



Montenegro  
Bureau for Education Services



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# My Values and Virtues – Development of Social and Emotional Skills

Handbook for Secondary School Teachers

Podgorica, February 2020





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# FOREWORD

Dear teacher,

Having a vocation linked with schools and working with young people is hugely dependant on teachers' awareness of the significance of their role in this transition to adulthood. It is no light responsibility nor an insignificant task to be daily in direct interaction with dozens of young people, setting true knowledge and education as a standard never to be relinquished. One of the missions of every truly committed teacher is to bring their students to an understanding of the need to acquire a solid education that will be their best recommendation in the future for a range of different jobs in the vast and multifaceted labour market. The teacher's role, nevertheless, does not end there. In this unique relationship developed between teachers and students, the teacher's role in social and emotional development is much more far-reaching. The fact that every teacher, whether they are aware of it or not, shapes the personalities of their students very much like the family or the more immediate or broader social environment does, adds to their responsibility and requires them to be equally competent in this role as well. Teachers have a unique opportunity to develop, foster, and reinforce character traits in students, to help shape the whole being of a young person. To make this happen, a teacher needs to be willing and keen to do so, but also to have clear guidance about the relevant methods. To put it simply, they have to be open to broadening their own knowledge and skills, and to be good life-long learners, as essential traits of their own character. The need to make things easier for teachers by offering a number of options for social and emotional development gave rise to this Handbook.

*True education will have to be achieved not only to acquire technical effectiveness, but also to form whole human beings. I am speaking about primary and secondary education, not any specialized education, inevitably delivered by universities. I speak of that education which a human being should get in the initial phases, when his spirit is more fragile, at the moment which remains decisive for what he will become: whether a miser or generous, whether a coward or brave, whether irresponsible or responsible, whether a wolf to another man or a person capable of joint endeavours. Moral issues, or at least spiritual ones; but also practical ones eventually, because the development of a nation first and foremost needs such values, otherwise we would end up with what we have been exhibiting here recently: hatred and destruction, sadism and cowardice, contemptuous dogmatism, and cruelty...*

*(Ernesto Sabato, 2005)<sup>1</sup>*

Integral personal development is not something aspired to only by modern schools. Since time immemorial, the personal development of young people has been one of the main goals pursued by school curricula. Greater insistence on learning objectives, somewhat neglecting social and emotional aspects, characterized the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Over the last decades we have been witnessing a growing awareness of the necessity to preserve and enhance the school's function in social and emotional development as well; a kind of a movement for modernizing and reinforcing this role of schools is gaining influence in educational systems around the globe, raising awareness among teachers of the necessity to preserve and enhance this role. The 'My Values and Virtues' programme, applied in Montenegrin primary schools since 2015, in general secondary schools since 2017, and in vocational schools since 2018, is the response of our education system to those growing global demands to offer young people a balanced

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <http://www.skripta.info/ernesto-sabato-pojedinac-i-univerzum-pdf-download/>.

set of the skills (cognitive, social and emotional) they need for further schooling and careers.

An overwhelming body of contemporary research shows that intellectual abilities alone are not enough for good and sustained outcomes in school, life, careers, and interpersonal relations.<sup>2</sup> Tolerance, self-control, belief in one's abilities, fairness, and creativity are just some of a number of character traits or characteristics, the absence of which may be a source of serious problems in the life of any person. Collectively, all are referred to as "soft skills", or social and emotional skills (SES). Apart from these terms, the Handbook will also make reference to the virtues found in the very name of the programme/initiative. It is noteworthy that both terms imply positive character traits guiding the conduct of individuals for their own benefit and that of others. When SES are properly directed and fostered in children and young people, in time such behaviours become habits and the foundations of a sound character and virtues. There is no finite list of all the areas of human experience and corresponding skills. These can change and evolve depending on the developmental stage and/or in reference to societal circumstances. The set of SES covered by this Handbook stems from a study (Pešikan & Lalović, 2015) and the piloting of the 'My Values and Virtues' programme.<sup>3</sup>

Naturally, this does not mean that the selection of skills covered by this handbook is a finite or a binding list that it is impossible to change. On the contrary: you may, as you deem fit, extend or narrow down the list of skills or focus on fewer skills that you find relevant in the given circumstances, situations or the given group or class.

We have no doubt that one of the impressions any teacher is bound to have after becoming acquainted with this Handbook is the most sincere conviction that many of the things listed here are already part of classroom practice and that every teacher has many ideas that deserve a place in this Handbook. Naturally, any such suggestion is more than welcome and precious to the team of authors.<sup>4</sup> But, what prompted us to carry out the 'My Values and Virtues' programme and to develop this Handbook is the need for all the things done by teachers, most often spontaneously or incidentally, when a good opportunity or situation arises, to be systematized and shaped into a well-designed and elaborated programme to be applied in a planned fashion. It is only in this way that teachers, already overwhelmed by the huge amount of material to be taught, will be able to focus the necessary attention on developing some SES – honesty or self-confidence, for instance. There seems to be a dire need in this modern world for such values to underpin all knowledge, all interpersonal relations, all labour markets – in a word, the foundations of both societies and individuals.

2 More information on programmes delivered around the world to develop social and emotional skills of students is available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235971900\\_PROGRAMI\\_ZA\\_POTICANJE\\_EMOCIONALNE\\_I\\_SOCIJALNE\\_KOMPETENTNOSTI\\_KOD\\_DJECE\\_I\\_ADOLESCENATA\\_1](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235971900_PROGRAMI_ZA_POTICANJE_EMOCIONALNE_I_SOCIJALNE_KOMPETENTNOSTI_KOD_DJECE_I_ADOLESCENATA_1).

3 More on the project, survey findings, and the Primary School Handbook is available at: <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/publikacije-i-istraživanja>,

4 You can send your ideas and suggestions to the Programme Coordinator, Ms Anđa Backović at: [andja.backovic@zds.gov.me](mailto:andja.backovic@zds.gov.me).



# ABOUT THE HANDBOOK: WHO IT IS FOR, WHAT IT CONTAINS AND HOW TO USE IT

*One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.*

Malala Yousafzai

The social and emotional skills to be fostered with the help of this Handbook include: teamwork, creativity, self-control, empathy, tolerance, optimism, self-confidence, honesty, and gratitude. It is important to know that all SES are intertwined, interlinked, and mutually reinforcing, that none acts in isolation or autonomously, and that each has its own deep meaning. Never forget, a skill “feeds” skill; look at those nine social and emotional skills as a bunch of grapes in which the large and vigorous grapes support the growth of those only just emerging. With the aim of encouraging and inspiring you to reflect on the significance of your role in fostering SES and, in general, the optimal development of your students, we have attempted to offer a range of resources and encouragements.

The Handbook may be used in several different ways and put to different uses. Homeroom teachers are recommended to use it for homeroom classes. For subject teachers, the Handbook may be a source of ideas on how to infuse regular instruction with the objectives/outcomes regarding SES. Other school professionals may also use it as a resource or inspiration for delivering various student

support programmes, where they can either pursue the activities on their own or work in conjunction with the homeroom teachers. It may also be quite helpful for extracurricular activities, student organizations or in designing school-based projects and campaigns.

The Handbook is structured so as to give clear and straightforward insights into the importance of developing SES in adolescents, and the possibilities for your personal engagement in the task.

The introductory section features texts explaining the significance and purpose of focusing on SES, particularly during adolescence. Given the great potential offered by regular instruction, a separate section focuses on core-subject teaching techniques and methods as a resource to foster SES development. This is followed by the sections on how to monitor SES and recognize whether your school is doing well in this respect.

The rest of the Handbook presents workshops, i.e. activities, for each of the selected SES. Each of these starts with a theoretical input for teachers on the significance and peculiarities of the given skill. This is followed by a number of ideas for activities which can be freely combined. Depending on students’ preferences and needs, you can develop workshops based on the ideas offered, or take it a step further and engage in independent exploration and development of new teaching content.

The final sections deal with school-based campaigns and what opportunities they offer for the development of SES.

The order in which the SES are presented in the Handbook is not mandatory. You can choose yourself, depending on the varying circumstances and the students’ needs, how to deliver the Programme. One of the options is to carry out some activities for all nine skills within the course of one school year.

For example, you can devise a workshop around each skill. Or, if you deem it necessary, you may decide to focus more lessons during one school

year on one skill only. Depending on your type of school, class profile, current class climate, and prevailing circumstances, you will decide which model to use. In any case, your expertise and professional experience, and the infallible feeling that a teacher who knows his/her class well has, will show you the way. Students will be grateful for that.

The whole point of the Handbook is to guide you effortlessly through many challenges. In any case, we hope it will be of use to you and that, through your efforts, it will be conducive to developing SES.



# DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS IN ADOLESCENCE

*No one is good by accident; virtue is a difficult science and must be learnt.*

Seneca

## TODAY'S ADOLESCENTS

The spirit of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the many challenges it poses, and the rapid changes that people have difficulties keeping pace with are but some of the reasons why adolescents today do not have an easy time. This delicate transitional stage between childhood and adulthood is tending to become prolonged. Although biological maturing is happening earlier, economic independence is being acquired later. Most classifications of one's life course within Western cultures set the boundaries of adolescence from the age of 10 or 11, with the beginning of puberty, until the age of 18 or 21 (in some classifications as late as 26) when a person, according to different criteria, acquires the status of an adult in a society.

Literature cites different systematizations of the development tasks an adolescent is to fulfil before a successful transition to the new stage, the key ones being: gaining autonomy and independence from one's parents, mastering skills and knowledge and developing a realistic, stable and positive identity. Young people keep asking: Who am I? Where do I belong? What kind of a person do I want to become? Where do I want to get to? Searching for answers to those questions is a process of forming his/her

identity, his/her value system, and the lifestyle that will very much define his/her further life trajectory. In these turbulent times, the process seems more complex than ever, which makes the role of those who are taking part in it harder and more delicate than ever before.

A survey conducted by the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) about support programmes for the parents/care-givers of adolescents in Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Montenegro, Moldova, and Romania show that although parents/care-givers, experts, and decision makers see adolescence as a development stage (from the point of view of the whole course of life), this transitional period from childhood into adulthood is often perceived negatively as being linked with developmental challenges, difficulties and problems, while very little is known or talked about its development potential (resources).<sup>5</sup>

### ***Adolescence should be seen proactively***

*The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 20 (2016) stresses the tendency towards positive changes during the transition to adulthood, which is "prompted by the significant capacity of adolescents to learn rapidly, to experience new and diverse situations, to develop and use critical thinking, to familiarize themselves with freedom, to be creative and to socialize" (CRC GC 4, par. 2, ibid.). Therefore, adolescenceshouldbeviewed proactively, although "adolescence also poses new challenges to health and development owing to their relative vulnerability and pressure from society, including peers, to adopt risky health behaviour" (CRC GC 4, par. 2, ibid.). In the light of these risks and challenges, General Comment No. 20 (2016) notes that adolescents require special forms of support and protection during their transition to adulthood. This is because "the foundations laid down during adolescence in terms of emotional security, health, sexuality,*

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/izvjestaji/studija-o-programima-podr%C5%A1ke-roditeljimastarateljima-adolescencata>.

*education, skills, resilience and understanding of rights will have profound implications, not only for their individual optimum development, but also for present and future social and economic development”<sup>6</sup>*

Neuroscientist Sarah Jayne Blakemore believes that what are sometimes seen as problems with adolescents – increased risk taking and impulsiveness – should not be stigmatized.<sup>7</sup> Fifteen years ago, it was widely assumed that the vast majority of brain development takes place in the first few years of life. In the past decade or so, neuroscientists have started to look inside living human brains of people of all ages, and to track the changes in the brain structure and brain function, revealing that this does not finish in early childhood, and instead, the brain continues to develop right throughout adolescence and into one’s twenties and thirties. One of the regions of the brain that changes most dramatically during adolescence is called the prefrontal cortex. It is proportionally much bigger in humans than in any other species, and it is involved in a whole range of high-level cognitive functions, things like decision making, planning, inhibiting risk-taking behaviour, and is key for empathy and social interaction, and development of other characteristics. The environment, including teaching, can and does shape the developing adolescent brain. In fact, changes in the brain provide an excellent opportunity for education and social development.

It is noteworthy, in the context of this Handbook, that when speaking of brain development in adolescents, a safe and caring environment in which teenagers receive continuous support, is vital for brain development. Young people need adults to have trust in them and to encourage them.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> The TED speech by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore about the brain development in adolescence together with the transcript is available at: [https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_jayne\\_blakemore\\_the\\_mysterious\\_workings\\_of\\_the\\_adolescent\\_brain/transcript?language=sr](https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_jayne_blakemore_the_mysterious_workings_of_the_adolescent_brain/transcript?language=sr).

A vast body of research globally and in our country (Pešikan & Lalović, 2015) shows that, despite the crisis, teachers and schools are largely identifying with their role in shaping social and emotional development, but that there are also numerous dilemmas regarding the methods towards achieving good results in this field.

It often happens that teachers, particularly in secondary schools, are focusing their work primarily on imparting knowledge, overshadowing the SES component of their function, as if they are forgetting what power they have and what responsibility they bear. Thus, teachers need to acknowledge and accept the power they possess and use it in the noblest manner possible – by helping continuously in the process of transition to adulthood and shaping desirable character traits. Children and young people need a comprehensive and balanced set of cognitive, emotional and social skills in order to lead healthy and successful lives, to have fulfilling careers and participate meaningfully in society: cognitive skills are only a basis for good school achievement, for employability and the labour market; they are reinforced by and intertwined with the social and emotional skills required for a healthy lifestyle, healthy relationships, a feeling of satisfaction with one’s life, and a safer society.

*The most recent European recommendation with eight key competences for lifelong learning<sup>8</sup> stresses the significance of a broad set of competences that every child and adolescent needs to lead a fulfilling personal and professional life, and become autonomous and active citizens. Teachers are key to attaining those goals and they need society’s support in doing so.*

*The competences include, among others, personal social competence and learning-to-learn competence, among whose components many social and emotional skills*

<sup>8</sup> The Council of the European Union adopted the Recommendation in May 2018. The document is available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.



*are recognized. This competence involves the ability to reflect upon oneself, to work with others in a constructive way, the ability to cope with complexity, to manage one's own learning and career, learning to learn, to maintain physical and mental health, lead a future-oriented life, empathize and manage conflicts in an inclusive and supportive context.*

This is a huge task and a major challenge, but equally so one of the greatest rewards of teaching as a calling. The experimental application of the 'My Values and Virtues' programme during the 2017–2018 school year

in four general secondary schools confirms that a well-planned and designed influence of teachers is feasible. Survey findings show that the programme did have a major impact on developing SES, leading to a better learning environment, teaching methodology, teacher–student interactions, and student–student interactions. All of the above supports our view that through well-planned and organized activities, both in regular teaching and extracurricular activities, secondary school students can be helped to learn about virtues, think about them and apply them (Pešikan & Lalović, 2017). Teaching methods and feedback play a key role in such endeavours.



## TEACHER INTERVENTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Young people are eager to show what they know and to prove themselves, to be acknowledged and appreciated. Development and shaping of social and emotional skills will not produce the desired effects without well-designed and timely feedback that teachers give to students while working, thinking, and responding in the course of these activities.

Reinforcement, guidance, and correction are the interventions directed at students when we wish to praise and support them, help them recognize and anticipate the situations in which the desired behaviour will be helpful for them and others or, on the other hand, instruct them on how to correct their behaviour.

### Meaningful praise

- The teacher clearly observes and states something specific that a student/group did.
- The teacher helps them think about why it is helpful both for them and for others.
- The teacher motivates them to behave the same way again.

An example: A student stays focused and persistent in doing a task.

- *Can you tell us how you managed to...? What happened...? What did you do?*
- *What helped you move on, persevere?*
- *Do you know anyone with the same approach to his/her work? Do you have a role model for that?*

### Guidance

The teacher helps students to:

- see a virtue in a new light, a new situation;
- identify how it can apply to their lives, from a different angle.

Example: A student lacks determination, persistence to master something new.

- Think of an earlier situation when you were determined and persistent.
- How did you feel then, what did you think and say to yourself? Could that help you now to be more persistent in this task?
- Think of the people you know and think of them as a good example of perseverance. What did they do, what was their approach? How could you use their experience to help yourself?

### Correction

- The teacher indicates a situation in which a student says or does something which is not conducive to his/her wellbeing or that of others.
- Don't criticize the person. Criticize the action.
- Instead of criticism or threats, help students understand the effect and consequences of what they are doing and understand that there is a way to make it right.

Example: Insulting others.

- *Did you notice what happened when you told Igor that...?*
- *How do you think your words affected him?*
- *What would be a good thing to say to him or do now?*

## Praising adolescents

The potential of praise is commonly known, praise is agreeable to every student. But, do we ever think that maybe not everybody appreciates the same kind of praise?

Carol Dweck, a professor of psychology (Columbia University, Stanford University), researched how praise affect students: dominantly praising personal characteristics and abilities (IQ) helps students build a positive self-image, build self-confidence (up to a point), but when they face an obstacle, they avoid it because they identify themselves with their success or failure. It often leads to a drop in personal motivation due to an overdependence on the opinions of others, and a tendency towards academic dishonesty to maintain the positive image of oneself before others. Conversely, praising someone's method of work, strategy or effort is conducive to students feeling in control over what they are doing, the feeling of competence, self-confidence, perseverance and responsibility. Such praise encourages internal motivation, and errors are seen as a natural part of learning.

### One should particularly be cautious when praising adolescents because:

- adolescents notice the difference between what is thought and what is said; they assess and anticipate others' reactions better; thus, **insincere and underserved** praise should be avoided;
- frequent praise of efforts and persistence may have the opposite effect: *I work hard... I need more time... I'm dumber than the others!*;
- adolescents like it when they see that their behaviours and actions have a positive effect **on others**;
- praising **tête-à-tête** and nonverbal praise are advisable at this stage in life;
- praise is **not to be combined with** criticism – avoid messages with a “but” following immediately after the praise;
- instead of generalized praise for a good job, it is more effective to ask the student how he/she **managed** to do it, for others to hear: Tell us more about...;
- adolescents are often suspicious of praise – they feel insecure, doubt their own abilities, and are **suspicious** of others who praise them;
- it is advisable to link praise with goals – help students understand that the **specific behaviours** that we are praising lead to the **goal** they have. Ask them to see for themselves whether certain behaviour is bringing them closer to or further away from the goal.

Instead of....	More helpful...
You're great at English... 'A' for you again!	You seem to have a good system for learning. How did you manage it?
Teacher:	Student understands:
Not an easy task at all, but you gave your best to solve it...	I don't quit easily... I'm persistent (others appreciate that...)



"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels  
have not Love, I am only a rinoimo cono or a ari"

"The moral find pleasure in their own virtue"  
Confucius

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues,  
but the parent of all the others."  
Marcus Tullius

"We do not learn for school, but for life."  
*Non scholae, sed vitae discimus*  
Seneca

I love conquers all  
Virgil

"Beauty will save the world"  
Fyodor Dostoevsky

"The starry sky above me and the moral law within me"  
Immanuel Kant

mission in life: wiping every tear from every eye."  
Mahatma Gandhi

amt. that life was in/awoke and saw



# FOSTERING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS THROUGH REGULAR INSTRUCTION

*Character does not only mean doing the right thing in terms of ethics; character means working in the best way. To that effect, character education is not just helping children succeed – it involves also teaching children to work hard, to develop their talents, and aspire to excellence in every area of their endeavours.*

Tom Lickona and Matt Davidson

## APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

There are numerous examples of successful practices aimed at developing students' social and emotional skills, as well as building the competencies of teachers and schools to support such development. Above all, apart from the implicit or implied role of schools and teachers in developing the social and emotional skills of their students, education systems and schools are increasingly planning, designing, carrying out and monitoring diverse targeted actions and programmes to support the development of SES in children and young people. Some rely on extracurricular activities, others on regular teaching. In other words, it has been recognized that it is not only school-based actions, workshops, student

communities, and the school ethos at large that affect the development of such skills, but huge opportunities also exist in regular instruction in all subject areas – teaching and learning methodologies and interactions can be put to the same use. The approach we took in developing the 'My Values and Virtues' programme was to combine the two approaches.

Although the programme is largely designed to be used in the homeroom classes, where the role of homeroom teachers gains the most prominence, it is certainly possible to extend the work and apply it in regular classrooms. A particular quality of this programme lies in the fact that the teacher who truly connects with it, who accepts and embraces it, will not be left untouched; rather, this becomes a learning process for the teacher him/herself, who begins to evolve and better understand the process of developing human character, and diverse social and emotional skills. This sharpens his/her ability to recognize and plan the points in the teaching process that lend themselves well to developing SES. He/she begins to think about which part of the lesson to use, what things can serve as a cue, maybe some inspiring introduction to the lesson, or a segment during the main part of the lesson, or else something for the wrap-up. By exploiting the potentials of every subject matter to develop SES, teachers help themselves, and their subject – in the eyes of their students – opens up into new dimensions. The students then understand that what matters to their teacher is not only their knowledge, but also their personality to no lesser extent. A range of shorter texts with the accompanying methodological appendices featured in the Handbook may serve the needs of regular classrooms quite well. Each teacher can, depending on their personal preference and judgment, use any segment of the teaching content offered (a short story, a game, a poem), which can be very effective and interesting. As needs be, the contents can be modified or you can even take it a step further and devise something new, adapted to your subject matter.

In addition, each section with theoretical inputs has a part focusing on the role of teachers, with recommendations on how teachers can foster the development of social and emotional skills, both for homeroom and for regular classrooms.

## POTENTIAL OF SUBJECT CURRICULA FOR DEVELOPING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

*Education is the way to move mountains, to build bridges, to change the world.*

Oprah Winfrey

When they are in school, students spend most of the time in regular instruction, where they acquire specific knowledge from different core and vocational subjects that is necessary for their future professions or transition to higher levels of education. They deal with the various teaching content and meet different teachers. One could ask oneself: How can we work on developing social and emotional skills when the curricula are quite overwhelming as it is, and teachers are in a constant rush to cover it all? With good organization and the belief that it is possible, any subject teacher will be able to find a way, depending on the subject matter covered and suited to their personality and approach to the job, to work continuously on more comprehensive character building in their students. Every teacher both educates and develops SES at the same time, and every subject has some content, situations or circumstances which can be used for pursuing this SES development role.

No matter how true it is that **language and literature** classrooms lend themselves naturally to the development of values and virtues, and that such teachers are inevitably continuously fostering virtues, nevertheless the 'My Values and Virtues' programme introduces a new dimension into teaching by encouraging any teacher to see the range of potentials offered

by their subject in a new and deeper way and identify opportunities for new methods of interpretation that have possibly remained unobserved. Once a teacher has mastered the basics of the programme, understood its significance and their own role in delivering it, their lessons may become new areas of action in which, even more than before, creativity, imagination, empathy, tolerance, and other social and emotional skills are developed.

