. Outside the classroom, the peer who they have been helping or who has given them help is not just a person who they can ignore, but a friend to accept and protect. All children who have participated in Interactive Groups say how much these activities have helped them to learn feelings and values as they are able to establish better friendships than ever before, thereby improving relationships in every area of their lives inside and outside school.

In contrast, the Learning Communities do not implement emotional education programs which are not based on scientific evidence. This is completely unrelated to the actions of some programmes which attempt to 'emotionally educate' students by forcing them to make physical contact with one another as a form of communicating emotional expression even when they do not wish so. In fact, all international guidelines for the prevention of child abuse go through teaching that no one touches the body without consent. Such activities entirely go against the student's freedom and favour harassment and aggression. On the contrary, the Learning Communities follow the recommendations made by the scientific community, which highlight the importance of promoting the freedom to choose who, when and how to touch the body of the child (Oliver, 2014).

The ideal love

Regarding feelings and love, there is also significant confusion between assumptions and scientific evidence in many coexistence programmes and sometimes even in programmes for the prevention of gender-based violence. The most common mistake is in believing that ideal love promotes violence in relationships between boys and girls. There is no proof of this. In reviewing scientific literature about ideal love, there is no evidence that ideal love fosters gender violence (Duque, 2015; Yuste, Serrano, Girbés, Arandia, 2014). When reviewing fairy tales it can be noted that in many cases they reproduce traditional gender roles and that they focus only on models of heterosexual and monogamous relationships. From the point of view of the socialisation of attraction to violence, there is never a fairytale prince who hits or abuses the woman he is in love with. Equally, there is never a fairytale princess who falls in love with somebody who abuses her. Therefore, these stories may contain sexist elements, but they do not promote the desire towards a person who mistreats.

Gender violence victims are women from every kind of background. They do not always match a traditional model of femininity. Many women who have lived according to a traditional family model and role of a woman have suffered gender-based violence and many have not. Equally, many women who have broken with the traditional model have suffered gender violence and many have not. In fact, many years' worth of gender violence prevention programmes which have focussed exclusively on overcoming gender stereotypes have been unable to eradicate gender-based aggression. Gender-based violence is still reality for young women educated in coeducational schools which challenge traditional feminine roles.

Furthermore, the same people and programmes who portray ideal love in a negative light who often also uphold aggressive models of the male which appear in many films, books and songs. Examples here include *The Perfume* which appears to celebrate a woman killer or *Three Metres Above the Sky* among others. Proponents of such gender roles consider the princess in the fairytale who has a prince devoted to her and who cares for her as 'submissive' whereas they regard the female protagonist in *50 Shades of Grey* as 'open-minded' when it is in fact the latter model who signs a contract of submission.

In contrast to this conception, Flecha and Puigvert (Duque, 2015) provide a definition of ideal love based on diversity, freedom and absence of violence:

We define the "ideal love" of the 21st Century as diverse and plural. Ideal love is not associated with any particular sexual option or form of relationship, or specific duration and does have a common feature: absence of gender violence. Socialization in the desire for "ideal love" helps to prevent gender violence, since it combines the absence of gender violence with sexual freedom and freedom of choice in relationships. (Duque 2015: 15)

Based on respect, ideal love prevents and does not foster gender violence. The adolescent females who are seeking males to fall in love with them, regardless of the duration of the relationship, believing in such an idealistic model, are more likely to value themselves and not subject themselves to sexist relationships than the ones who believe that true love is impossible or link passion with violence.

To find out more:

Video about preventive socialization. Presentation by Ramón Flecha and Lúdia Puigvert (Spanish). Ikas komunitateak Euskadi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7o3f8rhKO30>
(Checked in February 2019).

Video about memory and preventive socialization. Sandra Racionero's presentation. University of Loyola-Andalucia:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_xn0hd-kII&t=3916s
(Checked in February 2019).

10.3. How to implement preventive socialization in schools?

Once presented the theoretical bases that support the preventive socialization of gender violence approach, we following provide some guidelines that help to clarify how the Learning Communities schools implement this approach in their educational centers. Specifically, we highlight five lines of action:

1. Implementation of **Successful Educational Actions (SEAs)** that guarantee an improvement of learning and coexistence for all, such as Interactive Groups or Dialogic Literary Gatherings.
2. Introduction of practices and languages that guarantee **school spaces free of violence** from 0 years.
3. Development of **normative principles** through a process of deliberative democracy based on egalitarian dialogue and on scientific evidence.
4. Opening **spaces for dialogue** in schools on preventive socialization models in which the entire community participates.
5. Encourage **friendship, solidarity and support** for the people who suffer any type of violence, not towards those who attack. Promote prevention and intervention among peers (bystander-intervention).

6. Below, we provide some guidance on the 'Brave Club', an initiative being carried out by some Learning Communities to implement some of the elements above described.

