



IDEOLOGY OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

ANOTHER EDUCATIONAL MODEL IS POSSIBLE



Presentation

At Gándara we understand that learning is consubstantial to the human being, learning that occurs in all areas and throughout our lives. The need to learn and the curiosity for what surrounds us reach their highest levels during childhood, making it a stage as fundamental as it is delicate for the development of the human being.

With this background, we felt the need to create an educational space where children could learn in a beautiful, interesting, constructive way, and in harmony with their authentic needs in each of the stages of childhood development.

In this process, adults act as facilitators and, except on rare occasions, are in the background, so we prefer the term "companions" to refer to them in our learning space. If these conditions are met, children learn in a pleasant way and what they learn makes sense, because they experience it and integrate it into their vision of the world.

A bit of history...

Gándara began its journey in 2013 as a result of the concern for creating a respectful educational environment for our own children. The people who make up the Gándara team are passionate about education and are committed to an active and experiential vision of learning, convinced that we are contributing to the individual and collective transformation of our society.

At present, Gándara is the result of the collaboration between NOGUERA Y VALDÉS SL, the company that owns the school, and ADARE-GÁNDARA SL, an entity managed by the founders of the project and in charge of the technical and pedagogical management of the project.

Legal framework

Gándara began the process of authorization and registration as an international school by submitting the documentation to the Xunta in December 2016. Since 2015, we have been registered with the City Council of Gondomar as a study center - equivalent to an academy - and are in the process of applying as an international school with the

Xunta de Galicia through the New England Association of School and Colleges (the NEASC), an internationally renowned U.S. certifying agency.

Languages in Gándara

At Gándara, Spanish and Galician are the main languages used as vehicular languages. Until the end of 2017, English has been incorporated through art workshops taught by a British artist. From January 2018, we will have a native American teacher, which will help us to incorporate English in the school in daily activities and in a transversal way. The goal is to ensure that the children can communicate fluently in all the languages spoken at Gándara.

Pedagogical basis of our project

Gándara is a space where children learn by doing, in movement, and are the true protagonists of their learning. This occurs naturally in a relaxed environment where children learn by themselves in what we call a prepared environment, with the accompaniment/guidance of respectful adults who observe, detect and create the necessary conditions for children to meet their emotional, social and intellectual needs. At Gándara we value play, curiosity and personal initiative, while fostering autonomy and a critical spirit. We do not give ready-made answers, but accompany children in the discovery of knowledge and of themselves.

Our center is a place where boys and girls can develop integrally and we adapt to the different learning rhythms. The proposals are adapted to the needs and interests of the children, and the accompanying teachers guide, suggest, pull the thread of curiosity and open the windows of knowledge, so that learning becomes something pleasurable and somehow connected to the interests of the child.

Likewise, at Gándara we value interpersonal relationships among all the members of the space. We take care of communication and learn to take each other into account, both children and adults. We work daily to achieve personal relationships based on mutual respect, non-manipulation and non-violent communication.

Pedagogical referents

Our school model is based on the theoretical and practical work of several authors, pedagogues and schools that have inspired us deeply, and that are mainly:

Rebeca and Mauricio Wild: Their pedagogical work over more than four decades in the "Pestalozzi" school for kindergarten, primary and secondary, and later in El León Dormido, both in Ecuador, was from the beginning an engine of change and a great inspiration in our personal life and pedagogical vision. His work is an indispensable reference for our school and for many of the active schools in Spain and Europe. The Wilds knew how to combine scientific rigor, Maria Montessori's experiences and creativity to respond to the real needs of the children in their school. Raquel and Elena had the immense good fortune to be able to meet and learn from them, Elena during one of their training courses in Spain, and Raquel on her trip to León Dormido, Ecuador. Books such as "Educate to Be: Experiences of an Active School", "Freedom and Limits, Love and Respect", and "Quality of Life" are, among others, recommended bibliography for the families that come to our project.

Maria Montessori: The work of Maria Montessori came to us first through the work of the Wild, and several active schools in Spain, and later through the training of Montessori guides Ainara Muruzabal and Rebeca Gonzalez, both with extensive experience in respectful educational environments. Montessori bases its method on the observation of children, the detection of their authentic needs and the creation of the necessary conditions/materials to satisfy those needs and interest in learning. The Montessori materials and the structure that supports its method are fundamental pillars of the work at Gándara, as well as the conception of the child as an autonomous and intelligent being.

At Gandara, however, the Montessori Method does not exclude the integration of other pedagogical tools or models that can contribute to the development of children. Our pedagogical conception is also nourished by recent advances in neuroscience and the theory of multiple intelligences.