### Things can be different<sup>9</sup>

*When you watch TV or see a film, you are looking at things happening to other people. Prose fiction is something you build up from 26 letters and a handful of punctuation marks, and you, and you alone, using your imagination, create a world and populate it and look out through others' eyes. You get to feel things, visit places and worlds you would never otherwise know. You learn that everyone else out there is a me, as well. You're being someone else, and when you return to your own world, you're going to be slightly changed. Empathy is a tool for building people into groups, for allowing us to function as more than self-obsessed individuals. As you read, you're also finding out something vitally important for making your way in the world. And it's this: The world doesn't have to be like this. Things can be different.*

\*\*\*

*Literacy is more important than ever it was, in this world of text and email, a world of written information. We need to read and write, we need global citizens who can read comfortably, comprehend what they are reading, understand nuance, and make themselves understood.*

(Neil Gaiman, 2017)

<sup>9</sup> From Neil Gaiman's column available at: <https://www.6yka.com/novosti/nil-gejmen-zasto-nasa-buducnost-zavisi-od-biblioteka-citanja-i-mastarenja>.

In **foreign language classrooms** there is also a range of opportunities for developing SES. Given that learning a foreign language is always more than just learning a language, since it implies learning about the cultures of various peoples, the norms and values in those cultures, the potential for developing SES is quite rich – texts used in language instruction are often an ideal basis for developing SES, since most often they speak of various human destinies, different lifestyles, and numerous interesting facts that, with proper methodological guidance by the teacher, will be a good basis for developing not only communication skills, but also teamwork, curiosity, tolerance, solidarity, empathy, self-control, and other SES.

**The quest for a more humane life should start with school-based education**

*There is an urgent need for access to a different method of education, to teach children how to live on this earth that we have to preserve, since we depend on water, on air, on trees, on birds, and all living beings, and since any harm we cause to this magnificent oecumene threatens the future life and may lead to its demise. What would education be like if, instead of overwhelming children with information no one has ever managed to memorize, it would be linked with the struggle to retain species, with the dire need to preserve the seas and oceans. Children should be warned of the global dangers and atrocities that wars have brought about for nations. It is important they feel a part of history throughout which people did great things, but also made terrible mistakes. The quest for a more humane life should start with school education.*

(Ernesto Sabato, 2004)

Just as there is an ingrained conviction that languages and literature are the only fields with a rich potential to develop SES, there is also an ingrained understanding that the SES development function of **science** is negligible. However, physics, chemistry, or biology teachers are so well positioned when explaining the laws of nature, chemical processes, plant and animal life, and the importance of preserving the environment to be able to target the fostering of specific SES, such as gratitude, integrity, or empathy.

It is also a deeply rooted opinion that arts and literature teachers are those who are responsible for developing creativity in their students but **cooking or hair-dressing lessons** also offer a host of opportunities for developing SES.

*You can be creative in anything – in math, science, engineering, philosophy – as much as you can in music or in painting or in dance.*

(Sir Ken Robinson)

Numerous other vocational subjects are quite suitable for developing SES. By way of example, **medicine and veterinary subjects** have the potential for developing empathy or solidarity; the set of subjects dealing with **law and economics** is well-suited for building honesty and fairness; in **maritime subjects** students have the possibility to develop self-control or responsibility. The set of subjects dealing with **electrical and civil engineering** may have its potential for developing SES, for instance, creativity or teamwork.

**Physical education** is well-suited for working on persistence, optimism, self-confidence, and honesty. PE teachers who know their students well, who monitor their progress and cheer them when it is difficult to persist in an effort to get to the finish line or do some other sporting achievement, can have a major impact on the

development of self-confidence, persistence, and teamwork skills.

Teaching **mathematics** also abounds in moments suitable for fostering the development of SES. Thinking about it, it is precisely in such lessons that critical and logical thinking are developed, together with concentration, persistence, a systematic approach, accuracy, and precision, then it becomes clear that a mathematics teacher is one who can often use classroom situations to develop tolerance, self-confidence, empathy, and other SES. When through praise or reinforcement he/she gives credit to a student who has solved a difficult problem in a new way, then the teacher fosters creativity, but also optimism and self-confidence, and belief in people, in equal measure.

***Science promotes strong moral values. It teaches us to give precedence to arguments over brutality, to honesty over hoax, to strictness over anything else; to truth over "anything is possible". It establishes a rich dialogue between man and the universe.***

(Quéré, 2008)

**History** lessons open up possibilities for students to think critically about ethical issues related to historical events and personalities. Instead of insisting on mere rote learning of the content presented in a textbook, a history teacher has an opportunity to encourage students to think about the causes and results of an event, about the character traits of the main figures in those events, the rightness of the decisions that have carved world and national history, the importance of empathy, tolerance and mutual respect for preserving peace in the world, both in the past and today.

**Geography** teachers are in no worse a position to develop SES either. By learning about the differences between people, cultures, countries or regions, they are well-positioned to develop

students' ability to accept differences and appreciate the authentic contributions that the nations of the world are making to civilization. The omnipresence of modern technologies in the lives of young people and the huge benefits, but also risks associated with its use, pose huge challenges for **information technology** teachers. In no way can their task be boiled down solely to teaching students how to use digital devices, but rather they have to perform other functions and, both explicitly and implicitly, develop a whole range of SES, starting from creativity or teamwork to fostering critical thinking, responsibility, and self-control.

This brief mention of possible paths within some of the wide range of subjects taught in general and vocational secondary schools is intended just to spur teachers into thinking more deeply about such important issues. Every teacher knows best when and to what extent regular teaching may serve as a good basis for developing SES. The aim here is not to give a book of recipes (given the sheer number of subjects taught and curricula delivered in secondary schools, a whole new handbook would be needed to do so); it is rather to remind of the huge area for action in extracurricular activities, but also that this is in no way lesser in regular instruction. Likewise, we wish to remind you that it is true that huge potential lies in the students, but also in you, teachers, and very often it is up to you whether you will kindle a spark in students' hearts or not, whether they will become better people or not, whether their characters will have the virtues and values necessary to develop a sound, accomplished character.

## TEACHING/LEARNING METHODS

It should also be borne in mind that, in addition to the content, the very choice of procedures by which we guide students to the desired goal or outcome has the potential to develop SES. This refers to teaching methods. When selecting a teaching method, the key criteria we are guided by are learning outcomes, as well



as the resources we have available. Speaking of SES development objectives, it is noteworthy that these are not intended to push back the educational objectives. The whole point is not to develop social and emotional skills to the detriment of the cognitive ones. On the contrary, if teaching is well-designed and if proper learning methods are selected, adding a focus on social and emotional development will only solidify the overall educational process. This means that a teacher must use an array of teaching methods.<sup>10</sup> This will provide students with ample opportunities to apply what they learn, to practice it, to recognize the linkages between what they learn and real life situations, to reconsider their knowledge, views, values, and judgements. It is particularly important for students to become more aware that the subject they study contributes to their personality development.

Most theoreticians dealing with social and emotional skills and the designers of curricula for developing such skills promote an active

teaching methodology that encourages thinking, with the teacher as a facilitator of learning. An active teaching methodology has the capacity to engage the attention of students, as usually happens; however, such activities should not be carried out as fun exercises only. The best strategies should be used to pursue the intended objectives. In practice, for example, group work is quite common, but it is questionable whether it involves always true cooperative learning, which has a strong potential to develop SES, or is it merely a formal division of students into groups, without the true engagement of all group/team members. (More details in the theoretical input to the Teamwork section, p. 45.)

As noted at the beginning, if we approach the programme with sincerity, optimism, and belief in positive outcomes, even within the boundaries of a strictly vocational subject, the results will not disappoint, to the benefit of both students and teachers.

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<sup>10</sup> The appendix to this Handbook details some teaching methods and techniques suitable for developing social and emotional skills through regular instruction.





# MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS

*I am a scholar of life. Every night before I go to sleep, I analyse every detail of what I did that day. I evaluate things and people, which helps me avoid mistakes.*

Compay Segundo

Perfection is not possible in the area of measuring human characteristics and achievements; thus, there are numerous controversies around classroom assessment. Many subjective and objective factors affect (un)biased assessment on the part of the assessor/teacher, student, the subject of the assessment and the assessment tools. A vast body of research indicates that marks speak most about the assessor. The same happens when assessing the knowledge of students in a certain field, something that at first glance might seem readily measurable. Therefore, we are aware that many teachers will find this section unappealing, some even redundant. You may wonder how are we to measure progress in developing character traits when we already face so many problems in measuring knowledge.

To start with, it is noteworthy that no perfect or precise measurement is even expected; having said that, it is necessary to monitor progress and to sum up the results, since this is a natural process.

If we wish students to progress, to develop certain skills helpful for their learning and personal development, to reflect on them and practice them, the thing that will interest both us and them is whether we are on the right

track, and to what extent. How else are we to know whether what we are doing in regular teaching and other planned activities makes sense unless we monitor and check the effects of what we are doing?

Given that the Programme's goal, in addition to individual progress, is also a better classroom climate, communication at all levels, school ethos, etc., one of the ways to monitor progress is school self-assessment, which is already mandatory and done each year.

As a homeroom or subject teacher, feel free to choose how you intend to monitor class progress. It may be in the form of a journal in which at the beginning of each school year you enter some general remarks about the classroom climate and individual students. Then do the same at the end of the school year and record the areas in which changes have happened.

Over the course of the year you can write down all the specific moments both in your actions and regarding your students: whether they are using the language of virtues more; whether anything has changed in their interpersonal relations and communication, regarding their responsibilities; whether they are more able to critically assess themselves and their behaviour and how that affects others around them; whether they understand better the causes and results of certain behaviours and how some can be corrected so as to be more constructive.

On page 38 of this Handbook we propose using an interactive class diary in which students would record their ideas and proposals in reference to the development of virtues, good or bad examples from their lives, e.g. situations when they exhibited tolerance, optimism, honesty, but also situations in which they experienced violence or disappointment. Your journal and this diary may serve as inspiring and creative methods of assessment.

In addition to monitoring and recording the progress of individual students, and of the class as a whole, you may evaluate specific activities



as well – give your students an opportunity after the classes focusing on fostering SES or after homeroom classes to evaluate the format and effects of these activities.

The section on self-confidence refers to the website <https://www.futureme.org>, where students write a letter to themselves talking about their wishes and goals. A year later they will check whether there have been any changes in their thinking, feelings, and attitudes. This is

a simple way of monitoring changes, and your students may find it interesting.

Below is a simple self-assessment sheet that you may give your students at the beginning of the school year (the beginning of the Programme). Keep the filled-out sheets. At the end of the school year/programme, pass the same questionnaire out again. Compare them to see if there have been any changes.

See below the descriptions of some skills and characteristics, and assess how well they describe you (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents the lowest level of congruence, and 5 the highest).

1. I truly believe my efforts will pay off and that I can achieve what I want if I try hard.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am a good person who has no problems accepting and respecting all types of differences.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can work well in a team and contribute to the common goal.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have no problems acknowledging what others are doing for me and reciprocating with my good deeds.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I do good, the right things, regardless of whether I am seen or am being monitored or not.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I use my imagination and get some original ideas and creations.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Even in the most stressful situations, when overwhelmed by strong and unpleasant feelings, I manage to keep calm and composed.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I understand well what it is like to be in another person's shoes and can sympathize with people who are different from me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I recognize when other people do something good for me and I want to reciprocate.	1	2	3	4	5



# THE SCHOOL THAT IS SUCCESSFUL AT DEVELOPING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

*One looks back with appreciation at the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude at those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.*

Carl Jung

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to how a school can foster the development of social and emotional skills. All schools are similar in some respects, and quite dissimilar in others, and each school has its own character, its own personality. Nevertheless, the experiences of schools that are developing cognitive, and social and emotional skills in equal measure show that all of them are following some fundamental principles of working on social and emotional aspects in all areas of work and life.

School is truly devoted to developing social and emotional skills when:<sup>11</sup>

- it is understood that EVERYTHING that goes on in a school affects the development of desirable traits in students and that it is the responsibility of EVERYONE in the school;

- it clearly defines and promotes all the key values and agreed standards of behaviour for everyone in the school;
- it plans thoroughly and in detail how to support the development of values, virtues and skills in students, and does not count on it happening spontaneously or unaided;
- every area of school life and work and all the participants in the process offer opportunities for character building: the teacher as a role model, teacher–student and student–student interaction, curricula, teaching and learning methods, extracurricular activities, assessment and monitoring, school management, partnerships with parents, and the community;
- it uses teaching and learning methods that develop motivation, autonomy, integrity, teamwork, and other social and emotional skills;
- it offers plenty of opportunities for students to act in line with the adopted values and skills;
- it monitors and assesses the school ethos at large, as well as student progression, serving as inputs for planning further measures and progress.



<sup>11</sup> Adapted from Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education; available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268077357\\_Eleven\\_Principles\\_of\\_Effective\\_Character\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268077357_Eleven_Principles_of_Effective_Character_Education).

Every school should clearly articulate in its mission statement which traits it aspires to develop and reinforce in its students. Here, the key role rests with teachers as role models for intellectual and social and emotional conduct. There are many ways in which teachers can influence their students.<sup>12</sup> Even when they have no intention of doing so, teachers leave an impression.

Research<sup>13</sup> shows that academic achievements are better in schools committed to character building in their students – ones that promote and conduct activities to that effect. Thus, particular attention needs to be devoted to the school environment and interactions. It is futile to teach young people to manage anger if, when they leave the classroom, they see their teachers lose it. Likewise, it is pointless to talk about the importance of respect if they do not feel respected themselves in daily school interactions. The messages about virtues need to be sent out everywhere, in classrooms, corridors, on sports fields, in communication between students and teachers, between students and the school administration, and should be promoted through various forms of extracurricular activities. The whole purpose of our joint effort to promote SES is in the set ideal of the whole school living in the spirit of values and virtues that a young person will continue to develop and have as their legacy when they enter adulthood.

**Assume responsibility  
for your actions!**

**Be honest!**

**Stay informed!**

**Share!**

**Express gratitude!**

**Respect true  
authority!**

**Forgive!**

**Plan!**

<sup>12</sup> The role of the teacher in developing SES will be presented in detail in the theoretical inputs for each skill.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/conference-papers/GrossJlf-Kipling-characterandschools.pdf>.

**Think about the  
consequences!**

**Don't take all the things you  
see in the media at face value!**

**Play by the rules!**

**Don't blame others  
for your failures!**

**Preserve the  
environment!**

**Be persistent!  
Keep on trying!**

**How often do You say  
to your students...?**

**Behave well!**

**Be kind!**

**Don't abuse  
others!**

**Volunteer!**

**Listen to others!**

**Help those who  
need help!**

**Always give  
your best!**

**Be compassionate  
and show that you care!**



# INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP





# WORKSHOPS/ ACTIVITIES

## INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP

*The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.*<sup>14</sup>

Lao Tzu

### ***A word before we begin***

Just as many human endeavours start with the first, often crucial and delicate step, thus embarking on the journey of the 'My Values and Virtues' programme should start with well-designed and skilfully selected activities that will intrigue students and offer them a basic understanding of the programme. The significance of this step may be illustratively compared with the first meeting between a teacher and a new cohort of students, when the initial agreeable or uncomfortable atmosphere sets the tone not only for the immediate steps to follow, but, at times, also for our overall interaction with students.

Using a set of straightforward activities, students should learn the basic concepts (virtue, value, and character) and the virtues and skills that they as a group will be reflecting on and discussing during the programme. Particular attention should be devoted to creating an agreeable atmosphere for the workshops. Strengthening the bond between students and a strong sense of companionship is both a precondition and an aim in itself. This, on one hand, means having such a classroom climate where students feel mutual closeness, love, and

respect to be able to move on, and on the other, the 'My Values and Virtues' programme is aimed at creating a well-knit group of individuals who cherish true values – more and better than before.

We have already mentioned that 'My Values and Virtues' was already applied as a pilot programme in four general secondary schools over the 2017/2018 school year and that it helped create an environment conducive to learning, better teacher–student interactions, as well as interactions between the students themselves. This confirmed the validity and meaningfulness of the whole idea presented to you in the form of this Handbook.

You can spend one school period doing the introductory activities, and if you believe more time is needed for this stage, feel free to exercise your own judgement and devote as much time to this important first step as you deem fit. With this in mind, we have also proposed some additional activities.

Wise sayings, quotations, music, films and other things can serve as a source of inspiration for developing virtues and skills. Within the framework of introductory activities, we propose to use the well-known poem "If" by R. Kipling, believed by many to epitomize good character.

Given that the programme is intended for all general and vocational secondary schools, this Handbook section suggests a workshop regarding virtues associated with different professions. The foreword has already stressed the flexible nature of the programme, and the fact that you are free to choose the virtues that you would like to work with in your school or classroom. Although this workshop comes first, it does not mean you need to do it immediately after the introductory one. You can save it for later, once students have become more familiar with the virtues covered by the programme. You can also use it for the Career Orientation Programme that your school delivers.

Have a safe journey with the 'My Values and Virtues' programme and good luck with it!

<sup>14</sup> Most quotations are taken from the publication *Poslovne misli za sva vremena* (Business Thoughts for All Times). Available at: [https://www.biznis-akademija.com/Poslovne\\_misli\\_za\\_sva\\_vremena.html](https://www.biznis-akademija.com/Poslovne_misli_za_sva_vremena.html).





## WORKSHOP: What kind of a person will I be?

### Goals:

Students will:

- recognize the goals for building one's own character in the future
- develop relations of mutual respect and a sense of belonging to a group

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** a flip chart or a school board, sheets of A4 paper, markers, biros, copies of a coat-of-arms

\* \* \*



### Rules (5 min)

Invite your students to propose the ground rules for group work. Write down the rules you agree on, and later you can write them on a poster that will be displayed in the classroom.



### Coat-of-arms (20 min)

Pass out sheets of paper with a coat-of-arms (see notes and the appendix at the end of this workshop). Students put their names and other particulars, thus creating their personal coat-of-arms, where they use words or symbols to present themselves in the four boxes:

1. What kind of an adult I'd like to be – the traits I'd like to have (avoid words about occupations and what their profession will be);

2. Where I'd live;
3. What I'd be doing in my free time (hobbies); and
4. What will be most important for me.

Then the students present their coats-of-arms; first it could be volunteers, continuing with the rest of them. Divide the board into two columns: the left-hand side for writing down the **traits** students identified, and the right-hand side for what **is most important for them in life**.

Once done, ask your students to sum up, in one word only, all the positive character traits they mentioned as being ones they wish to develop. Through discussion, come up with the notion of virtue, and then ask them to sum up, in one word only, what is most important for them, their priorities. Conclude together that these are referred to as values.



### What is character? (10 min)

Write between the two columns you drew on the board previously (the one with values and the other with virtues) the word 'character'. Ask your students – what is character? – and let them brainstorm. Invite them to use the virtues already written on the board.

Sum this up. Explain the etymology of the word "character" (Greek word *haraso* = to engrave). Character may be said to be composed of virtues in action, our behaviour. For instance, virtues such as fairness, honesty, and care for others are objective human qualities, equally good for the individual who possess them, and for the community/society he/she lives in. Finally, they are of global significance.



### My values and virtues (10 min)

Discuss the following:

- What personality traits should my generation develop? Why are they important?  
(Guide them to recognize the importance of these traits for a happy and fulfilled life,



*for one's professional life and career, for the safety of all, or societal progress, etc.)*

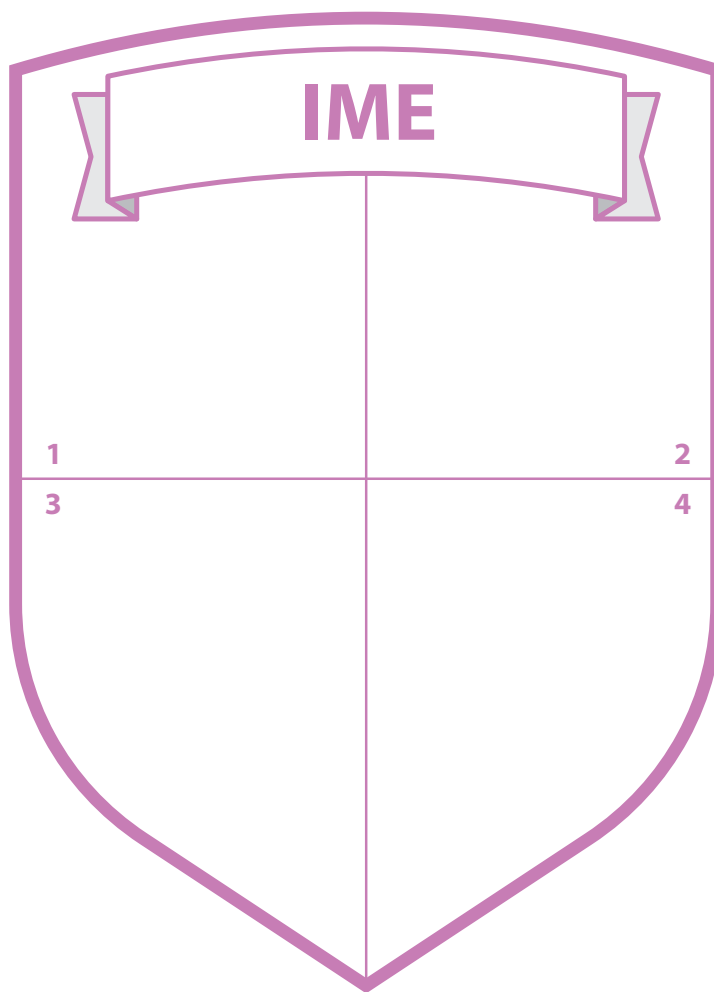
- – *What qualities should a better life in the future be based on?*

Go back to the virtues written on the board. Let your students single out several which are most important (in response to the previous question).

Then give an outline of the programme and the SES to be covered. Explain that young people need a comprehensive and balanced set of cognitive, emotional and social skills for a healthy and fulfilling life, job, and their place in society: cognitive skills are the basis

for achievements in education, employability and labour market; these are reinforced and intertwined with the social and emotional skills needed for healthy lifestyles, sound relationships, a sense of satisfaction with one's life, and a safer society.

**Note:** Instead of drawing a coat-of-arms, you can save the time for the ensuing discussion if you provide them with printed copies (two coats-of-arms fit onto a single sheet of A4 paper). Pass out copies and ask them to fill in the requested information. If they wish, they can decorate their coats-of-arms.



**Appendix:** An example of a coat-of-arms



OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

The following activities may be used instead of the coat-of-arms activity or as an addition to the previous activities. Two lessons may be devoted to introductory activities if you deem it necessary.

- It is most important...

Divide the class into several smaller groups. Each group should write a set of virtues which are important for them (no more than 10). Then, a rapporteur from each group presents the list of virtues they have chosen to the rest of the class. All the lists are then posted on the wall. Which virtues were included in all the lists? Were there any major differences between the groups? Talk about the differences and make a list that is accepted and supported by the whole class.

- **Self-assessment**

An individual task may be for students to do self-assessment: what virtues/skills they have, where these are seen in action (their behaviour), and which still need to be developed further.