Solidarity and support for the victims: the 'Brave Club'

The 'Brave Club' is one of the ways to take into practice some of the key elements that we have exposed previously: the socialization in the attractiveness towards nonviolent models like a key for gender based violence prevention; tolerance of violence since 0 years; and the involvement of the entire educational community in positioning against any kind of violence. In addition, this action focuses on enhancing dialogue and leadership of all students in the prevention of violence and the creation of a safe environment. In this sense, the 'Brave Club' is based on a wide range of scientific studies that highlight the importance of the bystander interventions (interventions of the "spectators") and the role of friendship and solidarity as protective elements against gender violence. On the one hand, several authors have identified the role of true friendships as a preventive element of bullying and have emphasized that informal networks of friendship are, in many cases, the most effective systems of support for victims (Dunn, 1986; & Farrington, 2012). On the other hand, numerous studies point out that in prevention and intervention efforts against violence it is necessary that the peers stop being passive spectators and accomplices of the aggressor to become active agents who position themselves and provide support, assistance and solidarity with the victim (Morales & all, 2016). In addition, this peer interactions can be a key factor in identifying situations of violence. In fact, in most cases students access information to which the rest of the educational community (teachers, family members, etc.) cannot reach. Therefore, by directly involving students in the fight against gender violence we are also expanding the possibilities of preventing and identifying it.

The 'Brave Club' consists of creating a group of students who are positioned against violence, denounce it, know how to treat others well and value friendship. The main objectives of this action are:

- Provide students with **ways to defend themselves free of violence**.
- Promote among the students the freedom to decide and that their decisions must be respected. **"No means no"**.
- **Support the victims** so that they feel protected and supported when reporting an aggression.
- **Break the "law of silence"** and the stigma of the "telltale".

The 'Brave Club' overcomes the present dynamics in the majority of educational centers in which the person who suffers the violence is isolated. Also, those

situations in which the people who dare to denounce are harassed. Many children do not dare to denounce due to the fear of social rejection, to being called "telltale", and instead those who attack usually have recognition. The only way to transform this situation is to turn it around, creating a safe environment where the person reporting is considered brave. This is one of the principles of the 'Brave Club'. It is proven that when the educational community is rejecting the violent attitude, students quickly learn that violence is not successful and, therefore, change behavior more quickly.

Orientations to implement the 'Brave Club'

Although there are several ways to carry this action out below is provide some guidance that exemplify how it is implemented in various centers. The 'Brave Club' implies to open spaces of dialogue in which the students can participate and assume leadership roles in the construction of consensus and action lines that involve the entire educational community against violence.

1. The first step is to create the "club" in the classroom, where all students are considered brave because they start from the idea that all of them will comply with the necessary respectful and non-violent treatment to be part of the club. As a starting point, it is necessary to foster relationships among students based on good treatment and friendship. The club it has to be perceived as something attractive.
2. The second step is to generate own languages and strategies that allow students to denounce and act in a non-violent way, both with the people who suffer an aggression and with the people who witness it. These "codes" can be both verbal and gestural. For example, in the picture below students of the 'Brave Club' agree that when someone suffers an aggression the rest will make a "shield" of friendship.
3. It is necessary that the "club" establish clear action guidelines on what to do in the case of an aggression. It is important to clarify that violence is never justifiable and to emphasize the importance of always positioning oneself in favor of the aggressed person and against the aggressor. For example, some of the agreements established by the students are that when one student attacks another, the aggressor is not paid attention, but rather the victim is attended to quickly. In addition, the victim is given the word to explain what happened. It is essential to explain to the students that what is condemned is violent behavior and not the person. In summary, what we want to achieve is that the students position themselves in favor of the victim and show their support. That visibility is given to the person attacked, not to the aggressor.

4. When a student assaults, he or she “leaves” the ‘Brave Club’ as it does not meet the only condition to belong to it: the respectful and non-violent treatment. This can be exemplified in many different ways, although what is relevant is the rejection attitude of the rest of the students as a whole towards this behavior. The next day, all the students begin the classes belonging to the club. It is important to point out that what we want to achieve is to encourage that the aggressor feels that his/her behavior was isolated and rejected by the group for him/her to change that attitude. In addition, it seeks to provide attractiveness to the behavior based on good treatment.
5. It is necessary to emphasize that the ‘Brave Club’ must impregnate all the spaces of interaction of the educative center (the classroom, the patio, the dining room, etc.). It is not therefore a bureaucratic procedure that is addressed in specific moments or spaces, but it becomes a very important dynamic in the educational center, something that is alive in the school. This allows that when a conflict occurs, it is managed at the moment. In this way, the entire school community and fundamentally the peer group itself has incorporated the principles of this action in their way of doing and establishing relationships in the educational center.

To conclude, following there is a quote from a teacher recalling the changes in the school that the ‘Brave Club’ brought about:

They associate the work environment without violence to something attractive. The “telltales” are no longer “telltales” and children who were previously invisible are now important and come here to say what happens and stay calm, before they came with fear (...). Violence has been greatly reduced, for example, at playground now they behave better. The aggressors accept criticism and isolation, and it hurts ...

‘Brave Club’ experiences:

Brave Club at CPI Sansomendi IPI (Vitoria-Gasteiz).

<https://revistas.upcomillas.es/index.php/padresymaestros/article/view-File/7121/6954>

(Checked in February 2019).

‘Brave Club’ at the School Mare de Déu de Montserrat (Terrassa)

http://www.eldiario.es/tribunaabierta/Club-Valientes-pies-acosadores-aulas-bullying-acoso-escolar_6_638046231.html

(Checked in February 2019).

To find out more:

Sordé, T. (Coord.). (2017). Guía para la Comunidad Educativa de prevención y apoyo a las víctimas de ciberacoso en el contexto escolar. Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Gobierno de España. <http://blog.educalab.es/cniie/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/05/Gu%C3%ADacomunidadeducativavictimasCIBERACOSO.pdf>. (Checked in February 2019).

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