Piaget: his evolutionary theories about the child remain one of the bases of modern pedagogy and of the way of understanding the educational stages in our Space. Fundamentally, we consider, like Piaget, that education should pursue the full development of the personality.

The Alavida School, founded more than 15 years ago in the Community of Madrid, and its director Tinus Wijnakker, are a living reference of active school in our country. We are immensely grateful to

them for sharing their knowledge, experiences and vision of life in a different school. Tinus also works regularly with our team, offering pedagogical advice and occasional courses for adults at our center.

Ken Robinson, contemporary British pedagogue and writer, great disseminator and promoter of changes in current education. Ken Robinson advocates a profound and radical change in traditional teaching methods, so that every child can develop his or her potential. His studies focus on understanding the diversity of human intelligence and creativity and how best to develop them to the fullest. According to him, imagination is the source of each and every human achievement.

Francesco Tonucci, Italian pedagogue who speaks of the crucial importance of play in child development. Howard Gardner and his theory of multiple intelligences, which provides a holistic view of the child, far from the conception of the human being as a mere repository of knowledge.

To these should be added other influences such as those of Maturana, Freinet, Robert Grille, Dorothy Corkille Briggs, John Holt, Heike Freire and Paula Freire, and Thomas Gordon, as well as the democratic educational experiences of Summerhill (UK), Sudbury Valley School (USA) and Ojo de Agua (Alicante).

Our principles

A - Self-regulation: we understand it as the capacity of human beings to grow and develop following their own natural rhythm and strength, learning to regulate their vital functions and detecting their own needs, expressing them and looking for ways to satisfy them.

B - Personal freedom: children live and work together in freedom, learning to apply reciprocity in their relationships, internalizing freedom of choice while respecting the freedom of others.

We understand personal freedom as a necessary element to act and experiment, to make mistakes and correct them. "One's own experiences, one's own feelings and thoughts are the basic conditions to experience freedom". Rebecca Wild

C- Self-learning: learning through a personal confrontation with the environment directed from the inside and not from the outside, to ensure the maintenance of the inner balance of the human organism. Res- pet learning started and directed by the children themselves.

"Education should aim at the full development of the human personality". Jean Piaget. "Understanding means inventing". Jean Piaget

D - Autonomy: to accompany children in their development as autonomous beings in their daily tasks, favoring the acquisition by themselves of the skills and abilities that each one needs to develop in daily life, according to their evolutionary stage. On the one hand, it is a matter of learning and acquiring the ability to do for themselves and, on the other hand, of letting them do for themselves: "help me do it by myself".

E - Needs satisfied: "Every growing organism has physical and psychological needs that must be satisfied to avoid later problems".

"to be satisfied in order to avoid later problems". Rebeca Wild. We believe it is vitally important for adults to respect these needs and create the conditions to satisfy them, while children learn to detect them and look for ways to fulfill them.

F - Limits and rules: Limits and rules guarantee coexistence in the space, and are an essential part of learning in Gándara. Respect for others and for the environment that surrounds us are at the base of our conception of limits. Likewise, limits offer the child security.

G - Respect for themselves, for others and for other living beings.

H - Gender equality.

I - No segregation by age in each educational stage, allowing respect for the individual rhythm.

J - Self-management and responsibility in the fulfillment of commitments freely accepted and chosen. **K - Solidarity, tolerance and acceptance of diversity.**

L - Non-violent communication: peaceful solution of conflicts. **M - Happiness and psychic balance, self-esteem, and self-regulation of emotions.**

N - Collaboration, not competitiveness.

Learning contexts: Spaces for playing, learning and working

The importance of a natural environment

At Gandara, outdoor activity is as important as indoor activity. Contact with nature - the earth, plants, fresh air, sun and water - is essential for human growth, fundamental to the development of creativity and

esteem for oneself, others and the environment around us. Through contact with the essential elements of nature, young children get to satisfy many of their authentic needs during the pre-operational stage (from 3 to 7 years old). Gándara is located in a 5,000 m² farm, very close to Gondomar in a semi-rural environment, with open landscaped spaces and beautiful trees, some of them fruit trees.

Prepared environments

The interior spaces are organized in work environments according to educational stages and offer a wide variety of materials on different areas of knowledge. Typically, children in the same age range show very different rates of development and learning; an active school can respond to these different needs. As a result, learning occurs naturally and pleurably, without anxiety and competitiveness.