- Interview

This is an activity done in pairs. Students ask each other questions to get to know each other better. You can give them prompts for the interview. Then, students share with the rest of the class what they have learned about their partner. The main aim of the activity is to get closer to a classmate.

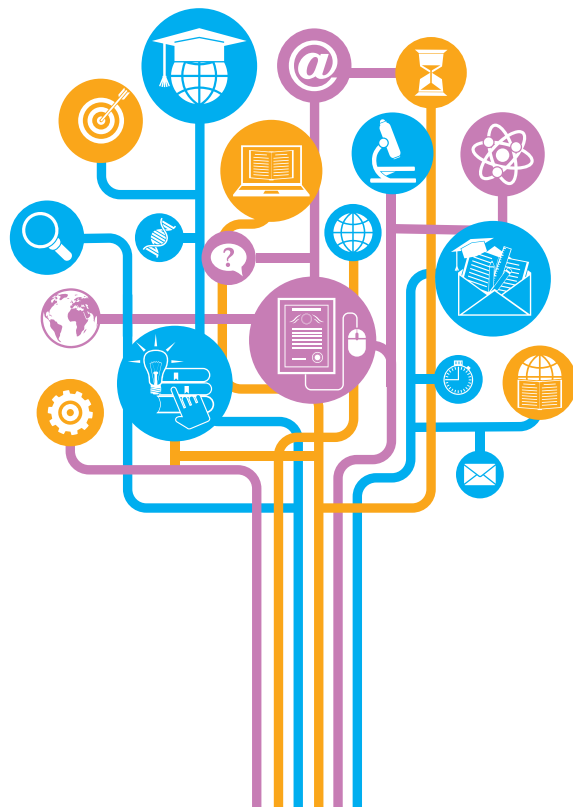
- Me in an encyclopaedia

Prompts for an essay: *Imagine that in a hundred years' time your great-grandchildren discover an*

*article about you in an encyclopaedia. What does the article say about you? What kind of a person were you? What did you do in life? What made you so interesting to deserve having your place in an encyclopaedia? Write a 300-word article. In one paragraph, write down which values and virtues are promoted by that article.*

- We Millennials

Table a discussion on “We Millennials” where students will talk about what Millennials are more successful and better at than the previous generations. What do they lack?





## WORKSHOP: If

### Goal:

Students will:

- *analyse the traits that make up a good character, using the poem “If” as an example*

**Duration:** 45 minutes

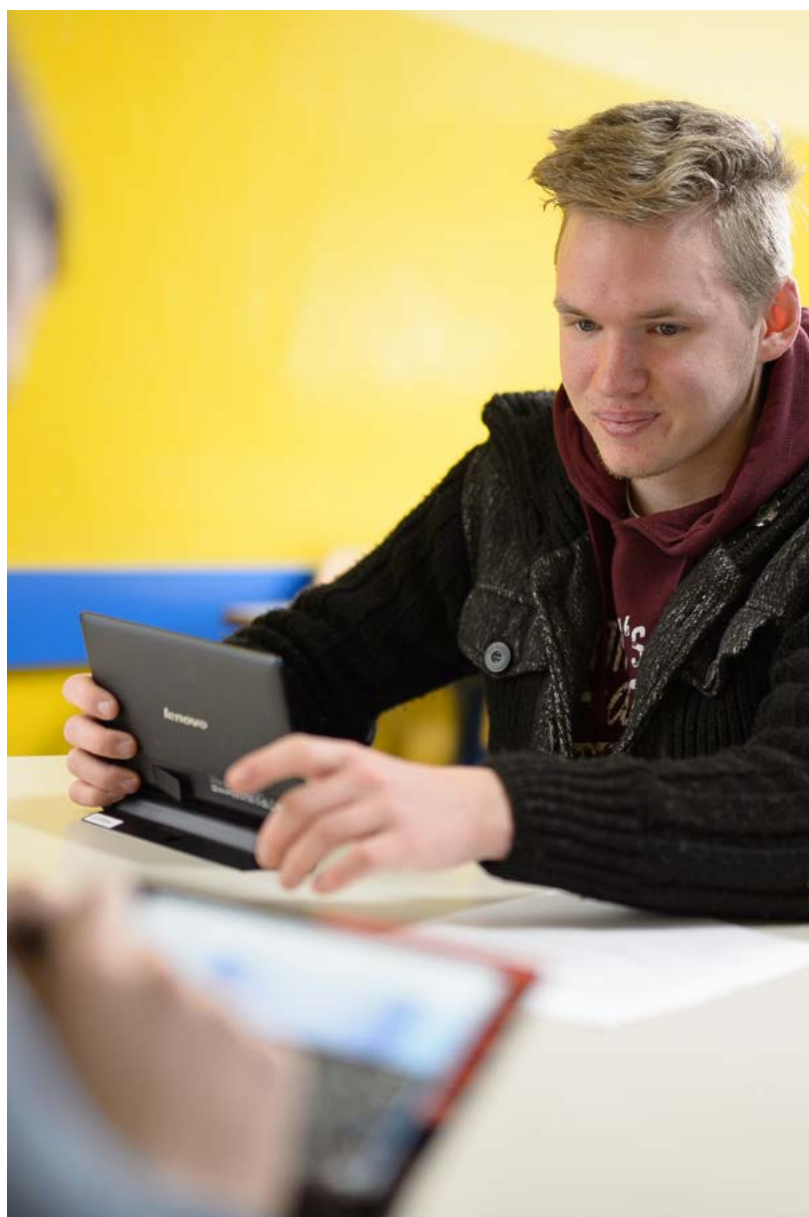
**Materials:** a flip chart or a school board, the poem “If”, a pencil

\* \* \*

Discuss the title of the poem. Ask your students what expectations they have of a poem titled “If”.

- Invite your students to come up one by one and take a piece of paper each with one numbered line.
- They are to find their partner by joining two adjacent numbers: 1 and 2; 3 and 4; 5 and 6; and so on (ending in 32, or 16 pairs; in classes with less than 32 students, invite several pairs to take additional lines).
- Pairs read the lines in sequential order until they finish the poem.
- Invite them to share their first impressions about the poem.
- Start a discussion on the meaning of the poem and the virtues referred to by each group of two lines.
- Next to the word “Man” write down the virtues identified and discuss the complexities of human character and the qualities of a good person.

- Ask your students the question in reference to the final lines of the poem: How big a Man am I? Invite them to do self-assessment – how they see themselves, their virtues, and their flaws; which virtues they should develop, and which flaws they should curb.



IF	
1. If you can keep your head when all about you 2. Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,	self-control, prudence
3. If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you 4. But make allowance for their doubting too;	self-confidence, tolerance, optimism
5. If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,	self-control, perseverance
6. Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,	honesty
7. Or being hated, don't give way to hating,	resilience, honesty
8. And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise.	moderation, modesty
9. If you can dream—and not make dreams your master,	imagination/creativity,
10. If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,	prudence, moderation
11. If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster	modesty, resilience
12. And treat those two impostors just the same;	adaptability/flexibility
13. If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken 14. Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,	tolerance, self-confidence
15. Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,	courage, resilience
16. And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:	optimism
17. If you can make one heap of all your winnings, 18. And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,	self-confidence, optimism
19. And lose, and start again at your beginnings,	optimism
20. And never breathe a word about your loss;	self-control
21. If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew 22. To serve your turn long after they are gone,	determination, optimism, self- confidence
23. And so hold on when there is nothing in you 24. Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'	determination, optimism
25. If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,	altruism, tolerance
26. Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch;	modesty
27. If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,	self-control, resilience
28. If all men count with you, but none too much;	moderation
29. If you can fill the unforgiving minute 30. With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,	wisdom, creativity
31. Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it, 32. And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!	good character

## IF

1. If you can keep your head when all about you	
2. Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,	
3. If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you	
4. But make allowance for their doubting too;	
5. If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,	
6. Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,	
7. Or being hated, don't give way to hating,	
8. And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise.	
9. If you can dream—and not make dreams your master,	
10. If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,	
11. If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster	
12. And treat those two impostors just the same;	
13. If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken	
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30. With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,	
31. Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,	
32. And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!	



## WORKSHOP: The virtues of my future profession

*Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.*

John Wooden

When talking to your students about the choice of their future profession or the one envisaged by their vocational school, it is important to help them recognize the significance, first and foremost, of morality and other virtues and values required to be successful in such jobs.

### Goals:

Students will:

- become aware of the demands placed before certain professions and which SES are particularly important for being successful at that job
- recognize how certain skills may be practiced in different situations in daily life

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** a flip chart or a school board, papers, pencils

\* \* \*



## Unprofessional professionals (5 min)

Short introduction by the teacher: Each profession comes with its own ethical norms stipulating the behaviour and operation in line with the values and moral norms. This is known as professional ethics or professional integrity. A lot has been said and written lately about unprofessional conduct of professionals, unjust judges, uncaring doctors, biased journalists, and corrupt politicians. What are the consequences of such behaviour?



## Virtues needed for my future profession (30 min)

Divide the class into groups depending on the profession of their choice (not necessarily identical ones – they can be related occupations). Each group gets a set of questions:

- What virtue (one or two) is essential for this profession?
- What are the key challenges and difficulties in this profession?
- What will happen in the case of misconduct in your job? What will the harm be for you, and what will it be for others?
- What do you know about that virtue? Where do you stand in terms of that virtue now, in your opinion? How can you improve it, in what situations?

The group rapporteurs present the group discussion. Write down the key virtues on the board.



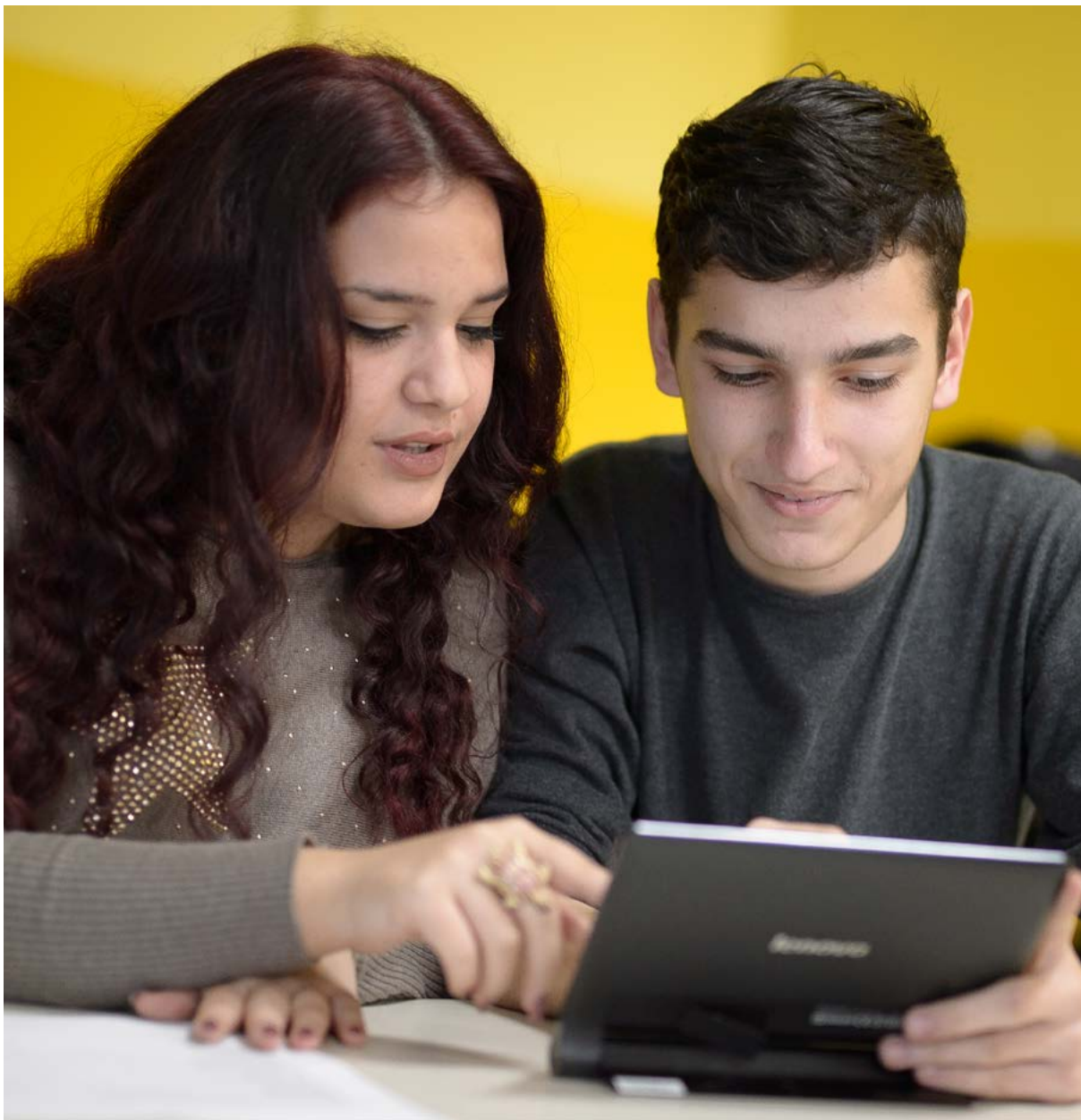
## Wrap-up (5 min)

In the wrap-up, it is important to stress that professional knowledge is not enough in most professions for someone to be successful. Various employers look for different skills needed to perform certain tasks well. In addition, today there are various “skill frameworks” listing



key competences, for instance for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some skills are rather easy to acquire, while honesty, integrity, respect, empathy, and responsibility are traits necessary to keep the job and advance in it. This goes for any type of a job, from the highest levels of power to the least demanding occupations.

Ask them what they think are the most relevant SES for successful companies and employers. Tell them that, according to the OECD<sup>15</sup>, the most important ones are: teamwork, responsibility, self-control, curiosity, creativity, and empathy.



<sup>15</sup> The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

## SAMPLE ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE USED FOR DEVELOPING ANY SES

- **TED talks.** Students choose one of their favourite inspirational talks highlighting good character traits. Then their task is to act as inspirational speakers to encourage others to develop such virtues.<sup>16</sup>
- **Short texts for long conversations. Quotations and sayings** can be used to start discussions on topics related to any virtue or any point of view. This will encourage your students to better understand and think deeper about a certain virtue. You could introduce “A Quotation A Day” rule. You can expand on the lists offered here.
- **Biographies of famous people.** The lives and works of scholars or artists from various periods are a valuable source of inspiration for your students. It is important to avoid mystifying their personalities so that students can observe that what those people have in common and what made them great was not their “genius”, but their commitment, perseverance, humanism, precision, and other character traits.
- **Situations from everyday life (in and out of school).** Using properly instructional moments (topics in teaching and real situations happening in the classroom, which give direct insight into a certain action, the behaviour of students, and reactions to that) is an excellent option for fostering SES.
- **Small-scale projects, e.g. interactive diary.** Students have a common notebook in which they record ideas and proposals about how to develop virtues. They can also use it to give good and bad examples from their own lives, e.g. situations in which they displayed tolerance, optimism, honesty, but also ones when they resorted

to violence, displayed disappointment, etc. Students do not have to sign their name to the contributions they make if they do not want to do so; what counts is the exchange of ideas, and this format of communication may boost empathy, or help them have some relief from their daily troubles. An interactive diary may also be an excellent tool to monitor the progress students are making.

- **Film.** For example, during a history lesson, you could watch any of the following films: *La vita è bella/ Life is Beautiful*, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, *Schindler's List*, *The Great Debaters*. The first three speak of the atrocities of concentration camps during World War II, and the fourth about the struggle of African Americans in the USA for equality. After watching a film, you could have a discussion for students to share their views, their experiences, critical views on the film, their knowledge on the issues covered by the film, whether they recognize any forms of discrimination in their own environments, what effect the film had on them and what feelings it elicited.
- Encourage them to discuss how well suited the films are for presenting a problem and whether the director's artistic expression may distract one's attention and relativize the main theme (*Life is Beautiful*). Film sessions may also be organized where these, but also some other films (*Apocalypse Now*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *No Man's Land*, *Gandhi*, *Judgement at Nuremberg*, *Hitler: The Rise of Evil*, *The Imitation Game*, *Darkest Hour*, *Philadelphia*, *Lincoln*) would be featured several days in a row followed by discussions on the same principles as above.
- **Books.** In his essay on education,<sup>17</sup> Ernesto Sabato says: *Children are not familiar with contemporary writers that could kindle a love*

<sup>16</sup> Available at: <https://www.ted.com/#/>.

<sup>17</sup> Available at: <http://www.skripta.info/ernesto-sabato-pojedinac-i-univerzum-pdf-download/>.



*for literature in their hearts, since they are the ones who would speak in the language closest to their fears and hopes; therefore literature should be taught backwards, starting from contemporary authors, in order for students to be able to appreciate what Homer or Cervantes wrote about love and death, about misfortune and hope, about loneliness and bravery. And the intention does not have to be to teach it all, just some episodes and problems, ones that achieved something important or which make up the fundamental structure. Even if few books are read, but are read with passion, this is the only way to truly experience something, otherwise it will be nothing more than a cemetery of words.*

- Since young people tend to oppose anything that is compulsory or imposed, it is no wonder that classics are often read unwillingly and when forced to do so. Therefore, it would be important to also include in the compulsory reading list some modern authors, selected by the teachers or students, who are closer to them in terms of themes and culture, and who, as suggested by Sabato, would “catch young readers in their net”. Depending on the choice of books, the teacher can start a discussion linked with some of the SES, but also a conversation on the importance of books and reading in general for character building.<sup>18</sup>
- **Music.** The teacher can start a discussion about music by inviting students to imagine the world without music and ask them to describe it, and then prompt discussion by asking things like: How important is music in the lives of people, young people? Where does music get its power or its magic from? How can music affect human beings? What kinds of music do you listen to when you study, create something, daydream, talk to

your friends? What does music elicit in you? How does music enrich people and make them better? How important is it to listen to good music and why?

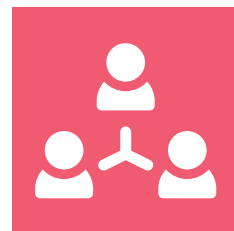
- The teacher can also propose listening to music focusing on one of the virtues; this offers opportunities to start a discussion about the lyrics and its messages, for example *Imagine* by John Lennon or some other with similar messages. In addition, music may be a very inspiring background for any form of work in the classroom, whether SES in the homeroom classes or a totally different activity in one of regular subject classrooms.



18 “Niko Rolović” General Secondary School Bar has a book club called “Biblioduh”, where young book lovers discuss works of modern literature (more details in the section on School-based Campaigns, p. 163).



# TEAMWORK





# TEAMWORK

*A team is more than a collection of people. It is a process of give and take.*

B. Glacel

No matter how often in life a person may be forced to rely on themselves and their own knowledge and skills, equally so, or even more so, one has to know that, no matter what we are like – unique, different, distinctive – we are all but a fraction of a bigger whole that we have to have a certain interaction with, to which we need to give ourselves, just as we have to receive and accept others. Such an awareness of our own role within the wider societal context is developed, among other things, by reinforcing the ability to act as a part of a team, i.e. a group gathered around a common goal. Today, in contrast to the traditional competitive relationships between individuals as the most effective way to success, more emphasis is placed on collaboration, that is, the ability to reach a goal through common and well-organized action within a team. Given that team members are all different from each other, each member brings their own knowledge and skills, their own intellectual, practical, creative and communication potentials to a team, thus enabling this format to function as a harmonious unit where each member has his/her place and role. But, a mere gathering of people does not make a team, regardless of whether it involves the best individuals for the given task. A good team takes time to build. It is expected that in teams, very much like in any other group, misunderstandings, crises and conflicts may arise and be resolved. Teams with a strong cooperative spirit, that are well

organized and eager to reach the common goal, are more effective in overcoming such challenges.

When planned and executed effectively, teamwork may be a strong lever for the development of numerous skills, values and virtues, which are essential for the social and emotional development of individuals, their learning, future careers, lives and participation in societal processes. Given that teamwork hinges on a culture of dialogue and mutual respect, it comes as no surprise that it is fertile ground for developing self-confidence, self-control, tolerance, empathy, honesty, creativity, etc. Their general presence in a team or a group, as a well-coordinated and aligned unit, is a testimony to the significance of the very idea of a team and its relevance for developing SES.

Social and emotional reactions among members start to evolve the moment a team is set up (they talk to each other, express thoughts and feelings, respond to others' actions, confront each other, etc.). These are all behaviours characteristic of people working in a group. In doing so, at different levels of development, different teamwork skills are exhibited, such as active listening and other communication skills, conflict resolution or leadership.

The benefits of effective teamwork for our cognitive, emotional, and social structures may be understood at several levels.

*Personality.* Every individual can benefit from collaboration with others: by feeling appreciated, by being important to others for contributing to the common goal, and sharing ideas. All of that is conducive to mutual trust and self-confidence. By partaking in group work, an individual is exposed to new ideas, different standpoints and perspectives, which fosters higher levels of thinking, critical thinking, and tolerance for others and different views of the scope and goal of common work. Teamwork, in fact, is an excellent opportunity for every individual to display their own skills and talents to others.



*Cognitive abilities and skills.* When people learn and/or work together towards a shared goal, it is only natural that throughout the process they offer and share ideas, analyse them, reconsider them, and come up with joint solutions. In the process we learn how to explain to others our thoughts, to analyse our own thinking processes and those of others. In addition, teamwork helps develop problem-solving, assessment, and evaluation skills. A good team shares responsibility, finds resources within the group, and manages to carry out a wider range of activities than an individual working alone.

Just like a basketball team thinking as one, planning, and practicing to score as many points as possible, in any team individuals have specific roles to play in carrying out some work or a task. Even if only one player scores points, it is the result of team effort – their planning, coordination, and cooperation!

Employers today are looking for people who are able and willing to work with others, ready to adapt to differences and who have relinquished the need to always be the “winner”. In today’s labour market, teamwork abilities and skills are among the most highly regarded competences.

### ***The teacher’s role***

In addition to the potential teamwork has for developing social and emotional skills, its significance is no less in the process of learning and pursuing learning goals. Modern-day teaching aspires to a cooperative learning method that combines group work with active teaching methodology. Being divided into groups or teams is relatively common, but in order for this method to yield its true potential, both in pursuit of learning goals and developing SES, it needs to be carefully planned, both in terms of group tasks and group structure. Whether a group should be homogenous or heterogeneous, it depends on the goal pursued.

This is where the role of the teacher comes into play; the teacher is to carefully weigh all the options

and choose the one that will be most effective. His/her role, naturally, does not end with the design and planning. The teacher is a watchful facilitator throughout the group process. He/she monitors, guides, and encourages his/her students, seeing to it that all the group members are contributing. Experience has shown that one of the major drawbacks of this method is an unbalanced contribution from all members. By no means does setting up a group mean gathering several students and sitting them next to each other, choosing a rapporteur who would, then, do the bulk of the work. One of the ways to overcome this passivity is for each group member to have his/her own specific role or task, which is one of the features of a team.

It is also important to pay attention to group connectedness and interactivity, the need for members to keep pace with others, to contribute, ask, use civil dialogue to confront or harmonize views – in a word, to cooperate. Hence, it is important in the classroom, when carrying out teamwork, for each member to feel comfortable and motivated, to be outspoken and feel free to present their own thoughts, to be hardworking and committed to contributing to the ultimate goal, the achievement of the shared goal.





## WORKSHOP: Why is it good to be part of a team?

### Goals:

Students will:

- *re-examine their own views about the importance and functions of teamwork*
- *develop mutual trust, cooperation and good communication on the team*
- *practice making decisions through consensus building*

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** sheets of A4 paper, pencils

\* \* \*



### Stairs (10 min)

Split the class into groups (each with no more than five people). Each group picks a letter. Make sure they choose different letters. Once done, instruct the participants: the aim is to “build” stairs made out of words beginning with the chosen letter. The first step starts with the selected letter, followed by the second word composed of two letters, then three, then four, etc. For example:

**N**  
**NO**  
**NUT**  
**NAME**  
**NIGHT**  
**NAPKIN**  
**NATIONS**  
**NECKLACE**  
**NEIGHBOUR ...**

The words used should be nouns, with the exception of the two-letter one, which may be some other part of speech. The number of letters for each subsequent word increases by one, but cannot be the same noun in various forms. The winner is the team that comes up with the highest number of words in two minutes (i.e. whose last word in the sequence is the longest, taking care of the rule of the gradual increase in the number of letters).



### Planet (30 min)

Provide an introduction into the activity:

A new planet has been discovered. Since it has excellent conditions for living, it must be populated; you are members of a committee whose task is to populate the planet. You should identify three qualities and three skills that the people who are to populate the planet should possess.

**Note:** Do not provide explanations if asked about the definition of qualities and skills. Leave it to them to decide and define the terms.

Explain to your students that they will first think on their own, then together with the others. They have 2 minutes for thinking individually and writing down those qualities and skills. When you clap your hands, each person should find a partner and together choose three qualities and three skills (5 minutes).

When 5 minutes have passed, clap your hands again and now two pairs should combine (into groups of four) and make a joint decision (5 minutes). Then two groups of four join together and make a decision in a group of eight (5 minutes).

The rapporteurs present their opinion about the three qualities and three skills.

Then discuss. Prompt the discussion:

- *How satisfied are you with the result, and with the decision-making process?*
- *How did you reach a decision?*

- *When was it easiest to make the decision – in pairs, in groups of four...?*
- *What was difficult?*
- *While you were working in groups, did you operate as a team? How do you know?*
- *What are the advantages and challenges of teamwork?*
- *What does it offer?*
- *What qualities and skills are displayed in good teamwork (e.g. active listening, tolerance for diversity, and patience).*



### Summing up (5 min)

Sum up the impressions and explain that teamwork skills are significant not only for classroom work, but also for their future careers and lives in general. Remind them that all professions, from doctors to professional basketball players, require the skill of working with others.

The activities envisaged by the 'My Values and Virtues' programme will also require possessing the same virtues; at the same time, this will offer methods for practicing them.

Stress that good teamwork is not only pleasant, but serves to develop essential professional and life skills.



### OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Modelled against the above workshop, the activities below may be combined, done autonomously or alongside some others from the Introductory Workshop and the final game.

These activities help students learn about teamwork, reflect on it and practice teamwork skills, such as: active listening, trust, respect, creativity, leadership, and conflict resolution.

## ▪ Collaboration or competition

### ***Competition is a war waged without weapons***

*We cannot have togetherness when all relationships are based on rivalry. Indubitably, competition motivates some people to greater endeavours, underpinned by a desire to win over others. But let us not fool ourselves, because competition is a war waged without weapons, but fought equally as one with weapons – it is based on individualism that separates us from others, the ones we are fighting against. If we had a greater spirit of togetherness, our history would be different, and our purpose in life would be different. When I criticize competition, I am not doing that only from some ethical principle, but because of the huge enjoyment of people sharing the same destiny, and which will save us from becoming futile with all the running for personal success that human life is coming down to.*

(Ernesto Sabato, 2004)

Read out loud the quotation or make copies of it. This activity can be done in groups, and students should think about the following: *Why, when speaking of motives/drive, does the author give preference to collaboration and togetherness over competition? What motivates you in your work and learning: collaboration or competition? Think about the character traits that will be fostered in a person whose greatest motivation is the wish to be better than others, as opposed to the ones of someone whose motivation primarily comes from working together with others on the same goal?*

The discussion can be supported by research findings showing that competition can be an exceptional motivation for those who succeed, but what happens to those who do not win? – sooner or later they quit. Classrooms fostering competitiveness often see aggression and intolerance among students.

### ▪ Teamwork and my future occupation

Split the class into groups, possibly by the type of jobs of their choice (the same or similar occupations); an alternative is to offer several occupations on pieces of paper that students draw and form groups in that way. The task is to recognize: to what extent are teamwork skills – such as active listening, trust, respect, creativity, leadership, and conflict resolution – important for the given occupation? In certain situations, what would the consequences be if someone does not have the skills? What teamwork skills are related to other social and emotional skills?

### ▪ Teamwork – pros and cons

This and the following activity can be used in any other lesson using group work. This is a group activity and the task is for students to list the pros and cons for teamwork. If needed, add the following examples:

#### Pros – examples:

- we achieve more at school, work, or in any other area of life if we share information, knowledge, ideas, and feelings;
- we understand better and accept more readily the views of others;
- our positive qualities and talents come to the surface (writing, acting, etc.);
- we establish better relationships with people around us, because they get to know our positive qualities and attitudes, and this boosts our self-confidence;
- the positive qualities and talents of everyone on the team join and become mutually reinforcing;
- we develop a feeling of joint ownership and sharing;
- we learn to resolve conflicts;
- we learn to work with other group members.

#### Cons – examples:

- it takes longer to make a decision as a team;
- at times teamwork can be very time-consuming, e.g. team members work at different pace;
- conflicts may arise (e.g. due to an uneven workload, avoiding one's responsibilities, etc.)
- teams may put pressure to accept the majority opinion and disregard somebody's idea, creativity, etc.

Discuss the pros and cons: *What prevails? What is your conclusion?*

### ▪ Overcoming obstacles that arise in teamwork

Encourage your students to recall situations in and out of school when a problem occurred during teamwork. Let them cite the examples they recall.

### Obstacles – examples:

- someone in the group is talking loudly, teasing other group members, refusing to participate;
- diluting personal responsibility;
- uneven workload distribution;
- some members lack teamwork skills;
- at times teamwork may undermine creativity;
- poor communication;
- conflicts can be subdued;
- predominance of a team member or a part of the team, etc.

After listing the obstacles that may arise in teamwork, encourage your students to come up with ways to overcome potential obstacles. For example, for an uneven workload or diluting personal responsibility the solution may be for each group member to be assigned a specific task. Someone who refuses to participate or distracts others should not be criticized, but rather asked what the problem is and whether he/she needs assistance.

The method for assessing/evaluating group work may help remove obstacles – apart from the usual assessment/feedback evaluating the overall product of group work, you may evaluate the work of individuals within the group. In doing so, you may ask the group itself to assess the contribution of each member, and you may also resort to self-assessment.

The self-assessment and mutual assessment, apart from leading to a less biased mark, is also an important tool in developing the self-assessment skills, but also of integrity, tolerance, etc.

### ▪ Importance of communication for good teamwork

Divide the class into groups. You can give them a task that needs to be solved together, but prevent them from talking. It can be a geometrical shape that you have cut into several

pieces, asking students to put it together, or telling them to draw something together, to make a newspaper tower, etc. Ask them: *How did you solve the problem? Why is communication an important precondition for teamwork? How helpful was nonverbal communication?*

On the other hand, encourage them to observe how good/effective communication fosters teamwork because: every team member knows his/her role, what is expected of him/her, asks questions and gets responses, receives feedback on things done.

### ▪ A perfect team player

This can be done as an individual activity, in pairs or in groups:

- *Try to remember a person who achieved great success while working with others (an athlete, a politician, etc.) This can be a famous person or someone you know in person. Tell his/her life story focusing on how teamwork was important in what he/she does.*
- *Write down all the qualities and skills a successful team player should possess.*

### ▪ A perfect team

*Imagine that you are in charge of the world. Choose 10 people you wish to have on your team who can help you improve the situation in the world. Who is on your team and why? Which skills are particularly important for you? What are the predominant characteristics of people on your team?*

### ▪ My thoughts

Students write extensive answers to the following questions:

- *The best team I have ever worked with ...*
- *Why is it important to work with other people?*
- *What skills do I need to improve, what values do I need to aspire to in order to be a good team player?*



## ▪ Inspirational stories about teamwork<sup>19</sup>

The stories below talk about the importance of teamwork from different angles and what makes a team successful. Read the examples out loud, and then discuss the results of the analysis conducted by Google. Ask your students: *What do you think of these results and what are your experiences? Have you ever been in a situation to work better on the team where you felt safe and accepted?* Then talk about the legendary Rolling Stones.

The example below highlights particularly the importance of rehearsing together for continued team success. *Would any member of the Rolling Stones individually have achieved such a success as they did together?* Discuss why bands often split up.

Recall all teamwork skills that you discussed during previous activities and how important they are for any team, bands included, to survive. If your students have watched the film “Bohemian Rhapsody”, they can compare Queen with the Rolling Stones. What did Queen mean to Freddie Mercury, what happened to them when he went solo? Invite your students to give other examples they know of, either from music or other areas.

<sup>19</sup> More examples and details about these stories are available at: <https://www.scoro.com/blog/teamwork-stories-importance-of-teamwork/>.

### Google discovers the key to good teamwork

In the last decade, Google has spent millions of dollars on measuring nearly every aspect of its employees’ lives, and among other things it was determined to find out how to compile ‘the perfect team’. The company’s executives worked hard on finding the perfect mix of individuals necessary to form a stellar team.

Google ran a project known as Project Aristotle. It took several years and included interviews with hundreds of employees. They analysed data about the people on more than 100 active teams at the company. There was nothing showing that a mix of specific personality types or skills or backgrounds made any difference between successful and less successful teams.

Google’s intense data collection led to the same conclusions that good managers have always known: **In the best teams, members show sensitivity, and most importantly, listen to one another.** Matt Sakaguchi, a mid-level manager at Google, was keen to put Project Aristotle’s findings into practice. He took his team off-site to open up about his cancer diagnosis. Although initially silent, his colleagues then began sharing their own personal stories. At the heart of Sakaguchi’s strategy, and Google’s findings is the concept of “psychological safety”.

Google now describes **psychological safety** as the most important factor in building a successful team: the best teams are mindful that all members should contribute to the conversation equally, and respect one another’s emotions.

**It has less to do with who is in a team, and more with how the members interact with one another.**

### A rolling stone gathers no moss

Mick Jagger, Charlie Watts, Keith Richards, and Ronnie Wood – the Rolling Stones – have played together for more than 50 years. However, they still recognize the importance of practicing together. Before every tour, the band typically commits to two months of rehearsing. No matter how good they might be individually, they know that it is important to be mutually accorded.

They appreciate the opportunity to reconnect with their collective rhythm.

A huge amount of experience together enables the band to perform with almost telepathic communication, and the Rolling Stones' success comes from each member having a distinctive yet complementary role.

Each of the band's members is a talent in his own right, but it is the chemistry the band has with each of them that works best. Being part of the Rolling Stones remains the best way for each member to achieve their individual goals. **The best teams are those which combine individual drive with understanding the importance and power of the team.**

This is the secret to becoming an excellent team: **There is no substitute for the ongoing commitment and deliberate practice required to build better teams.**

### Teamwork quotations

- *If you want to be incrementally better: Be competitive. If you want to be exponentially better: Be cooperative!*

Unknown

- *Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.*

Helen Keller

- *Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.*

Michael Jordan

- *Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.*

Henry Ford

- *Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.*

Vince Lombardi

- *Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.*

Andrew Carnegie

- *Remember, teamwork begins by building trust. And the only way to do that is to overcome our need for invulnerability.*

Patrick Lencioni

- *None of us is as smart as all of us.*

Ken Blanchard

- *If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.*

Henry Ford

- *The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.*

Phil Jackson

- *It takes two flints to make a fire.*

Louisa May Alcott





CREATIVITY







# CREATIVITY

*That which leads and sweeps the world along is not locomotives, but ideas.*

Victor Hugo

At the beginning of this introductory text about creativity and its significance we cannot but wonder: What would this world have looked like since the dawn of humanity without the invention and creative spark in human beings? What kind of creatures would we have become? Would have we ever been able to exhibit the Renaissance symbols celebrated by Shakespeare? Would we ever have reached Pythagoras' theorem, Archimedes' lever, Copernicus' heliocentric system, Gutenberg's press, Newton's law of gravity, Einstein's theory of relativity, Tesla's alternating current and remote control boat? It would take thousands of pages just to list, and still fall short of, all the wonders created by humans thanks to their curious creative mind.

Even our early ancestors were inventors; a hunter must have had the idea of sharpening a pole and making a spear, or using the juices of the earth, plants, and animals to make colours and paint cave walls. Imagine the colossal work done by our ancestor who was persistent in rubbing two flints against each other? This Promethean light sped up the pace of human through history.

Thanks to this creative spark, humans have mastered the land, the water, and the air. They have measured and explored the earth, reached the bottom of the ocean with sonar. Humans have ventured into the macrocosm – gone up into the skies, stepped out of earth's orbit, touched the moon, discovered that the Milky Way is but one of billions of galaxies. Looking in the opposite direction,

humans have also conquered the microcosm – discovered a universe of molecules and atoms, and developed, for instance, nanotechnology, an interdisciplinary science that underpins all future science, creating technological wonders in the millimicron range, invisible to the human eye. Humans have conquered many diseases, prolonged life expectancy, turned into reality the recent dream of being able to have a conversation with someone overseas, eye-to-eye with their interlocutor. For thousands years already the human creative spirit has been embodied through words, colours, tones, shapes, movements, and naturally, the mind, and innumerable scientific and technological achievements, but also through countless everyday creative endeavours, without which the ground-breaking ones would not have been possible in the first place.

The common denominator to all of the above is a very important component of human character, whose spark lives in all of us. This is the creative potential lying dormant in human beings waiting to be kindled. The question that inevitably comes up is: How can we open up the realms of the human mind, how can we transform the shy beacon of spirit borne in the imagination of a child into a powerful light illuminating the horizon?

This question is at the same time an invitation to delve more deeply into the notion and function of creativity and ask ourselves about the true meaning and etymology of the word itself. Creativity is a notion that refers to thinking processes that help reach solutions, ideas, forms of art, theories or products that are unique or new. The term itself comes from the Latin word *creare*, meaning to produce things that did not exist before or to create.

Today creativity is considered to be one of the key competences inseparable from core knowledge and essential for successful work in all areas of life. Recent research has shattered two ingrained conceptions: that creativity is a gift that only some individuals are endowed with; and that it is exhibited in the arts only. It is true that Mozart was a child prodigy and that

a 10-year old Bach wrote thousands of notes in the moonlight, but also any inventor, any scholar, and researcher first had to be a child and a daydreamer, who ardently put into action their first inventions without ever leaving their attics. They had to believe in themselves and the rightness of their ideas, to be open, optimistic, tolerant, and persistent. These are all character traits that creativity is closely linked with.

Creativity is also linked with divergent thinking, whose basic feature is to seek as many solutions to a problem as possible. Divergent thinking implies the production of ideas, elasticity of opinion, the discovery of new paths to solving one and the same problem. This type of thinking is predominant in the arts, but is also necessary in many stages of scientific work.

As for adolescents, their thinking is by nature open and susceptible to the new and different, it is playful, ready to take risks and nonconformist. These are all features which create a good foundation for creative production. Thus, teachers should be aware at all times of this creative potential present in their classrooms.

### **The teacher's role**

*I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and that there are as few as there are any other great artists. Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit. (John Steinbeck)*

Given that it is known that creativity is a thinking process that can be fostered and developed, it is clear that the teacher's role in the process is very important, but the thing each teacher should think about during self-assessment is whether and to what extent they themselves are creative. It is hard to imagine a teacher fostering creativity in their students without nourishing their own creative spirit and displaying it in their classroom delivery.

A creative teacher stands ready to be innovative and different, taking the pulse of the group, to apply the particular teaching method, technique, or tool that is sure to lead to the desired results, create dynamism, stimulate, and encourage

students to be creative themselves. As noted by Steinbeck in the above quotation, working with adolescents is, in fact, a vast field of opportunities and of creation waiting to be delivered. The teacher is truly a potential artist. The teacher sculpts and shapes the spirit of their students even when not attempting to do anything of the sort; imagine what could be achieved when leading by example in creative action. It is only if the teachers themselves are creative that they will be able to spread and transfer their creative spirit and raise the awareness of their students about how important creativity is, both for the lives of individuals, and society at large.

Apart from the need to be creative in the choice of methods in pursuit of teaching goals, a teacher has to be the creator of a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere where students feel free and safe, which is conducive to the free flow and exchange of ideas. A teacher with good pedagogical skills will know how to support their students even when they doubt their own creative powers, and will raise their spirits so that they do not feel discouraged and so that they continue to think freely even when they face obstacles.

It is only through working in this spirit that the teacher, aware that they have a unique opportunity to develop young people's creative potentials and determined to make that one of their professional missions, will be able to respond negatively to the question posed by Sir Ken Robinson in his renowned motivational talk: *Does school kill creativity?*





## WORKSHOP: News from a different angle

*It is our duty to follow our imagination at least as much as we follow the obviousness of the real world that we live in; because truth has the best chance to be at a point where our imagination and the reality of others cross paths.*

Borislav Pekić

### Goals:

Students will:

- understand the notion of creativity
- practice associative and divergent thinking
- understand how ideas, qualities and skills affect the course of their creativity and vice versa

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** sheets of paper, poster paper, old newspapers, scissors and glue

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### Questions and answers (10 min)

Pass out two sheets of paper to each student. Each of them needs to use one sheet to write a question they would like to have an answer to. The question may touch upon any domain of life, whatever comes to mind first. Once finished, gather all the questions and put

them in a box. Then tell your students to use the second sheet of paper to write down their response to their question. Collect them and put them in another box. Thereafter, each student picks out one question from one box, and one answer from the other. Then he/she should read the question and the answer and try to find a connection. Given that the chance of them drawing their own question and answer is remote, the students will have to seek some distant connections.

Once this is done, discuss the element of creativity involved in this task: seeking less-than-obvious connections, originality in thinking, etc. While summing this up, you will define the notion of creativity.



### Recreated news (30 min)

Divide the class into 5 groups of 5–6 students each, counting all the students from 1 to 5, so that all the students assigned the number 1 form group 1, and so on. Introduce the activity in this way:

*“Today the media brings much more negative information than anything positive or optimistic. Newspapers are filled with headlines speaking of conflicts, violence, and accidents. Influenced by such information, we tend to take a pessimistic angle on reality.*

*“Now we will give ourselves the freedom to create unusual, witty, and optimistic news. Each group will use one poster-size piece of paper to come up with some new and original news using materials from actual newspapers. Give a name to your newspaper! You are not allowed to write or draw anything new. Just use scissors and glue to create your newspaper. You have 15 minutes to do that.”*

When they have finished, the groups present the news from their panel. The others listen attentively so that they can vote at the end for the most original piece of work. Voting is done by raising hands and the number of fingers (1 to 5) for originality. Assign a student to do the counting and recording of results.



Discuss with your students what other social and emotional skills creativity is linked with; which skills (their own and those of other group members) helped them recreate news, and which ones possibly stifled their creativity.

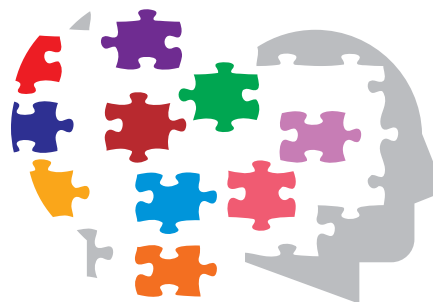


### Group creativity (5 min.)

If there is some time left, talk to your students about the process they went through:

*Did the group stimulate or block your ideas? How did you reach an agreement? How did you feel*

*while working? How did you feel while assessing the work of others? Is it difficult to assess the originality of a product?*



### OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Modelled against the above workshops, the activities that follow may be used together, separately, or with some other introductory and final games. These activities help the students learn about creativity, reflect on its importance and application in various situations. This will also boost their own creativity.

#### ■ Creative tasks<sup>20</sup>

These are just a few of the sample tasks that can be used to foster creative thinking, and they can also be used at the beginning or the end of a lesson. Students can work individually, in pairs, or in groups. The tasks can be used as a topic for essays in literature or foreign language classes.

#### Sample tasks:

- Write a creative definition of creativity.
- It is time to enrol at university. Explain in one paragraph why you have chosen the given department.

- As an executive, you have to write an apology for a faulty product your company made.
- Imagine you are a tree. What are you thinking about while you are being cut down?
- Find a photograph and describe what you see.
- You lent your car to your friend, but forgot that there was something in it you didn't want to be found. What is it?
- An exchange student is spending a week at your place. Choose a restaurant he/she has to visit and a person he/she has to meet.
- Write a postscript for the last letter a human being is to send to another human being.
- Describe a shirt in your wardrobe that you never wear.
- Someone blocked your car in the parking lot. Write a kind note. Write an angry note.
- A genie trapped in a lamp can make your three wishes come true. What are your three wishes?
- What is one of the people in your proximity currently thinking about?

<sup>20</sup> Most tasks are taken from Po Bronson's book *642 Tiny Things to Write About*.



- You made a documentary (topic of your choice). You're making a debut at a film festival. The audience asks you the following: *What inspired you to write this story? Who funded the film? Why did you pick this exact title? Have your parents seen the film?*
- Why is coffee better than tea?
- Why is tea better than coffee?
- Describe the scene in which the main character realizes that his/her good friend is in love again.
- Come up with a story of a horrible holiday of two families living in the same house.
- Write your life story in five sentences.
- Without looking in the books, try to recall the first sentences from "The Stranger", "The Trial", "Anna Karenina", etc.
- Your best friend knocks on the door in panic and wants to confide something in you. Then, at the last moment, he/she runs away without saying anything. What do you think he/she wanted to tell you?

## ▪ Daedalus and Icarus

The myths and legends of Ancient Greece are an inexhaustible source of inspiration for creators in various forms of arts, but can also be a good basis for discussion about various human features. The myth of Daedalus and Icarus<sup>21</sup> may serve as a source of inspiration for discussion on creativity. This activity is suited for lessons in literature, history, the arts, etc.

Ask students if they remember who Daedalus and Icarus were. You can read the full text or retell the myth:

Daedalus was artistically the most gifted man of his time, a builder, sculptor, and stonecutter. But, the great artist had one big flaw – he was vain and could not accept that anyone might be better than he. That is why he killed his nephew Talos when he thought he would better him in his creations. When he was caught red-handed, Daedalus fled to Crete, where he found refuge

with King Minos, who asked him to build a shelter for the monster the Minotaur and keep him away from human eyes.