Infant has a large classroom organized by learning environments: sensorial, mathematics and pre-mathematics, pre-writing and reading-writing, cosmic (knowledge of everything in the Cosmos), symbolic play and book corner. As for the primary classroom, we find the different environments: mathematics, reading and writing, cosmic, experiments, games, and library. In addition, there are three common areas shared by both stages: the kitchen, the art room and the psychomotricity classroom.

The school, like its members, is an organic entity, in continuous transformation and adaptation to the needs of the educational community. Many of the materials we use are Montessori, although not exclusively, and are renewed and increased as we grow as an educational community.

Groupings

The school is organized into two different stages, each on a different level of the main building. Infant and primary share the outside and the psychomotor classroom. Within each stage, the girls and boys share spaces, which is a great motivation for the little ones, who want to imitate the older ones, and also an opportunity for the older ones to share and teach their knowledge to the younger ones. Mixing ages also makes it possible to cater to the different learning rhythms of boys and girls; this flexibility allows them to "go back" to an earlier stage to reinforce or acquire unassimilated knowledge, or to advance more quickly, alongside older children who show more developed skills.

In primary school, some activities and workshops are organized according to age, following Montessori's segmentation into Workshop 1 (ages 6 to 8) and Workshop 2 (ages 9 to 12). In addition, primary school children have weekly tutoring sessions with a companion, who offers a more personalized follow-up, posing challenges appropriate to their abilities and pace of learning. Based on a global observation of the child, the task of the companions is to guide, invite them to discover and bring knowledge closer to the children.

The learning community

Children

Children who can participate in the space must be at least 3 years old when they join. They can join at any time of the year from September to May.

Accompanying persons

At Gándara it is the job of the chaperones to ensure a relaxed environment, to detect the needs of the children and to provide loving, respectful and non-directive accompaniment. Accompanying also implies setting firm limits and remembering the rules of coexistence so that the environment is relaxed and the conditions for coexistence and learning are optimal. Likewise, the accompaniers have the mission of activating the spaces by creating attractive materials that respond to these developmental needs.

The accompaniers are people trained in respectful accompaniment, enthusiastic about active education and committed to an alternative to the predominant educational system. On a weekly basis, they are coordinated through pedagogical meetings outside of childcare hours. Likewise, they devote themselves exclusively to the children during the opening hours of the space, so they try not to hold conversations with other adults in the space during that time. This is especially relevant during the period of incorporation of new children, during which parents should be present, but not interfere in the activities of children or companions. To this end, parents will receive precise instructions prior to the start of the induction period.

The families

We understand that the involvement of families is fundamental to guarantee a concordance between the pedagogical line of the project and the family environment. This facilitates the process of self-

regulation and active learning. Families are the base, since their influence is profound, determining and primordial in the integral development of their children; therefore, we consider that parents should have an active role in the life of the school, first, during the stage of incorporation of the child to the space and then taking an interest in the type of education that we promote from our center.

Before and during the children's stay at Gandara, parents will have to participate in several interviews to get to know us and discuss the development of their children and exchange ideas and doubts that may arise, in addition to the meetings planned to discuss the growth process of each child.

We hope to be able to offer at least once a year a seminar/course on education, given by people with a long trajectory in accompaniment and respectful upbringing.

The Governing Board

The Governing Board is the responsible and guarantor of the pedagogical line of the space. The methodology is decided solely and exclusively by this team. Any substantial variation must be proposed at a meeting and approved by all its members. Raquel, Marina, Iago and Elena are part of the pedagogical team.

Objectives

- To create a relaxed environment of active development, where children can grow and learn following their internal stimuli: from the inside out. We are inspired by these words of Rebeca Wild: "To create an environment prepared and adequate to meet the authentic developmental needs of children, based on the confidence that the human being has the capacity to learn by himself pushed by his internal development plan" and on the belief that "the child builds himself through play".
- To facilitate the acquisition of the minimum contents included in the school curriculum through a pleasurable learning process that is as experiential as possible.
- To contribute to global social change and a new socio-educational paradigm through respect for the individuality of each person, the experience of limits with empathy and the development of interpersonal relationships based on mutual respect, non-violent communication, non-manipulation and tolerance.

- Organize orientation courses for adults on active pedagogy, respectful accompaniment and other related topics through events (lectures, colloquia, training courses, seminars) that are in tune with our vision of respectful accompaniment and learning as an active process driven from within.
- To serve as a space of exchange for families and other people interested in respectful and healthy growth processes.
- To try to make the project sustainable in all areas: human, social, economic, functional, etc., always seeking respect and harmony with the environment.