Pause here and ask your students what kind of shelter Daedalus built for the Minotaur. *How was Daedalus being creative?*

If the students fail to recall, tell the story of the Labyrinth. Ask them whether they recall any other myth related to the Minotaur and the Labyrinth. Have they heard of Ariadne's thread? Remind them how Minos's daughter Ariadne gave the thread to Theseus who entered the Labyrinth to slay the Minotaur. *How is Ariadne's creativity displayed? For what situations is the expression 'Ariadne's thread' used?*

Then tell the rest of the myth: To prevent the truth spreading about the Labyrinth, Minos imprisoned Daedalus and kept watch over all the roads and all the ships.

Pause again and ask your students what Daedalus contrived to save himself and his son Icarus. *How was his inventive spirit displayed?*

Daedalus conquered nature through his inventive spirit. He made wings for himself and for Icarus. He bound feathers together, from the smallest to the largest, thus making a large surface. He secured the larger feathers with threads, and the smaller ones with wax, to be reminiscent of bird's wings. When the task was completed, Daedalus, standing still, spread and flapped the wings to test them. Then he made a pair of wings for his son Icarus and taught him how to fly. When they were both ready, Daedalus warned Icarus not to fly too high or too low, because if he flew too high, the sun would melt the wax, and if he flew too low, the sea foam would soak the wings and would not be able to fly any longer. Then they both set off. Everything went fine in the beginning, but after a while Icarus became ever bolder and ventured higher up, and the sun warmed and melted the wax, and the wings came off. Icarus fell into the sea and drowned.

Ask your students what Icarus was like, why he did not listen to Daedalus' instructions. *Can we*

<sup>21</sup> Available at: <http://elyisum.blogspot.com/2009/03/dedal-i-ikar.html>.

*say that Icarus lacked self-control? What can we say about his ambitions and self-confidence?*

*There is a saying: Who flies high, falls low. What do you think about it? Did Daedalus warn Icarus not to fly too high? It is often overlooked that he also warned him not to fly too low. If we are to say one should not fly too high or too low, how does that relate to everyday situations? Why do some creative people fail? What hinders them? What do they lack?*

Daedalus blamed himself and his skilfulness for his son's death, and the spot where Icarus fell into the sea and drowned was named Icaria. Eventually Daedalus reached the shores of Sicily, where he was offered protection by King Cocalus. In Sicily Daedalus built a temple in honour of the god Apollo, and hung up his wings as an offering.

## ▪ Great inventors and their inventions

This activity may be linked to the story of the mythical hero Daedalus, followed by a discussion about actual heroes – inventors, to

whose inventiveness and creativity we owe our gratitude for the comforts of our daily life that we often take for granted. Choose stories about the lives of great inventors. Ask your students: *How did they come up with these inventions?* Encourage your students to search for more information about those great people, their inventions, and creativity<sup>22</sup>. In vocational schools you can choose inventors in fields close to the heart of your school and of your students. Likewise, this activity can be adapted to regular teaching of any subject matter by focusing on inventions or people significant to the given field.

We believe that your students will find interesting the biography of Chris Anderson, an inventor who designed a method to spread creative ideas, as well as Nikola Tesla's autobiography about his inventions.

<sup>22</sup> Lots of interesting facts are available at: <https://www.thoughtco.com/inventive-thinking-and-creativity-gallery-4122925>.

### Chris Anderson

Chris Anderson has run the organization TED, a set of conferences aimed at spreading good ideas across the world, since 2001 and has shifted the focus from just technology and engineering to original, interesting and exciting ideas of all kinds, and to people.

Born in Pakistan in 1957, Chris Anderson moved around with his missionary parents, living in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India before attending a boarding school in Bath in the UK. He originally worked in journalism and publishing, but in 2001 he left Future Publishing and acquired TED, an organization founded in 1984 which held an annual conference focusing on Technology and Design ideas. He took the TED model and shifted it to focus on 'fostering the spread of good ideas' and invited people from all walks of life and careers to share their ideas and tell their stories. Speakers have included Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Gordon Brown, Richard Dawkins, Larry Page (Google founder), author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Sheryl Sandberg (COO at Facebook), Christy Turlington (former model and an activist) and many Nobel Prize winners.

He also introduced the TED Prize, the TED Fellows Program, TED-Ed and the TEDx programme, allowing hundreds of independently organized TED-like events to be held around the world.

TED talks are available for free on the internet and they are currently being translated so that the whole world can access and understand them.

Chris Anderson took the structure of TED and, thinking creatively, saw how it could expand and facilitate the sharing of creative, exciting, and important ideas. Under Chris Anderson's stewardship, TED aims to provide a platform for the world's smartest thinkers, greatest visionaries, and most inspiring teachers, so that millions of people can gain a better understanding of the biggest issues faced by the world.

TED's mission statement begins like this:

*We believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and ultimately, the world. So we're building here a clearinghouse that offers free knowledge and inspiration from the world's most inspired thinkers, and also a community of curious souls to engage with ideas and each other.*<sup>23</sup>

23 The original text about Chris Anderson is available at: <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/My%20Character%20PDFs/Resources/9.%20Creative.pdf>

Before reading the excerpt, ask your students: *What do you know about Nikola Tesla? How do you imagine a path from an idea to an actual invention?*

### **My inventions<sup>24</sup>**

Altho I must trace to my mother's influence whatever inventiveness I possess, the training [my father] gave me must have been helpful. It comprised all sorts of exercises—as, guessing one another's thoughts, discovering the defects of some form or expression, repeating long sentences or performing mental calculations. These daily lessons were intended to strengthen memory and reason and especially to develop the critical sense, and were undoubtedly very beneficial...

*When I get an idea I start at once building it up in my imagination. I change the construction, make improvements and operate the device in my mind. It is absolutely immaterial to me whether I run my turbine in thought or test it in my shop. I even note if it is out of balance. There is no difference whatever, the results are the same. In this way I am able to rapidly develop and perfect a conception without touching anything.*

*When I have gone so far as to embody in the invention every possible improvement I can think of and see no fault anywhere, I put into concrete form this final product of my brain. Invariably my device works as I conceived that it should, and the experiment comes out exactly as I planned it. In twenty years there has not been a single exception. Why should it be otherwise?*

(Nikola Tesla, 1919)

24 The translation of the excerpt from Tesla's autobiography was taken from: <https://edoc.site/-nikola-tesla-moji-izumi-autobiografija-pdf-free.html>.

After reading the excerpt, ask your students: *What can be said about Tesla's journey from an idea to its concrete form? What other characteristics, apart from creativity, are present in the character of an inventor? Do you recognize any of these characteristics in yourself? What do you conclude from the text: can creativity be practiced and developed?*

### ■ At Home – A Short History of Private Life

Bill Bryson, an author of books on travel, was struck one day that most of the key discoveries for humankind can be found in the very fabric of the houses in which we live. This inspired

him to start a journey around his own house, considering how the ordinary things in life came to be. Along the way he did a prodigious amount of research on the history of anything and everything, from architecture to electricity, from food preservation to epidemics, from the spice trade to the Eiffel Tower, from crinolines to toilets; and on the brilliant, creative and often eccentric minds behind them. This is how his book *At Home – A Short History of Private Life* came into being.

You can use excerpts from this book to encourage your students to think about inventions throughout history, and give them creative tasks while doing so.

#### The world was a painfully dim place

*We forget just how painfully dim the world was before electricity. A candle – a good candle – provides barely a hundredth of the illumination of a single 100-watt light bulb. Open your refrigerator door and you summon forth more light than the total amount enjoyed by most households in the eighteenth century. The world at night for much of history was a very dark place indeed.*

(Bill Bryson, 2010)

Encourage your students to find some examples of inventions and think of other patents we use daily.

#### He became an inventor thanks to a railway pass

*The founder of the company Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company, George Bissell's novel idea was to drill for oil, as you would for water. Everyone before had dug for it. To get things going he dispatched a man named Edwin Drake – always referred to in history books as 'Colonel' Edwin Drake – to Titusville with instructions to drill.*

*Drake had no expertise in drilling and was not a colonel. He was a railway ticket collector. He had lately been forced to retire through ill health. His sole advantage to the enterprise was that he still possessed a railway pass and could travel to Pennsylvania for free. To enhance his stature, Bissell and his associates sent correspondence to Drake addressed to 'Colonel E. L. Drake'. With a wad of borrowed money, Drake commissioned a team of drillers to begin the search for oil.*

*On 27 August 1859, at a depth of just under seventy feet, Drake and his men hit oil. Although no one remotely appreciated it at the time, they had just changed the world completely and for ever.*

(Bill Bryson, 2010)

The story about Drake may inspire your students to look for interesting facts about inventors and their inventions.

## String

*How long people have been dressing themselves is a question not at all easy to answer. All that can be said is that about forty thousand years ago, after an immensely long period in which humans didn't do much at all except procreate and survive, there stepped from the shadows the big-brained, behaviourally modern people commonly known as Cro-Magnons (after a cave in the Dordogne region of France where they were first found) and that among these new people was some ingenious soul who came up with one of the greatest, most underrated inventions in history: string.*

*String is marvellously elemental. It is simply two pieces of fibre placed side by side and twisted together. That achieves two things: it makes a cord that is strong and it allows long cords to be built up from short fibres. Imagine where we would be without it. There would be no cloth and clothing, fishing lines, nets, snares, rope, leashes, tethers, slings, the bows in bows and arrows, and a thousand useful things more. Elizabeth Wayland Barber, a textile historian, was hardly exaggerating when she called it the 'weapon that allowed the human race to conquer the earth'.*

(Bill Bryson, 2010)

Task your students with coming up with a new original use for string. Encourage them to combine some items to get new inventions.

They need to explain for what purpose it could be used. Students are to illustrate their inventions.

Ask them: *Is your idea practical? Can it be easily made? Is it safe? Does it take a lot of money to make it? Is it similar to an existing product? Would people really use it?*

## ■ Women in science

This activity can be used in regular science and social studies instruction.

Encourage your students to name as many creative people from various walks of life as possible. Write the names down, and then count how many of them are women. It is expected that there will be much fewer women than men, as has been the case throughout the history, particularly in science and the arts.

*Why is that so? Are women less creative than men or is it down to something else?*

## Women in the shadow

Over the almost four-millennia-long history of science, women have been present from the very start, but their names are rarely mentioned except in a narrow circle of historians of science. Until the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were in the shadows of their husbands, fathers, or brothers, and many of them will remain unknown forever. Financially dependent, shut up in the private space of their family, throughout history it has been disproportionately harder for women than men to exercise their right to education, free choice of occupation and they have always been multiply discriminated against...<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> [http://bs.enciklopedija.wikia.com/wiki/%C5%BDene\\_u\\_nauci\\_od\\_Arhimeda\\_do\\_Ajn%C5%A1tajna](http://bs.enciklopedija.wikia.com/wiki/%C5%BDene_u_nauci_od_Arhimeda_do_Ajn%C5%A1tajna).



Discuss with your students:

- *How much do you think women participate in science today?*
- *What are the most frequent obstacles for the greater participation of women in science?*
- *Which misconceptions/stereotypes are most common about women in science?*

Students can find information online about these indicators in the world and in our country, as in the case of the given reference.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO. Women in Science (2016): <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs43-women-in-science-2017en.pdf>.

Then read out loud or pass out copies of the short text about Katie Bouman. Ask your students what characteristics and skills, apart from creativity, they recognize in this young scholar. Encourage them to look up online for more similar stories about women in science.

### **Katie Bouman – The woman behind the first black hole image<sup>27</sup>**

Twenty-nine-year-old Katie Bouman led the team that developed the algorithm that created the first-ever image of a black hole. The remarkable photograph, showing a halo of dust and gas 500 million trillion km from Earth, was released on Wednesday.

For Dr Bouman, its creation was the realization of an endeavour previously thought impossible. Excitedly bracing herself for the ground-breaking moment, Dr Bouman was pictured loading the image on her laptop.

“Watching in disbelief as the first image I ever made of a black hole was in the process of being reconstructed,” she wrote in the caption to the Facebook post. She started developing the algorithm three years ago while she was a graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

There, she led the project, assisted by a team from MIT’s Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and the MIT Haystack Observatory. In the hours after the photograph’s momentous release, Dr Bouman became an international sensation, with her name trending on Twitter.

“3 years ago MIT grad student Katie Bouman led the creation of a new algorithm to produce the first-ever image of a black hole,” MIT’s Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence Lab wrote. “Today, that image was released.”

But Dr Bouman insisted the team that helped her deserves equal credit.

The effort to capture the image, using telescopes in locations ranging from Antarctica to Chile, involved a team of more than 200 scientists.

“No one of us could’ve done it alone,” she told CNN.

<sup>27</sup> Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-47891902>.



## A Room of One's Own

This activity is suited for literature lessons.

Inspiration for the teacher: A Room of One's Own<sup>28</sup> is an essay written by Virginia Woolf back in 1928 when she was asked to speak about women and fiction. In this famous essay the author presented the thesis that a woman has to have a room of her own and 500 pounds a year to be able to write. In other words, a woman needs the space of freedom and financial independence *for her creative spirit to be able to develop and be fruitful*.

Ask your students to name women authors, composers, painters they are familiar with. *How*

*do you explain so few women in the history of the arts and fiction? Why wasn't women's creativity more visible in the past? Are things changing for the better in modern times? What should a woman do in order to have the preconditions to create? What should society do? Write down the key responses.*

Then read out loud the excerpt for the essay and invite them to compare the views presented in the text with their own thinking: *How different are things today, ninety years after the essay was written?*

<sup>28</sup> Available at: <https://www.rwfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Sopstvena-soba.pdf>

### **A Room of One's Own and 500 pounds a year**

*... Be that as it may, I could not help thinking, as I looked at the works of Shakespeare on the shelf, that the bishop was right at least in this; it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare. Let me imagine, since facts are so hard to come by, what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith, let us say. Shakespeare himself went, very probably,—his mother was an heiress—to the grammar school, where he may have learnt Latin—Ovid, Virgil and Horace—and the elements of grammar and logic...*

*He had, it seemed, a taste for the theatre; he began by holding horses at the stage door. Very soon he got work in the theatre, became a successful actor, and lived at the hub of the universe, meeting everybody, knowing everybody, practising his art on the boards, exercising his wits in the streets, and even getting access to the palace of the queen. Meanwhile his extraordinarily gifted sister, let us suppose, remained at home.*

*She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school. She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil. She picked up a book now and then, one of her brother's perhaps, and read a few pages. But then her parents came in and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about with books and papers. They would have spoken sharply but kindly, for they were substantial people who knew the conditions of life for a woman and loved their daughter—indeed, more likely than not she was the apple of her father's eye. Perhaps she scribbled some pages up in an apple loft on the sly but was careful to hide them or set fire to them. Soon, however, before she was out of her teens, she was to be betrothed to the son of a neighbouring wool-stapler. She cried out that marriage was hateful to her, and for that she was severely beaten by her father.*

*Then he ceased to scold her. He begged her instead not to hurt him, not to shame him in this matter of her marriage. He would give her a chain of beads or a fine petticoat, he said; and there were tears in his eyes. How could she disobey him? How could she break his heart? The force of her own gift alone drove her to it. She made up a small parcel of her belongings, let herself down by a rope one summer's night and took the road to London. She was not seventeen. The birds that sang in the hedge were not more musical than she was. She had the quickest fancy, a gift like her brother's, for the tune of words.*

*Like him, she had a taste for the theatre. She stood at the stage door; she wanted to act, she said. Men laughed in her face. The manager—a fat, looselipped man—guffawed. He bellowed something about poodles dancing and women acting—no woman, he said, could possibly be an actress. He hinted—you can imagine what. She could get no training in her craft. Could she even seek her dinner in a tavern or roam the streets at midnight? Yet her genius was for fiction and lusted to feed abundantly upon the lives of men and women and the study of their ways. At last—for she was very young, oddly like Shakespeare the poet in her face, with the same grey eyes and rounded brows—at last Nick Greene the actor-manager took pity on her; she found herself with child by that gentleman and so—who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?—killed herself one winter's night and lies buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle.*

*That, more or less, is how the story would run, I think, if a woman in Shakespeare's day had had Shakespeare's genius. But for my part, I agree with the deceased bishop, if such he was—it is unthinkable that any woman in Shakespeare's day should have had Shakespeare's genius. For*

*genius like Shakespeare's is not born among labouring, uneducated, servile people.... When, however, one reads of a witch being ducked, of a woman possessed by devils, of a wise woman selling herbs, or even of a very remarkable man who had a mother, then I think we are on the track of a lost novelist, a suppressed poet, of some mute and inglorious Jane Austen, some Emily Brontë who dashed her brains out on the moor or mopped and mowed about the highways crazed with the torture that her gift had put her to. Indeed, I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman. It was a woman Edward Fitzgerald, I think, suggested who made the ballads and the folk-songs, crooning them to her children, beguiling her spinning with them, or the length of the winter's night.*

*... Considering that Mary Carmichael was no genius, but an unknown girl writing her first novel in a bed-sitting-room, without enough of those desirable things, time, money and idleness, she did not do so badly, I thought. Give her another hundred years, I concluded, reading the last chapter, give her a room of her own and five hundred a year, let her speak her mind and leave out half that she now puts in, and she will write a better book one of these days. She will be a poet ... in another hundred years' time.*

*... And women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time. Women have had less intellectual freedom than the sons of Athenian slaves. Women, then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry. That is why I have laid so much stress on money and a room of one's own.*

*... For women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force, which has, indeed, so overcharged the capacity of bricks and mortar that it must needs harness itself to pens and brushes and business and politics.*

*Without our doing, those seas would be unsailed and those fertile lands a desert. We have borne and bred and washed and taught, perhaps to the age of six or seven years, the one thousand six hundred and twenty-three million human beings who are, according to statistics, at present in existence, and that, allowing that some had help, takes time...*

*Now my belief is that this poet who never wrote a word and was buried at the cross-roads still lives. She lives in you and in me, and in many other women who are not here tonight, for they are washing up the dishes and putting the children to bed.*

(Virginia Woolf, 1928/2014)

## ■ Marketing

Choose 5–6 items. Divide the class into several groups and entrust each group with one item and invite them to design a purpose to which that item could be put. Students are to give interesting names to the products already available in the market. They define the term “slogan”. Discuss the purpose of the existence and use of slogans.

Ask your students to cite several examples from advertising. Discuss the reasons why a certain

slogan is effective. Following that, students come up with slogans for their inventions. They discuss the visual effects of TV commercials or magazine commercials (with the text predominant in some, photographs in others). Encourage them to devise an advertisement to promote their invention. They can choose whether to have a magazine, radio or TV advert. Their adverts can include songs, humour, etc. The possibilities are endless.



## ■ Media literacy and creativity

Given that media literacy is necessary in order for young people to understand the power/role of the media in the modern world and to build a proper attitude towards the media, we propose an activity that would make it possible for them to understand that every media message is a construct that often stems from vested interests. The most common interest is profit or some other form of power – social, political, or economic.

Suggest to your students, modelled against the dailies available in the country, to make a copy of their newspaper on “current school affairs”. Divide the class into groups, and allow two or three days for this activity.

When students are to present their works, discuss how they approached the task of creating newspapers, invite them to compare points of view and observe how a different topic can be discussed from different angles, but also how the media can adapt truth to the interests of their founders, owners, and social and political groups that the given media outlet is promoting or is dependent on.

## ■ Problem solving

Make a list of problems in the class (tardiness, lack of discipline, not having required stationery, etc.) and choose several problems for which students need to come up with solutions. They need to analyse problems and come up with creative ways to solve them. Write the list of options on the board, preferably accepting some witty proposals. In order for the creative thinking process to be successful and fruitful, the classroom climate needs to be positive and agreeable, conducive to the acceptance of different ideas, appreciating the opinions of others, and respecting diversity (tolerance).

Choose one or more solutions that you could work on. Divide the class into groups that will work on different solutions. The groups are to present their solutions, and their suggestions can be further improved and polished. This kind of activity will help build a pleasant classroom

climate, build teamwork and critical thinking skills, as well as build a sense of comradeship.

## ■ My hero

This can be used as a warm-up activity at the beginning of the workshop, or as a topic for essay writing. Likewise, the same activity can be used for any other virtue.

Task for the class: *Bring to mind an inspirational person who thinks creatively. It can be someone famous or someone you know in person and who lives in your neighbourhood. Explain the life story of that person and what he/she did creatively. Which qualities and skills did that person display?*

## ■ School and creativity

*No one learns to make right decisions without being free to make wrong ones.*

Unknown

You can find different TED talks online which may be an excellent inspiration for discussion on any virtue. For creativity we suggest the TED talk by Sir Ken Robinson<sup>29</sup>, for which there is transcript available in Serbian and in Croatian, among other languages.

These are just some of the views shared by Sir Ken Robinson in his talk entitled *Do schools kill creativity?*

- All kids have tremendous talents, which are not used enough, and creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status.
- All kids have in common that they will take a chance. They're not frightened of being wrong. I don't mean to say that being wrong is the same thing as being creative. What we do know is, if you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original. And by the time they get to be adults, most kids have lost that capacity. They have become frightened of being wrong because we stigmatize mistakes.

<sup>29</sup> Sir K. Robinson: Do schools kill creativity? – 19 min. [https://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity](https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity).



- Every education system on earth has the same hierarchy of subjects. At the top are mathematics and languages, then science and the humanities. At the bottom are the arts. Everywhere on earth. And in pretty much every system, too, there's a hierarchy within the arts. Art and music are normally given a higher status in schools than drama and dance. There isn't an education system on the planet that teaches dance every day to children the way we teach them mathematics. I think math is very important, but so is dance. We all have bodies, don't we?
- We know three things about intelligence. One, it's diverse. We think about the world in all the ways that we experience it. We think visually, we think in sound, we think kinaesthetically. We think in abstract terms, we think in movement. Secondly, intelligence is dynamic. If you look at the interactions of a human brain, intelligence is wonderfully interactive. The brain isn't divided into compartments. In fact, creativity – which I define as the process of having original ideas that have value – more often than not comes about through the interaction of different disciplinary ways of seeing things. And the third thing about intelligence is, it's distinct.
- What TED celebrates is the gift of the human imagination. We have to be careful now that we use this gift wisely. And the only way we'll do it is by seeing our creative capacities for the richness they are and seeing our children for the hope that they are. And our task is to educate their whole being, so they can face this future. By the way – we may not see this future, but they will. And our job is to help them make something of it.

If you do not have the means to play the recording, you can read out loud excerpts from Robinson's talk. Divide the class into groups and give them several key ideas for discussion:

- *Do schools, in Ken Robinson's opinion, kill creativity? Explain.*
- *Do you agree with his views? Why?*

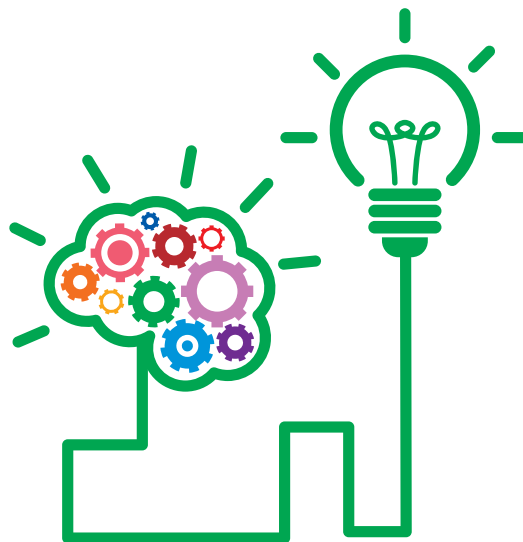
- *Think back to your childhood – were you less afraid of mistakes back then, and why? Did you have some talents that you did not develop further, and why?*

### ■ Misconceptions about creativity

This activity can be done in regular music or art lessons.

One of the most common fallacies is that creativity is linked with the arts only, and that it is a special gift of rare individuals. Another misconception is that creativity means doing whatever comes to mind. However, creativity is not “fooling around”. It is a process full of discipline, which implies skill, knowledge, and control. Obviously, it implies also imagination and inspiration. Nevertheless, it is not only freedom of creative expression, because you also need discipline and daily practice. If we have a look at people that we appreciate for their creative achievements, we will see that they have achieved everything because of their wonderful ideas, extraordinary discoveries, but also discipline and readiness to make mistakes – to repeat the process until they arrive at the solution.

Excerpts from the Bernard Grun's book *Anecdotes about Musicians* can serve as an introduction to a discussion about these misconceptions.



The American composer Aaron Copland once delivered a lecture on the method of work of famous composers. "What about you, Mr Copland", an inquisitive lady asked, "how do you work? Do you wait for artistic inspiration?"

"That's right, ma'am", he responded politely, "and I do so every single day!"

***Incessant, persistent, everyday work is the only thing all significant composers have in common, while they may be different in every other respect.***

We cannot remain indifferent before the complete edition of the works of Johann Sebastian Bach: forty-six huge volumes. The publication of his prolific oeuvre alone took half a century of work by the Bach Society... However, during his lifetime, Bach saw in this work nothing more than meeting the daily duty God had given him to provide for his family. "I had to work a lot," he used to say, "and if anyone worked as much as I did, he would achieve the same success."

Mozart needed to be in "good spirits" to work and he had to be alone. "I don't know," he used to say, "where the inspiration comes from, but if I am not disturbed, my inspiration is infinite. It keeps gaining shape, until finally the whole edifice gets its form." The incredible ease with which he composed remains to this day one of the greatest miracles of music.

... Chopin worked spontaneously, directly, almost improvising. The ideas would rush to him suddenly, unexpectedly, as if taken for granted. They were done in one go, with their entire melodic and harmonious perfection. However, Chopin had to pay for this spontaneity of ideas with hours, at times even days, of painstaking and arduous work. He would rewrite the same section a hundred times, polish and change it, bitterly moaning over an inappropriate harmony, a transition that seemed overly simple, only to get back to the original idea in the end.

(Bernard Grun, 2007)

Some of the most peculiar undertakings of young musicians certainly include: the tenacity with which the then ten-year-old Bach would, for half a year, clandestinely, without candlelight, having moonlight above only, rewrite a sheet of piano music he wanted to have; the richness of Tchaikovsky's ideas when, in composition lesson, in one single day, he came up with two hundred marvellous variations on the given theme, as well as the remarkable musicality that made Brahms famous and that was the basis for his career.

(Bernard Grun, 2007)

What character traits, apart from creativity, do you recognize in these musicians? Give some examples of scientists, artists who achieved huge success. What characteristics do you recognize in them? Can creativity be practiced? Explain.

## Creativity quotations

Make copies of creativity quotations or put them up on a video projector. Volunteers choose the quotation they like the most and explain why.

- *Imagination is more important than knowledge.*

Albert Einstein

- *Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails.*

Mark Twain

- *There is something more important than logic: imagination.*

Alfred Hitchcock

- *It is our duty to follow our imagination at least as much as we follow the obviousness of the real world that we live in. Because truth has the best odds to be at a point where our imagination and the reality of others cross paths.*

Borislav Pekić

- *Life-transforming ideas have always come to me through books.*

Bell Hooks

- *That which leads and sweeps the world along is not locomotives, but ideas.*

Victor Hugo

- *An idea can turn to dust or magic, depending on the talent that rubs against it.*

William Bernbach

- *Every bold idea seemed ludicrous at first.*

Johann V. Goethe

- *Everything starts as somebody's dream.*

Larry Niven

- *Perhaps imagination is only intelligence having fun.*

George Scialabba

- *Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.*

Pablo Picasso

- *Creativity is contagious. Pass it on.*

Albert Einstein

- *There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns.*

Edward de Bono

- *It is better to have enough ideas for some of them to be wrong than to be always right by having no ideas at all.*

Edward de Bono

- *Creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes and having fun.*

M. L. Cook



SELF-  
CONTROL







# SELF-CONTROL

*A man, though wise, should never be ashamed of learning more, and must unbend his mind.*

Sophocles

People today live fast, in a constant struggle to reconcile their numerous daily duties with the satisfaction of countless real, but also unrealistic, needs and wants. Very often people aspire to instant gratification in their personal, family, or professional lives. If it is not possible to achieve everything in a very short period of time, people tend to think of themselves as worthless or unrewarded.

This prompts people to reconsider their own choices, whether that is what they were supposed to do and devote themselves and their scarce time to, or whether they should have focused on something else that brings faster gratification or quick gains. As if the speed of getting to the goal becomes a decisive criterion, as if the goal might disappear if they slow the pace down a little.

This inevitably leads to the question of how able we are to control ourselves and our urges, our need for fast, short-lived gratification of our current needs, aspirations, often even whims. An old Arabic saying teaches us the ancient wisdom: *Of your unspoken words, you are the master.* Or, try to control yourself, to restrain the unspoken word on the tip of your tongue, do not let it leave your lips prematurely and when you are surer to miss the target than hit it. Once a spoken word reaches the intended recipient, there is no way back, it cannot be deleted. *"I was killed by too strong a word,"* are the words of a great poet. We have to be careful about what

we say, when, and who to. Words are weapons, at times lethal ones. We have to be the masters of that weapon. It can wound or even destroy both those around us and ourselves.

The beauty and complexity of character is seen in the ability of human beings to control themselves, not to be excessive in anything, to strive for moderation, that ancient ideal, throughout their lives. Human beings, with their emotions and impulses, on one hand, and their intellect on the other, are simply predestined to a constant internal struggle. They also have to learn a lot about themselves, to discover new ways of self-regulation. They need an internal eye, an internal brake, and a delicate touch for the right measure that will enable them to recognize and feel the moment when they need to step back, count to 10 and compose themselves, both in everyday situations and in those decisive moments, the watersheds in life, both good and bad.

Hence, self-control is an SES that requires the renouncing of fast gratification when pursuing an important goal, without succumbing to strong feelings of dissatisfaction, disappointment, anger, or fury. It also involves the conscious renouncing of things (procedures, actions, words) that we may regret later. Self-control is also self-discipline and will power, conscious and intentional controlling of decisions. In addition, self-control involves planning and the gradual achievement of long-term goals, as well as patience and the skill of enduring strong emotions. It is inseparably linked with a "cool head", with tolerance and responsibility towards oneself and others.

Conversely, underdeveloped self-control is linked with low self-confidence and self-esteem. It is often a cause for conflicting or aggressive behaviour. As a result of low self-control, young people in particular tend to be members of groups prone to risk-taking and destructive behaviour, as well as to exposure to health risks (substance abuse and addiction; unhealthy dietary habits – overeating and undereating; sexually transmitted diseases;

early pregnancies; unwanted pregnancies, etc.), and poor educational outcomes.

The skill of managing one's actions does not come spontaneously. It takes effort to build patience, self-discipline, strong will power, since these are the virtues that make a person able to bring good to him/herself and the closest surroundings, but also to the wider community. There are numerous examples of individuals from the past and present whose virtues of self-control, patience, and self-discipline benefited all people around the world – peace in the world, development of science education, culture and sport (e.g. Nelson Mandela 1918–2013; Mahatma Gandhi 1869–1948; Helen Keller 1880–1968; Albert Einstein 1879–1955, etc.).

Science says that the regions of the brain responsible for self-control functions are not fully mature even at the end of adolescence, when many other functions are already fully developed. Self-control is one of major problems in the lives of adolescents, predominantly resulting from the immaturity of the relevant brain regions. Nonetheless, it would be wrong to conclude that self-control comes naturally through the mere maturing of those brain regions and that all it takes is waiting. Everything that happens to a child or a young person in their daily lives, all their events and experiences, can have a substantial impact on developing self-control – by either fostering or inhibiting it.

Regardless of how dependent it is on the maturity of brain regions, self-control can be acquired, learned, and developed. It is an integral element of the socialization process of each individual – we gradually learn and acquire all the things conducive to more prosperous and fulfilling lives, on our own and as a part of a group. Younger children first master control over their bodies and movements, taught by their elders (external control), and during adolescence self-control becomes increasingly part of the conscious mental processes (internal control). While that may be the case, self-control requires practice, rehearsal in different daily

life situations. It is both our conscious decision and a plan. Therefore, a young person needs to be brought to an understanding of the need to develop tools of self-control. Young people themselves need to recognize the benefits of such a virtue, and the resolve for this to become an integral part of their character needs to come about as a personal choice. It is also important to develop such awareness gradually, not as a consequence of negative experiences caused by the absence of self-control at a given moment. Development of self-control from an early age is intended to pre-empt frequent adolescent excesses, both in interpersonal relationships and in regards to alcohol and substance abuse, the most serious threats to young people's mental and physical health. It also happens quite frequently that young people who do not have developed self-control regretfully fail to fulfil their full physical, mental, emotional, or social potentials. Conversely, a person who manages to master the mechanisms of self-control creates, at the same time, fertile ground for developing other virtues, such as tolerance, self-confidence, honesty, empathy, optimism, etc.

Regardless of the type of job, self-discipline, planning, patience, strong will, and self-control are needed to a greater or lesser degree, sooner or later. The significance of these virtues and skills for entrepreneurial, leadership, and managerial positions can hardly be overrated. The same goes for job advancement. Apart from leading and managing, leaders are also role-models for the people they work with. One wonders if it is possible at all to be successful in one's life and career without possessing self-control.

Backed by strong evidence, particularly over the last two decades, researchers conclude that children and young people who possess self-control skills stand better chances of academic achievement, career development, better physical, mental and social health, to become productive members of the society they live in than their peers who have not mastered the skill.

## The teacher's role

It is very important for the school or teachers to do their utmost to develop such an important skill in all students. Teachers are expected to understand the development needs of adolescents and the delicacies of youth, to encourage students to become aware of and understand the reasons why they lose control and to try to be more patient and moderate in similar situations in the future. Through honesty and patience, they should make young people aware of the long-term consequences of a lack of self-control.

Teachers also use the resources of their subjects to develop self-control. Be it mathematics, literature or art – any of the subject areas has a potential to develop SES, it only needs to be observed and used. It might seem at first glance that mathematics is far from any SES; however, come to think of it, doesn't problem solving require precision, perseverance, optimism, self-confidence, honesty, and obviously self-control?

The teacher is also a role model. The way teachers manage to handle unpleasant classroom situations determines not only how well they will be accepted by the class, but also how the students themselves will act in similar situations. We never know what behaviours will be replicated. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to be on top of things, i.e. to control themselves and explain to students how they have managed to overcome delicate moments by keeping control of themselves and moving on.

To a large extent, you as a teacher also set the tone in the classroom. The more pleasant the atmosphere, the less challenges and less need for uncontrolled behaviour there will be. So, articulate clearly your expectations regarding discipline or ground rules. Many of them will follow your demands clearly and adapt their behaviour to the standards, more often than when such expectations are not stated at all.



## WORKSHOP: Self-control is...

### Goals:

Students will:

- *understand the meaning of concepts of responsibility and self-control and their interlinkages*
- *recognize the consequences of presence or absence of self-control for themselves and others*

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Marshmallow Test video

\* \* \*



### Introductory exercise (5 min)

Divide students into pairs sitting or standing facing each other. Their task is to look each other straight in the eyes for as long as possible without blinking. Let them keep this position for several minutes.

Start the conversation:

- *What characteristics/skills did you display in this activity?*
- *What were you thinking about while you were doing it? What helped you keep up? Are you satisfied with yourself in this exercise?*

The aim is to recognize and name the following traits: patience, calmness, discipline, will power, self-control. Then tell them that all of these characterize self-control as the overarching topic of this workshop.



## Temptation (15 min)

Play the Marshmallow Test<sup>30</sup> – about 4–5 min. (They can watch it on their smart phones). In the experiment children were offered to take one marshmallow now or wait for 10 minutes and get two instead.

### Analysis:

- What is in conflict here – what is the temptation about? (Eat a marshmallow right now or wait and get two.)
- What differentiates the children who ate a marshmallow right away from those who waited? What were the children doing? (thinking, making a decision; feeling uncomfortable; restrained unpleasant feelings; ultimate goal – I will have two marshmallows)
- Name the experiences/feelings of children who managed to wait for the two marshmallows? How do you feel when you reach a goal after long and patient waiting?

Give your students more information about the experiment: *Psychologist Walter Mischel conducted the famous Marshmallow Test. The studies that started 50 years ago and are still ongoing showed that the control of delayed gratification, the ability to wait for the preferred rewards, is visible and measurable already early on in life, and that it affects the wellbeing of people and their life outcomes in terms of physical and mental health.*

*Interestingly, such abilities can be modified and improved through specific cognitive strategies. For instance, while children were sat facing the treat in front of them and did their best not to eat it, the experimenter attempted to help them by comparing a marshmallow with other inedible things, such as clouds, the moon, or a ball. These concepts were chosen because of them being seemingly white, fluffy and roundish, just like the marshmallow itself. Then the experimenter led them to think about playing with a ball, imagining the moon and how the clouds move across the sky. The idea was to redirect their*

*attention to see the thing in front of them in a totally different way. It was no longer a food item, but a notion in nature performing an action and having a function. Thanks to the experiment, it can be observed that self-control is crucial in achieving long-term goals. It is equally important for setting boundaries and developing empathy, which is required for having caring relationships. In addition, it helps people to avoid trouble, such as dropping out of school, rejection of change or performing unwanted tasks.<sup>31</sup>*



## Self-control and me (25 min)

In smaller groups, students discuss the situations from their experience or the experience of their peers where self-control was lacking.

- What does one fail to do then? What is conflicting? What took over?
- What are the consequences (for themselves and others)?

Then let them discuss the situation in life/relations with others/ in school where self-control is needed and why: what would the consequences of lack of self-control be in such situations (for themselves and others)? They share their responses with the other groups.

Encourage them to talk about situations in which they exhibited patience and self-control:

- What helped you?
- What are the benefits of self-control for me/ others?

In their responses students will probably mention some qualities or skills conducive to self-control, e.g. critical thinking, empathy. Indicate the linkages between these skills.

Modelled against this workshop, the following activities can be combined, done on their own or with some other introductory and final games. Through these activities, students learn about self-control, think about this skill, and work on developing it in themselves.

30 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo4WF3cSd9Q>  
or [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX\\_oy9614HQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX_oy9614HQ).

31 More details about the test is available at: [https://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man%C4%8Dmelou\\_eksperiment](https://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man%C4%8Dmelou_eksperiment).





## OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

### ▪ Self-control and responsibility

Teacher's introduction: We are all quite convinced that we can affect some things in life to a large degree or fully, others not at all. This can be illustrated by the common statements: *Things are under control... in my hands!* Or conversely – *It's all in God's hands! I give up!*

Ask your students: *What can you yourselves affect (the most), what in your present life is under control, what depends on you (e.g. what decisions, choices, events, activities)? What are the things where you feel you have no control over whatsoever?*

Record their associations on the board under two columns for the sake of easy comparison. Comment on whether some see differently the sense of control in some situations/events (e.g. their school achievements). Sum up the findings: *We all believe that the place of control is sometimes within ourselves (internal control), and sometimes beyond us (external control).*

Ask your students: *How would you define the notion of personal responsibility?*

Examples: *Responsibility is... standing by one's decision... actions; bearing the consequences...;*

*working and behaving so that others trust us and can rely on us, etc. Responsibility is acceptance of a duty, an obligation to do something, which is important to others and myself, as well as respect, protection, and care towards those affected by my actions and behaviour.*

Remind them of the list with the "places of control" and invite them to consider them in the light of personal responsibility. *We are responsible for those things that we believe and wish to be under our control.*

*Why do we tend to shirk responsibility? What are the consequences for ourselves and others?*

### ▪ Muso and Milovan

This can be an activity done individually, in pairs or in groups. Make enough copies of the story "Muso's Patience"<sup>32</sup> and the anecdote from "Examples of Humanity and Bravery" by Marko Miljanov<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> The story was taken from the book "The Prayer of the Frog" by Anthony de Mello, an Indian psychotherapist, priest and author. The stories belong to different countries, cultures and religions, spiritual legacies and folk humour of humanity.

<sup>33</sup> Available at: [http://www.montenegrina.net/pages/pages1/knjizevnost/primjeri\\_cojstva\\_i\\_junastva.htm](http://www.montenegrina.net/pages/pages1/knjizevnost/primjeri_cojstva_i_junastva.htm).

### Examples of humanity and bravery

*Milovan, son of Janica, Vujošević, from Brskut once said: "Upon my soul, I could defeat any man in a duel!"*

*They asked: "How so, uncle Milovan?"*

*Milovan: "Effortlessly, upon my soul! He'd get angry, curse me, leaping and shivering with rage! I'd say nothing. And the next day, he'd be crest-fallen, ashamed, and would regret his words! There you go, I win, he loses!"*

(Marko Miljanov)

### Muso's patience

Muso, one of the most illustrious masters of his day was travelling in the company of a disciple. They came to a river and boarded a ferry. Just as it was about to leave the shore a drunken samurai ran up and jumped into the overloaded boat, nearly sinking it. Then he staggered around wildly, endangering the safety of the frail vessel, so the boatman begged him to stay quiet "We're stuffed in here like gooseberries in a bottle," said the samurai raucously. Suddenly he saw Muso and shouted. "Here! Let's throw the holy man overboard!"

"Please be patient," said Muso "We'll soon be across."

"What? Me be patient?" he shouted wildly "Look! if you don't jump off, I'll throw you overboard this minute." The master's calm demeanour in the face of these threats so enraged the samurai that he walked up to Muso and struck him across the face, drawing blood. The disciple had had enough. He was a powerful man and he said, "After what he has done, he shall not live."

"Why get so upset about a trifle?" said Muso with a smile. "It is on occasions like this that our training is put to the test. You must remember that patience is more than just a word."

Then he composed a little poem that ran:

*"The beater and the beaten:  
mere actors in a play  
that is as short-lived as a dream."*

(Anthony de Mello, 2005)

#### Discussion:

- What are the points of similarity between Milovan and Muso, the lead characters in the two stories?
- What quality do they both share, in what does their strength lie?
- How many people that you know would do something similar in the given situations? Why?
- How do you react in similar situations?

### ■ Why didn't Orpheus manage to save Eurydice?

Remind your students of the ancient myth about the tragic love between Orpheus and Eurydice: Orpheus was a musician and a poet with perfect pitch. When he played his lyre, not even nature could remain indifferent. But Orpheus was unlucky in love; his wife Eurydice died of a snake bite soon after their marriage. Orpheus was so sad that he descended to Hades to try to get her back. His grief-stricken song charmed the inhabitants of the Underworld, Hades, including Pluto and Persephone. They

allowed him to take Eurydice's soul to the light of day and thus revive her, provided he did not turn around once before they got out. Ask your students whether they know what happened next: *Did Orpheus manage not to turn around? Why? What quality did he lack? Do you know of any quotations about self-control (self-discipline, strong will, patience...)?*

### ■ Mythical and contemporary flyers

Remember the myth of Daedalus and Icarus. It is included in the chapter on creativity. Ask your students: *Why did Icarus drown? What quality did he lack?* Then play the recording of Felix Baumgartner's freefall from the stratosphere in 2012.<sup>34</sup>

Students discuss Felix's motives/qualities/skills: *Why did Felix, after jumping, say this had "changed his life"? What could have he understood about himself?*

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4UIWJnOgBI>.

**Note:** You can link this story to the one about Nikola Tesla.

## ▪ How Nikola Tesla practiced self-control

### **One's salvation can only be brought about through one's own efforts<sup>35</sup>**

*Up to the age of eight years, my character was weak and vacillating. I had neither courage or strength to form a firm resolve. My feelings came in waves and surges and vibrated unceasingly between extremes. My wishes were of consuming force and like the heads of the hydra, they multiplied. I was oppressed by thoughts of pain in life and death and religious fear. I was swayed by superstitious belief and lived in constant dread of the spirit of evil, of ghosts and ogres and other unholy monsters of the dark. Then, all at once, there came a tremendous change which altered the course of my whole existence. Of all things I liked books the best. My father had a large library and whenever I could manage I tried to satisfy my passion for reading. He did not permit it and would fly into a rage when he caught me in the act. He hid the candles when he found that I was reading in secret. He did not want me to spoil my eyes. But I obtained tallow, made the wicking and cast the sticks into tin forms, and every night I would bush the keyhole and the cracks and read, often till dawn, when all others slept and my mother started on her arduous daily task.*

*On one occasion I came across a novel entitled "Abafi" (the Son of Aba), a Serbian translation of a well known Hungarian writer, Josika. This work somehow awakened my dormant powers of will and I began to practise self-control. At first my resolutions faded like snow in April, but in a little while I conquered my weakness and felt a pleasure I never knew before—that of doing as I willed. In the course of time this vigorous mental exercise became second nature. At the outset my wishes had to be subdued but gradually desire and will grew to be identical. After years of such discipline I gained so complete a mastery over myself that I toyed with passions which have meant destruction to some of the strongest men. At a certain age I contracted a mania for gambling which greatly worried my parents. To sit down to a game of cards was for me the quintessence of pleasure. My father led an exemplary life and could not excuse the senseless waste of time and money in which I indulged. I had a strong resolve but my philosophy was bad. I would say to him, "I can stop whenever I please but is it worth while to give up that which I would purchase with the joys of Paradise?" On frequent occasions he gave vent to his anger and contempt but my mother was different. She understood the character of men and knew that one's salvation could only be brought about thru his own efforts. One afternoon, I remember, when I had lost all my money and was craving for a game, she came to me with a roll of bills and said, "Go and enjoy yourself. The sooner you lose all we possess the better it will be. I know that you will get over it." She was right. I conquered my passion then and there and only regretted that it had not been a hundred times as strong. I not only vanquished but tore it from my heart so as not to leave even a trace of desire. Ever since that time I have been as indifferent to any form of gambling as to picking teeth. During another period I smoked excessively, threatening to ruin my health. Then my will asserted itself and I not only stopt but destroyed all inclination. Long ago I suffered from heart trouble until I discovered that it was due to the innocent cup of coffee I consumed every morning. I discontinued at once, tho I confess it was not an easy task. In this way I checked and bridled other habits and passions and have not only preserved my life but derived an immense amount of satisfaction from what most men would consider privation and sacrifice.*

(Nikola Tesla, 1919)

<sup>35</sup> Taken from: <https://edoc.site/-nikola-tesla-moji-izumi-autobiografija-pdf-free.html>.

### Discussion:

- *At what moment did Nikola Tesla begin to practice self-control?*
- *What affected him?*
- *Recall some examples from your personal experience: how did you manage to resist temptation?*

## ▪ Nelson Mandela – 27 years in prison did not break his will

Apart from homeroom classes, this activity is also suited for history, sociology, or civic education lessons. Read out loud the text about Nelson Mandela.

### **Nelson Mandela<sup>36</sup> (1918–2013), Former President of South Africa**

Nelson Mandela, also known as Madiba, is possibly one of the most famous statesmen in the world. He served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999, and was the first South African president to be elected in a fully representative democratic election. Before his presidency, Mandela fought against Apartheid (the system of racial segregation and discrimination in South Africa) and as a result, served 27 years in prison.

Nelson Mandela was born in Transkei, South Africa in 1918 and was the first member of his family to go to school. He attended college before moving to Johannesburg and working as a clerk in a law firm, completing his degree at the University of South Africa by correspondence. Mandela grew up in Apartheid South Africa where the rights of the majority non-white population were restricted. After the 1948 election victory of the Afrikaner-dominated National Party, Mandela got more involved in politics, leading the ANC's Defiance campaign and helping to provide low-cost legal advice to South African blacks who could not afford representation. He initially believed in being non-violent, but after the government banned the ANC, Nelson Mandela argued for the use of force. In 1962 he was arrested and sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour. Then in 1963, Mandela was brought to stand trial with many others for plotting to overthrow the government by violence, and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

From 1964 to 1982, Mandela was imprisoned at Robben Island Prison, then at Pollsmoor Prison on the mainland. Mandela was seen as a controversial figure, with many of his critics considering him a terrorist. However, people across the world campaigned for his release.

Nelson Mandela was finally released on 11 February 1990, after 27 years in prison. After his release, he continued striving to attain the goals he and others had set out almost four decades earlier. In 1994 there were multi-racial, free and fair elections for the first time, and Mandela and the ANC won 62% of the vote. He was inaugurated on 10 May 1994. During his years in prison, Nelson Mandela's reputation grew steadily. He was widely accepted as the most significant black leader in South Africa and became a symbol of resistance as the anti-apartheid movement gathered strength. He refused to compromise his political position to obtain his freedom and showed incredible patience as he suffered in prison.

*We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right* – Nelson Mandela.

<sup>36</sup> Taken from: <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/My%20Character%20PDFs/Resources/4.%20Patience.pdf>.

### Discussion:

- *What character traits do you observe in Nelson Mandela? How did he manage to resist pressure and not renounce his political beliefs by accepting that many years of imprisonment?*
- *Are you aware of any saying or quotation by Nelson Mandela?*<sup>37</sup>

### Examples:

- *I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.*
- *Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.*
- *I am not a saint, unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying...*
- *No one is born hating another person...*
- *You will achieve more in this world through acts of mercy than you will through acts of retribution.*
- *It always seems impossible until it is done.*
- *The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.*
- *Honour belongs to those who never forsake the truth even when things seem dark and grim.*
- *Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.*

What sayings speak of the significance of willpower/patience/self-control? Encourage your students to recognize other virtues that those quotations refer to.

Tell them you will go back to these virtues in Nelson Mandela's biography when you talk about tolerance, optimism, and honesty.

<sup>37</sup> Available at: <https://sr.globalvoices.org/2013/12/17-mudrih-izreka-nelsona-mendele-koje-svako-treba-da-procita/>.

### ▪ Success comes to those who wait

Inspiration for the activity: It would be great to get all that we want the moment we ask for it. But, it never happens like that. The main characteristic of a successful person is patience and persistence in attempting to get to the goal, even when others give up.

The problem is that we set for ourselves unrealistic deadlines, expectations, and goals. TV programmes, such as the X Factor and various self-help books, send us messages that one can become successful easily and quickly. Advertising sends the message we can have it all and now. We believe that if we buy a new pair of sneakers that we will become good athletes or if we get a study guide that we will easily pass all the exams. Unfortunately, it simply is not true. There is no silver bullet to success; it takes diligence and patience.

Most people need time to become successful. Even when we see someone who seems to have become successful overnight, it usually turns out that he/she has been trying for years, having performances or making contacts before that happened. It is just that we do not see that part. Remind your students of the anecdote about musicians and researchers (Creativity section). Discuss their characteristics.

Ask your students to work individually and finish the following sentences:

- *Good things come to those who wait because...*
- *Sometimes it takes patience and will power because...*
- *The five situations in which I showed patience...*



## ▪ Needs and wishes

This is an activity done individually.<sup>38</sup>

Get your students thinking: *Do you know that those with the willpower to persist and be patient stand a better chance of succeeding?* (If you discussed this before through some activity, just remind them of that.) *Today young people face more difficulties than ever before. Can you remain patient, delay gratification and be more successful on the account of your willpower?*

Give them the task (possibly a printed copy for each student): *Now look at the following items. Put a circle round all those that you think you really need to survive. Now tick those you think you would want in your life.*

- **Trainers**
- **Fire**
- **A dog**
- **A house**
- **Land to grow things on**
- **Television**
- **Meat**
- **Parks and play spaces**
- **Water**
- **Telephone**
- **A car**
- **Music**
- **Shelter**
- **Blanket**
- **Education**
- **Vegetables**
- **A bed**
- **Medicines**
- **The internet**
- **Bread**
- **Books**
- **Friends**
- **Chocolate**

Tell them the following: Psychologist R. Baumeister and scientific journalist J. Tierney recently published a book<sup>39</sup> arguing that willpower actually operates like a muscle: it can be strengthened with practice and becomes tired by overuse. Therefore the more you practice having willpower the better you will become at it.

So the next time you are offered some chocolate that you think you really shouldn't have, try to say no.

Now complete the following statements:

- *A need is something...*
- *A want is something...*
- *I should concentrate on meeting my needs rather than my wants because...*



<sup>38</sup> The ideas for activities are taken from: <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/My%20Character%20PDFs/Resources/4.%20Patience.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Willpower (2012).

## ▪ Self-assessment

You can make a copy of the test for each student or read them out loud one question at a time with them recording their answers on a sheet of paper. *Answer the following questions to find out how much willpower you have:*<sup>41</sup>

Question	Yes Definitely	Maybe	Probably Not	Definitely Not
Your doctor tells you to follow a strict dietary regime that involves eating no chocolate or sweets for a month. Will you follow your doctor's advice?				
Tomorrow you will have an important examination and you have to revise, but a friend of yours calls you and invites you to a party. Do you say 'no' to the invitation and revise all night instead?				
You have signed up for an exercise class in order to get fitter. The course will last 4 months and it will be very hard work. Will you attend all the lessons?				
Your girlfriend or boyfriend is going away for a whole year. Will you stay together?				
You had to get to an important meeting, but the bus broke down. Would you walk there instead?				
You are at your friend's house and you notice they have left their diary on their bed while they have gone to the shops. Do you leave it where it is and not look at it?				
You can have a burger or a salad for dinner. You already had a burger for lunch, and you're trying to be healthier. Do you have the salad?				
Your parents have hidden the Christmas presents in a really obvious place and you find them. Do you leave them where they are and not look at them?				

If you answered mainly 'Yes' or 'Maybe' to the questions then you have lots of willpower – well done!

If you answered mainly 'Probably not' or 'Definitely not' to the questions then you don't have much willpower and this is a character strength you need to work on!

## ▪ Self-control exercises

Divide the class into several groups with the task to propose strategies/methods for practicing and building self-control, based on personal experience or what they have learned about self-control.

**Examples:**

**Turn the situation to your favour:** Instead of being annoyed because of a delayed train or bus, use the time to read or wander in your

thoughts. Remember Nelson Mandela who waited for 27 years to get out of the prison.

**Acknowledge your feelings:** When you become aware of your feelings, no matter how negative, it will help you control impulsive reactions. In addition, it can also help if we pay attention to the situations in which we most often react strongly to be able to recognize them more readily in future and restrain our reaction before it happens.

**Set priorities:** Remind them of the activity when you discussed needs and wants, and if you didn't do that before, now stress the difference between needs and wants. It is

<sup>40</sup> Taken from: <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/My%20Character%20PDFs/Resources/4.%20Patience.pdf>.

important to understand and accept that we cannot, and don't have to, always have what we want. Setting priorities will help us feel calmer. In "A Prayer", Saint-Exupéry says: *Present me with the sense to be able to judge whether something is important or not.*

## ▪ The Art of Small Steps

Inspiration for the activity: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, best-known as the author of *The Little Prince*, is an author who wanted to be a pilot

and a pilot who wanted to write. Luckily for the world, Saint-Exupéry managed to make both his wishes come true. As a pilot, he was awarded the Legion of Honour fighting on the side of the Allies against Hitler. Even when on missions, he never stopped writing. "A Prayer"<sup>41</sup> was written during one of the most difficult times in his life, when illness, age, and the atrocities of war were gradually getting the better of him.

41 <https://m.cdm.me/kultura/umjetnost-malih-koraka/>.

### A Prayer – Teach Me the Art of Small Steps

*Lord, I'm not praying for miracles and visions, I'm only asking for strength for my days. Teach me the art of small steps.*

*Make me clever and resourceful, so that I can find important discoveries and experiences among the diversity of days.*

*Help me use my time better. Present me with the sense to be able to judge whether something is important or not.*

*I pray for the power of discipline and moderation, not only to run throughout my life, but also to live my days reasonably, and observe unexpected pleasures and heights.*

*Help me to understand that dreams cannot be a help. No dreams of the past or dreams of the future. Help me to be here and now and accept that moment as the most important.*

*Save me from the naive belief that everything in life has to go smoothly. Give me the sober recognition that difficulties, failures, fiascos, and setbacks are given to us by life itself to make us grow and mature.*

*Remind me that the heart often argues with reason.*

*Send me the right person at the right moment, who will have enough courage and love to utter the truth!*

*I know that many problems solve themselves, so please teach me patience.*

*You know how much we need friendship. Make me worthy of this nicest, hardest, riskiest and most fragile gift of life.*

*Give me enough imagination to be able to share with someone a little bit of warmth, in the right place, at the right time, with words or with silence.*

*Make of me a man capable of joining those who are really down.*

*Spare me the fear of missing out on life.*

*Do not give me the things I desire, but the things I need.*

*Teach me the art of small steps!*

- Task your students, working individually or in pairs, to highlight the thoughts that concern self-control/patience.
- Discuss how in difficult moments people feel to be losing the type of control that depends on them: Saint-Exupéry knows what is valuable and what he needs to regain control, but feels that (currently) it is beyond him and prays to God.
- Once this is completed, tell them to look for other virtues that Saint-Exupéry aspires to.
- Compare “A Prayer” with the poem “If” (p. 34). Where do you see the similarities?

## Self-control quotations

As is the case with other virtues, quotations can be used as an inspiration for discussion at the beginning of the workshop, as final thoughts in summing up, or as a stand-alone activity. When asking your students to choose the quotation they like the best and say why, give real-life examples to which the quotation applies, etc.

- *Patience is power; with time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes silk.*

Chinese proverb

- *Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.*

Benjamin Franklin

- *The course of events in life does not depend on us at all, or very little; but the way we put up with events depends to a great deal on ourselves; hence, this is where we need to direct our strength and this is what we need to pay attention to.*

Ivo Andrić

- *He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened; He who gains a victory over other men is strong; but he who gains a victory over himself is all-powerful.*

Lao Tzu

- *Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.*

Lao Tzu

- *I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is over self.*

Aristotle

- *He who cannot obey himself will be commanded. That is the nature of living creatures.*

Friedrich Nietzsche

- *The highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts.*

Charles Darwin

- *Self-control is strength; Right Thought is mastery; Calmness is power.*

James Allen

- *You can't control the fact that people will annoy you, but what you can control is your reaction.*

Anonymous

- *Control yourself or someone else will control you.*

Anonymous

- *Silence is not always a sign of weakness; it's also a sign of strong self-control.*

Anonymous

- *You are always responsible for how you act, no matter how you feel. Remember that.*

Robert Tew





EMPATHY





# EMPATHY

*In this wretched world there are such wounds of the soul that are further hurt by restraint and concealment. If you reveal them to an honest soul, a true friend, they relieve you and the pain lessens.*

S. M. Ljubiša

A modern individual is often alone, without a stable family or friends, abandoned to the tempests of time, to the rapid pace of life, alienated, filled with anxiety, fear, and despair. The bigger the comforts of daily life (in this part of the world we live under much better conditions compared to our ancestors, even the not-so-distant ones), the less meaning it has. How is it that we are speaking increasingly about loneliness, egotism, hypocrisy, lack of interest, numbness of the senses and emotions? How is it that we are increasingly saying that a person cannot count on anyone but themselves, has no one to confide in, or sympathize with?

What is conducive to this state of a 'man being a wolf to another man', both individually and globally? The answers to these questions are complex and go beyond what this text can offer by way of explanation.

Our intention is to remind of the need to be aware, on one hand, of the negative aspects of modern life, and on the other, of the deep-rooted need to create systematically, through programmes like this one, the prerequisites to change such realities for the better.

What is needed, thus, is to start with the youngest age, through primary and secondary schools, to do the utmost so that a human

being can be closer to another human being, to continuously develop in the young people understanding for others, to recognize from the youngest age how fragile we are unless we have someone by our side to support us, when storms come which threaten to tear us down, and help us get up when we fall.

This naturally leads to the following questions: How empathetic are we? How much sympathy for other human beings do we have? How able are we to grasp the world of another human being, to understand how they feel, and why is this so, and to know what causes such feelings?

Regardless of any subjective or objective response to this, it is important to know that empathy, just like any other social and emotional skill, can be developed. We "just" need to be a conscious being and have an understanding of the importance to develop our own empathy. A human being, as a social being, should not feel pity, but be sympathetic; not feel sorry, but deeply understand the next person. Only if we are empathetic and willing to push our empathy further can we develop this major quality in younger generations.

Empathy is actually the ability to see things from the perspective of another human being, with the aim of understanding their feelings and thoughts, letting such understanding guide our actions.

The definitions that see the essence of empathy in sharing emotions include both identification with the other person, but also awareness of the feelings of the other person following such an identification. It also includes our sensitivity for the needs and circumstances of another person, as well as care for others. A modern American psychologist and scientist, who devoted most of his work to empathy, Martin L. Hoffman, says that empathy is the ability of a person to feel what is appropriate for the situation of another person, not for one's own situation.

It is worth noting that empathy is not feeling pity. To empathize does not mean feeling sorry for someone. Sympathy usually means just

feeling sorry for a person, which hides, to say the least, satisfaction with oneself and one's own life circumstances, the pleasure of us not being those to whom something unpleasant is happening. Empathy should not be confused with kindness either. Being civil and kind does not mean sharing feelings and thoughts with somebody and knowing exactly how somebody feels, what they are thinking about; it means being able to comprehend their condition or situation, maybe even better than our own.

Empathy is not what transpires in the famous saying *Do to others what you would like done to you* either. We have just to recall the quotation by the famous author George Bernard Shaw: *Do not do unto others as you expect they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same.* Empathy is the very understanding of such tastes, i.e. the power and the ability not to judge others by ourselves.

We have to be ready to understand and accept diversities and go beyond prejudice by not seeking in other people what is different, but the opposite – what we have in common. This is why empathy is the cornerstone of tolerance.

To be able to do that, we have to develop the skill of attentive listening and observing the emotional states and needs of others. "What is essential," believes Marshall Rosenberg, a psychologist and the originator of the idea of non-violent communication, "is our ability to be present to what's really going on within, to the unique feelings and needs a person is experiencing in that very moment".

Nevertheless, listening in itself is not enough. It also takes openness and honesty, and readiness to show how we feel and what we are thinking. No matter how ready we might be to transmit the finest and most sincere thoughts and emotions, to show clearly and loudly how well we feel and understand the condition, feelings, needs, and circumstances of the person we wish to help, it is important, in doing so, not to shatter our spiritual balance or assume a sacrifice that would put ourselves in harm's way.

Thus, empathy is, in a way, like tightrope walking – a skill that helps us find our balance, to give exactly as much as we think and feel we can, no more, no less, because it will no longer be good either for us or for others.

### ***The teacher's role***

Similarly to other social and emotional skills, the teacher's role is essential for developing empathy. Teacher can hardly be good transmitters of the idea of empathy, both theoretically and practically, unless they are ready to extend their own knowledge of empathy, and express and apply it at all times in the classroom.

The teacher is a person who gets to know his/her students well after a while, a person who follows classroom developments, who is interested to keep improving not only the interpersonal relations between students, but also his/her own rapport with the students. Being an empathetic teacher means having a sixth sense for group dynamics, to be a person who keeps feeling the pulse of the class with all its specificities and showing compassion and true understanding of their shared and individual problems.

The teacher as a role model is an irreplaceable tool or instrument for developing social and emotional skills. It is only if they see empathy in action that students will be able to assume such a pattern of behaviour, such a life motto, as the mainstay of their interpersonal relations. They will be in a position to discover its mechanisms, to understand its benefits and use it in the classroom, but also beyond. Thus, it is no wonder that, as research has shown, having more empathy diminishes the need for aggressive or destructive behaviour. By building it, a young person simply becomes better – more tolerant, more consistent in their relations with others, more responsible towards the others present in their lives, regardless of where they are. It is also conducive to developing integrity, so the empathy of an individual is inseparable from the need of the same individual to act with

integrity. Successful managers and leaders are increasingly spoken of as persons with pronounced empathy.

It is extremely important to include the subject's potential to develop social and emotional skills, because sometimes certain conditionality of delivery (gym exercises, problems to be solved in the mathematics and physics classrooms, pronunciation of words in a foreign language, etc.) make it possible for the teacher to show empathy, to show that he/she understands how a student feels regarding the difficulties they encounter in mastering the lesson content or any other issue in connection with the given subject.

In addition, the content of certain subjects, such as literature, language, or history, offer a wealth of ideas, where the teacher uses a text, written or electronic literature, as a pattern and a starting point from which to guide students to an understanding of the importance and necessity of empathy for a thriving and rewarding life.

To put it simply, a teacher is someone who monitors, listens, senses, feels compassionate, understands, supports, and empowers. Someone who, first and foremost, likes his/her calling and his/her students. And that is the foundation for building a house of social and emotional skills, empathy included.







## WORKSHOP: Empathy is the echo of others in ourselves

*The assistance we always stand ready to extend to a fellow human being cannot be replaced by any riches, let alone our own wretched lives.*

S. M. Ljubiša

### Goals:

Students will:

- examine the difference between empathy and sympathy
- understand the meaning of empathy in interpersonal relationships

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Material:** post-it notes

\*\*\*



### Empathy is... (10 min.)

Tell the class: *Recall a situation when you quarrelled with a friend or any other person close to you, a situation in which your feelings were hurt, when you wished someone would understand how you felt, but you remained misunderstood.* Invite volunteers to share their examples.

Discuss with your students how we feel when we see that others recognize and understand our feelings, as opposed to when our feelings remain misunderstood. Define empathy: when we try to understand how a person feels and put ourselves in his or her shoes, we show empathy.

Ask the class whether they believe that they are empathetic enough and what makes them say so.



### Empathy vs. sympathy (25 min)

Ask your students:

*How do you respond when your friend is going through a rough patch – how do you behave, what do you tell him/her?* (They can recall a specific situation.)

Invite your students to write the responses on post-its. Tell them that individual responses will not be read out until they are all put together. Then take a post-it, read what is written on it and put it on a poster or flip chart; while doing so, together with the class, categorize the responses under one of the two columns: empathy or sympathy.

Before doing that, explain that sympathy means expressing a feeling that does not last long and is most often patronizing and comforting: *I'm so sorry you're suffering*; while empathy involves sharing of feelings and thoughts: *I feel your disappointment*.

Apart from feelings, empathy also involves thoughts: *I understand how you feel...* Recognizing and sharing the emotional state of another person is a complex internal experience. It is underpinned by self-awareness, the ability to differentiate one's own feelings and the feelings of the other person, the capacity to look at things from a different angle, and the ability to recognize emotions in others, but also in ourselves and to know how to properly show such feelings.

Empathy means: seeing with the eyes of others, listening with the ears of others, feeling with the heart of others.

Discuss the responses categorized under the two columns: *What is a more frequent reaction – empathy or sympathy? What kind of reactions would you prefer? Why is empathy important in friendship and other interpersonal relations? How*

*important is empathy in various professions? What are the different ways of showing empathy?*

Conclude: In order to step into someone else's shoes, we need to set a balance between emotions and thoughts, and between ourselves and others. The art of empathy requires **paying attention to the needs of others, but without sacrificing our own**. This gives us the right and the responsibility to pull ourselves out of someone else's shoes and to know how and when to do that.

**Alternative activity:** Instead of the previously described activity, you can play an animated film<sup>42</sup> for the class. The video's theme: interesting animation is used to explain that empathy drives true connection, whereas sympathy has no such power. Dr Brené Brown

42 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>

researched empathy in different professions and came to the conclusion that there are four main elements to empathy: putting oneself in somebody else's shoes; refraining from judging; recognizing the feelings of another person, and telling him/her that.



### Role play (10 min)

Instruction for students:

Tell your partner (choose any of the methods for a random selection of pairs) a situation from personal experience when you were sad, frightened, or had a hard time for any reason. If you feel uncomfortable sharing personal stories, come up with a story. The partner is supposed to be empathetic. Then switch roles. Discuss to what extent you actually managed to show empathy, how you felt.





## OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Modelled on the workshop shown above, you may combine the activities below, do them as stand-alone activities or combine them with some other warm-up or wrap-up activities.

These activities will help your students learn about empathy, think about its significance in interpersonal relations and develop their own empathy.

### ▪ How empathetic are you?

You can make copies for each student, or else tell them to take a sheet of paper and write the following words: always, often, rarely, sometimes, never. Then read out loud each statement, while your students are supposed to tick the relevant word depending on how frequently they do so.

### How empathetic are you?<sup>43</sup>

**Instruction:** Put a tick ✓ next to a statement you agree with

Statements	ALWAYS	OFTEN	RARELY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
I feel saddened when someone in my environment feels bad.					
Before I judge a person, I first try to imagine how I'd feel in his/her position.					
I'm upset when I see someone treated with disrespect.					
When I see that someone from my environment is happy, my mood improves.					
I worry about people who are less fortunate than me.					
When I see a person who's agitated, I have a strong urge to help.					
I believe there are two sides to each story and I always try to see both.					
It makes me sad when my friend is unhappy.					
When I see someone being exploited, I feel the need to protect that person.					
I enjoy making others happy.					
Friends come to me with their problems because, as they say, I understand them the best.					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

<sup>43</sup> This is not a real test, but rather a list of statements that the authors combined from different sources solely with the intention of encouraging students to think about how empathetic they are and cannot be used for other purposes. The sources used: <https://psychology-tools.com/test/empathy-quotient>; [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take\\_quiz/empathy](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take_quiz/empathy); [https://www.gotoquiz.com/the\\_empathy\\_test](https://www.gotoquiz.com/the_empathy_test).

When they have finished, tell the class that this is not a real calibrated test, but it is clear that the responses under *always* and *often* indicate developed empathy. If most of their responses were *rarely*, *sometimes* or *never*, it means it is high time for them to work on their empathy. Ask them which of the examples offered in the test they would like to start applying to foster empathy.

### ▪ Practicing empathy 1

Remind your students that empathy is a set of skills that include connecting with others, acceptance, understanding and sensitivity to various experiences.

Explain how they can practice empathy:

*Imagine what it feels like “being in someone else’s shoes” and how you would feel in such situations?*

*When you listen: maintain eye contact, do not interrupt the interlocutor and ask prompting questions; you can show that you try hard to understand what he/she is going through.*

Explain the key stages of empathy:

1. Watch and listen – listen and observe feelings.
2. Connect with the person by recalling a moment when you experienced or felt something similar.
3. Put yourself in his/her shoes and think how you would feel in that situation.
4. Show your support with encouraging words or simple gestures.

Emphasize that it is important not to make things look better by using words to comfort the person but without true connectedness, e.g. at least, at any rate, you should be happy that... For instance, your friend is complaining that she failed physics, and you say: *At least you don’t have a problem with maths...*

We should not be trying to make things look better; rather, we should say something along these lines: *I understand your pain, because the*

*same thing happened to me recently. Can I do something for you during this period? I know you’re going through a rough time now, I’m glad you shared that with me...*

Rarely can an answer make people feel better. What helps truly is CONNECTEDNESS.

Invite your students to practice empathy in the following examples. They can add other situations of their choice.

#### Situations:

1. A girl was told she could not be on a sports team because of her sex.
2. A child is unhappy in the playground because other children don’t want to play with him.
3. Your friend is sick and will miss the prom.

### ▪ Practicing empathy 2

Each student should take a card and write down: *The problem I’m trying to solve is...* and then finish the sentence. The cards should be anonymous. When all the cards are completed, collect them, mix them up and pass out to the students.

If anyone gets his or her own card, they should switch with another student, since they are supposed to deal with the problems of others.

After that, each student reads out what is written on the card, but in such a way as to present it as his/her own problem. He/she explains to the group ways how to handle that problem. Others say they have experience in handling similar problems and offer their solutions.

The activity continues until all the cards have been dealt out.

They assess how pleased they are with the solutions offered.

### ▪ Tell me your story

The activity is suited for history or literature classrooms, and teachers may also design it for teamworking.

In a darkened classroom (if not possible, ask your students to close their eyes) read out loud (or else play a recording made by the teacher or a student with elocutionary skills) sections of letters that soldiers wrote from the front in World War I without saying which side they were fighting for. After that, divide the students into pairs and task them, based on what they heard (and prior knowledge they have of the atrocities of World War I) to finish the stories, trying to get into the shoes of the soldiers who, at the time, were approximately the same age as the students are now.

Then tell them that the first excerpt they are going to hear is from the Remarque's *All Quiet*

*on the Western Front*, and the second is a letter from a soldier on the front. Both are German soldiers. Discuss how the image of the other/ the enemy is built over history – just because someone is on the opposing side in war, even as soldiers, who have not come there of their own free will, is often portrayed in war films, reports, etc. as the bad guy. Remarque, who himself fought in the World War I, is an anti-war author. Then they will listen to the poem *Čovek peva posle rata* (*A Man Sings after the War*) by Dušan Vasiljev, read by the actor Bekim Fehmiu.<sup>44</sup>

44 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z53w3c5dAq8>.

*The silence spreads. I talk and must talk. So I speak to him and say to him: "Comrade, I did not want to kill you. If you jumped in here again, I would not do it, if you would be sensible too. But you were only an idea to me before, an abstraction that lived in my mind and called forth its appropriate response. It was that abstraction I stabbed. But now, for the first time, I see you are a man like me. I thought of your hand-grenades, of your bayonet, of your rifle; now I see your wife and your face and our fellowship. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death, and the same dying and the same agony—Forgive me, comrade; how could you be my enemy? If we threw away these rifles and this uniform, you could be my brother just like Kat and Albert. Take twenty years of my life, comrade, and stand up—take more, for I do not know what I can even attempt to do with it now."*<sup>45</sup>

(Erich Maria Remarque, 2016)

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*I have no idea what we are still fighting for anyway, maybe because the newspapers portray everything about the war in a false light which has nothing to do with the reality... There could be no greater misery in the enemy country and at home. The people who still support the war haven't got a clue about anything...*<sup>46</sup>

(A letter from the Western Front, dated 17 October 1914. An example of the discrepancy between a soldier's own experience at the front and the official reporting in the German press.)

45 An excerpt from Remarque's novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*. (Translated from German by A. W. Wheen, published by Fawcett Crest.)

46 More available at: <https://impulsportal.net/index.php/kolumne/drustvo/4158-svjedocanstva-o-besmislu-rata-pisma-vojnika-iz-prvog-svjetskog-rata-citaju-se-i-sto-godina-kasnije>



## ▪ Remarque and Hemingway

This is an activity that can be jointly delivered by history and literature teachers. Following the introduction, where you are to briefly present the biographies of Remarque and Hemingway, emphasize the fact that both took part in World War I on opposite sides.

Divide the class into groups and tell them to devise a conversation between the two great authors, i.e. how the war experiences affected them, their ability to understand the position of others, their lives, and their political and anti-war activities.

This can result in a performance (correlation between history and language and literature) about the “lost generation” of writers who took part in World War I.

## ▪ The Amistad case

*Freedom is not given. It is our birth right.*

Apart from the homeroom class, this activity can also be delivered in History, Sociology, or Civic Education classrooms.

Ask your students: *Why do some people deny or take away from others rights that belong to all of us, and this most often ends in violence?*

Allow a couple of minutes for them to reflect and give their views. Make copies of the Amistad case<sup>47</sup> (one copy per pair will suffice).

<sup>47</sup> Source: <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/amistad>.

### The Amistad case

*In February of 1839, Portuguese slave hunters abducted a large group of Africans from Sierra Leone and shipped them to Havana, Cuba, a centre for the slave trade. This abduction violated all of the treaties then in existence. Two Spanish plantation owners, Pedro Montes and Jose Ruiz, purchased 53 Africans and put them aboard the Cuban schooner Amistad to ship them to a Caribbean plantation.*

*On 1 July 1839, the Africans seized the ship, killed the captain and the cook, and ordered Montes and Ruiz to sail to Africa. However, the schooner, its cargo, and all on board were seized in American waters. The plantation owners were freed and the Africans were imprisoned on charges of murder.*

*Although the murder charges were dismissed, the Africans continued to be held in confinement and the case went to trial in the Federal District Court. The plantation owners, government of Spain, and captain of the ship that seized Amistad each claimed rights to the Africans or compensation.*

*The case made it to the Supreme Court, where the Africans were represented by former U.S. President, John Quincy Adams. Adams passionately and eloquently defended the Africans’ right to freedom on both legal and moral grounds, referring to treaties prohibiting the slave trade and to the Declaration of Independence.*

*The Supreme Court decided in favour of the Africans, stating that they were free individuals. Kidnapped and transported illegally, they had never been slaves. Senior Justice Joseph Story wrote and read the decision: “...it was the ultimate right of all human beings in extreme cases to resist oppression, and to apply force against ruinous injustice.” The opinion asserted the Africans’ right to resist “unlawful” slavery.*

*The court ordered the immediate release of the Amistad Africans. Thirty-five of the survivors were returned to their homeland (the others died at sea or in prison while awaiting trial).*

When they have finished reading, tell your students to think about the feelings of the people imprisoned on the *Amistad* and to sum it up in one word only. Most probably students will use the words fear, anger, panic... If they wish, they can sketch or draw the image that they conjured up in their heads while reading the text.

Ask them if they have ever felt helpless without knowing why bad things were happening. How would they respond to the above situation?

Then give them the opportunity to express the feelings they had while reading the texts. *How did the Amistad story affect them? What did it stir in them? Did they feel empathy? Are they aware of similar examples of violations of fundamental human rights? How would they react if they found themselves in a similar situation? Have any of*

*their fundamental rights ever been violated and how did they respond?*

Finally, students watch a trailer for the movie *Amistad*<sup>48</sup>, directed by Steven Spielberg, to generate their further interest and deepen the discussion.

### ▪ Empathy shatters prejudice

Read out the text about Claiborne Paul Ellis. Discuss how empathy can overpower hatred and change our rigid views. Ask your students whether they know of any similar example from their personal experience, their surroundings, or literature.

<sup>48</sup> Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ej9C5rQOaYU>.

**Claiborne Paul Ellis**<sup>49</sup> was born in 1927 in North Carolina, in a poor white family. He had a tough job in one garage and blamed African Americans for all his troubles, which resulted in following in the footsteps of his father and joining the infamous Ku Klux Klan (KKK). He advanced over time to one of the highest positions in the local branch of this white supremacist association. As a leader in his community, in 1971 he was invited to a 10-day meeting to help tackle racial contention in schools. He was appointed co-chair of a steering committee alongside a black activist Ann Atwater, whom Ellis despised. But, working with her, he realized the absurdness of his prejudice against African Americans. In the first place, he realized that the same problem of poverty was affecting both communities. "I was beginning to look at a black person, shake hands with him, and see him as a human being", he later recalled his experience from the community meetings. "It was almost like being born again." On the last night of the meeting, Ellis tore up his KKK membership card before several hundreds of people. He and Atwater remained friends for life...

<sup>49</sup> For more details go to: <https://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/how-a-white-supremacist-became-a-civil-rights-activist>.

### ▪ In somebody else's shoes

Apart from homeroom classes, this activity is also suited for history or literature lessons.

Ask your students the following questions, one at a time. Tell them to write their responses on post-it notes.

*How would you feel if:*

- *someone ridiculed the way you look?*
- *you were excluded from a group because of your social background and poor financial standing?*
- *you didn't have money for the bare necessities?*

Students will most likely report negative feelings. Continue the discussion asking the following:

- *Are there any Roma students in our school? If yes, do you socialize with them/would you socialize with them?*
- *Do you know anything about Romani history, any words from the Romani language? What does the word Roma mean? How would you feel if you were surrounded by people who know nothing about your culture?*
- *Have you ever paused to think about how anybody different might feel?*

Read out loud the poem *Gypsy Milk* and the story *When I Was Dark-Skinned*/Čohano. When they

have finished, allow the students to share their impressions about the texts, and their thoughts and attitudes about the lives and problems of the Roma population. Prompt them to see similarities between the story teller (Čohano) and the poet (*Gypsy milk*). *What is their attitude towards the Roma? Are you aware of any similar example?* Ask the students if the story and the poem made them put themselves in the shoes of the Roma people. *What is the position of the Roma in Montenegro today?*

Finally, you can show them the blog post on child marriages written by Rozalinda Toska, a Roma girl and UNICEF Young Reporter.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/price/mladenci-ili-djeca>.

### When I Was Dark-Skinned<sup>51</sup>

In those far-off and long past times when I was a boy in primary school, I had a classmate Mile Petrović, a little frog-eyed Gypsy, who was called Mile Dorky or as it is said in the Gypsy language: Mile Dileja. The surnames Nikolić, Petrović or Jovanović are quite common among Gypsies, many are still named Mile even today, but my mate, that Mile Dileja, was, and remained, somewhat different from the others.

He was killed by Fascists in 1942 in World War II. He was buried somewhere in the direction the village of Jabuka, near Pančevo, in a large mass grave of nameless victims. The two tombstones in the flatlands, at the bottom of what once was the Pannonian Sea, resemble two islands washed by the vast low-hanging skies of southern Banat. I go there sometimes, light a candle and cry. To this day I sometimes think I have seen Mile. In the bustle of the city. In the hustle of bus stations and airports. On the banks of the rivers along which I am taken by boats. On empty fields, at dusk, when I peek through windows of trains. A Gypsy caravan passing through the air, mild and flaky like silk. Fifty steps behind it, as translucent as glass: Mile. When the train takes a turn, he seems to outgrow the tree crowns, to dissipate and turn into a large white cloud. All alone, he lingers for long in the southern skies.

Although the shortest in the whole class, Mile always sat at the back of the classroom, as if he was bothering someone, as if he were different from other children. He was beaten up by everybody, for no reason, simply because he was a Gypsy. Mile got beaten up innocent and blameless. And he was believed to have an evil eye, because of being squint-eyed, and to associate with the devils at night.

One day, when it all got out of hand, I moved Mile to sit next to me at the front of the classroom and I got into a fierce fight for his sake. I declared him my mate. I pretended to be squint-eyed myself when we scared other kids. He taught me the Gypsy language, and the two of us would say things that no one understood and were all important and mysterious.

<sup>51</sup> Source: <http://fenomeni.me/tag/cohano/> and <http://miroslavantic.blogspot.com/2008/08/kad-sam-bio-garav.html>.

I was a frail boy, blond, and cowardly, but all of a sudden some devil awoke in me; I would pick a fight with anyone, even the strongest. For days I would come back home with blood on my face and torn clothes. My bag got kicked in the mud. As many as five at a time would attack me. But I held on.

Mile adored me. He started stealing things for me, erasers, crayons, snacks, pencils... and would bring them to me with some weird dog-like loyalty. I got into a lot of trouble because of that; later on I had to return all those things secretly, so as not to offend him. And returning is sometimes more difficult than stealing in the first place. Mile Dileja was the greatest poet I knew in my childhood. He would invent Gypsy songs for my sake to familiar melodies, rewrite the old ones he heard from his mom and grandma. For a long while, I recall this as if from some strange mist, we talked at great lengths about the odd worlds of plants and animals, about the evil spirit Čohana that feasts on children, about dreams and curses, Gypsy caravans and roving, all bitter, mischievous, sad, and cheeky at the same time. One day he shared his secret with me: he did poorly at school because he could not think without singing. If he could, he said, sing the lessons – geography, science, multiplication tables – just to turn it all to how he finds it more appealing, he would be the best student in the class.

Then the war came. The dreadful Čohano came, instilling fear in Gypsy children and adults alike. Test it if you don't believe me: this runs in their blood. Strange. Just go to any Gypsy house and if a baby in a cradle is crying, a child still not able to talk, try scaring him with the devil, with the elves, witches, the bogeyman, try anything you like – he will go on crying. But if you say to him, looking him straight in the eye: quiet, Čohano's coming – the child will turn his head, shiver, and fall asleep.

In all the homes on the Gypsy Alley during the first nights of the war, candles were lit all night long. Čohano is said to be afraid of the light, as a spirit of darkness and death. "Čohano eats away candles," they used to say. "Light one after another to keep the light going." My Mile was made to wear a yellow ribbon on his arm. The occupiers said so. The yellow ribbon meant he was not human, but a Gypsy, and that anyone could kill him if they wanted. He was scared to death. I would take him home from school, take the yellow ribbon off his sleeve and put it on mine. It happened once, on our way back from school, that we encountered a German soldier. One of ours, a local, recruited for the "Prinz Eugen" division. He wore a helmet and carried a weapon, and was no more than six or seven years our senior. He had blue eyes, a round ruddy face, at first even seemingly benevolent. He pointed the rifle at my chest. A gleaming gold tooth in his mouth. "What are the two of you playing at?"

"Nothing", I said. "He's afraid, and I'm guarding his fear."

"What is he to you when you're guarding his fear?"

"My brother," I said. He was still smiling. He drew his bayonet and put the top of it into my nostril. He pulled it up for as much as I could lift myself on tiptoe.

"And who are you afraid of?" he asked Mile. Mile kept quiet, looking at his feet.

"He's afraid you might kill him, Mister Soldier," said I, still on tiptoe as if about to fly. I felt my nostril starting to tear and bleed.

"And you're not afraid?"

"Everyone who's little has to have an elder brother to watch over him," I said.

"And where's your elder brother?"

"I don't have one, Mister Soldier", I said. "That's why I'm also afraid when on my own. But I'm not allowed to in front of this boy."

Grinning incessantly, the soldier took me along the street. I walked like that, on my toes, with the bayonet up my torn nostril and people pulling aside to give way. The soldier was truly amused by the whole thing. I guess he expected me to cry. As for myself, out of the immense fear and pain, there was no other thought in my head but the reverberating: don't trip over, you'll lose your nose.

Mile was taken away one night with a group of Gypsies and shot. I remained alive. And whenever I see a Gypsy needing help, I stand by him to guard his fear.

I used to frequent taverns with the best Gypsy groups playing live. They call it a music chapel. I'd hang out with them and cry; make them play Mile's songs to me. They say – there's no such thing. The lyrics don't go like that. And I know that the lyrics go exactly like that, invent a few things as we go along, and gradually now, some good orchestras, such as Tugomir's or Janika Balaž's, or Žarko's band, or Džane's or Miloš Nikolić's from Deronje, are beginning to sing those songs. "Out of respect," Steva, the bassist from Silbaš, tells me. "We feel sorry when you cry. If there are no songs, we'll invent them for you."

So it goes. For years now I've been travelling around and inventing Roma songs. Roma – that's the same as Gypsies – just in Gypsy language Romalen means 'people'. Always capitalized.

And what about Mile Dileja? I don't believe in God. Or the dreadful Čohano. But if it exists somewhere, then I implore it, down there in the world of darkness, of plant roots and silence, to buy a velvet hat for my Mile Dileja. He always wanted to have one so badly.

(Miroslav Antić, 2009)







## ▪ Get to know me

Talk to your class about marginalized groups in their community (Roma, the homeless, victims of violence, recovered addicts...). Then divide them to work in small groups to devise and shoot a documentary about the lives of these people (in the form of an interview, the story of their life, a day with...), that they will later present to the other groups and give their opinions about what they have seen and heard. As inspiration, you can watch the video Don't Laugh at Me<sup>52</sup>.

## ▪ A game in soldiers' boots<sup>53</sup>

This activity can be jointly delivered by history and P.E. teachers. This is an outdoor activity. The history teacher speaks about the Christmas

truce in 1914, when German and British soldiers on the Western Front, to celebrate Christmas in no man's land, for a brief moment, ceased their fire and played a game of football.

In memory of the event, students and teachers play a football game. The two teams can be students vs teachers or mixed teams of both students and teachers. If no match can be played, then discuss the event in the history or homeroom classrooms.

Ask your students: *Were you aware of this event? What emotions does the story stir? What message does it send? Can you put yourself in the shoes of the soldiers?*

52 Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj5V3J8h0uQ&t=32s>

53 <https://noizz.rs/kultura/svet-je-dobio-najbolju-lekciju-u-istoriji-na-bozic-1914/dldtt22>



### **Christmas Day football match in no man's land on 25 December 1914**

It was December 1914. The Great War started gaining pace and the war machinery at the Western Front was working at full speed. In September of the same year the German Empire attacked the French Republic via Belgium, but the invasion was stopped after the First Battle of the Aisne. From November onwards, the war turned into trench warfare between the two armies dug into defensive positions. In the first months the war took away many lives, more than any war that had preceded it, and it was no wonder that the "live and let live" philosophy took root both among civilians and among soldiers. Many peace initiatives were launched in December of the same year to stop the endless bloodshed.

The Open Christmas Letter was a message of peace sent by 101 British suffragists to the women of Germany and Austria in the days that preceded Christmas by the Gregorian calendar. On 7 December 1914, Pope Benedict XV pleaded with the warring powers to hold a Christmas truce. His quotation remains remembered: "that the guns may fall silent at least upon the night the angels sang".

Their pleas were officially ignored by governments.

Yet, on the front, away from the courts where politicians were shaping their destinies, things looked different.

Young people who had been dragged away from their homes and thrown into icy-cold trenches without proper clothing, did not understand why they had to kill and die in the absurd war for them. They were full of life and wanted to meet their enemy. This phenomenon, so unusual in such circumstances, got an official name – fraternization.

Fraternization is a phenomenon which leads to peaceful, at times even friendly, interaction between soldiers from opposing camps. It appeared during prolonged peaceful times in the trenches that were close enough to hear human voices. The fraternization process started as early as in November, a month into the invasion, by soldiers from one trench starting to send greetings and messages to the soldiers on the opposing side, and in time they started responding.

In this case, in the opposing trenches in the north of France the armies of the United Kingdom and the French Republic were on one side, and the German Empire on the opposite side.

Kaiser Wilhelm II ordered one hundred pine and fir trees be sent to the front and trimmed so that the brave German soldiers could have a Christmas tree with them on the holiest of all Christian holidays. British women sent gifts to their dearest who were somewhere in foreign lands facing the enemy, and civilians sent food, tobacco, and medicines by caravan.

As it happened, along the whole front, the gifts, food, and all necessities were left half-way between the trenches, so soldiers would fly white flags and go into no man's land to take the parcels. This is how the first meeting happened.

"Dear Mother, I am writing from the trenches. ... In my mouth is a pipe presented by the Princess Mary. In the pipe is tobacco. Of course, you say. But wait. In the pipe is German tobacco. Ha ha, you say, from a prisoner or found in a captured trench. Oh dear, no! From a German soldier. Yes a live German soldier from his own trench. ... Marvellous, isn't it?" wrote a British soldier to his mother excitedly.

Further on in the letter he wrote about one of his men, who was an amateur hairdresser in civil life, cutting the unnaturally long hair of one of the Kaiser's soldiers, and how he heard his



lieutenant praised to his inferior, an eighteen-year-old German, as the best man he saw there. They exchanged coat buttons.

These meetings became more frequent and ultimately culminated in football matches on no man's land at Christmas, on 25 December 1914. Most of these were matches between the soldiers of the same nationality – all but one.

On that cold December day, on one side there was a combined team of French and British soldiers, and the opposing team were German soldiers.

They played according to the then valid rules and the game was fierce. According to all the recordings that survived to this day, they showed more heart out in the football field kicking a ragball around than they ever did when fighting each other.

The match ended 3:2 in favour of the German Army.

With hugs, congratulations, and wishes to repeat the game next year, they went back to their trenches.

The next year found them in the same place, but the governments of all three armies insisted on prohibiting fraternization and socializing with the enemy. The human face of the enemy was overshadowed by the increase in military and civilian victims, the use of the nerve gas and increasing atrocities on all fronts.

Nevertheless, at least for a day, the sound mind in the sound body won over and young men, students, and workers alike, threw down their guns and left their trenches to run to a field where they played a game of football. Few of them were aware that it was the football match of their lives. A sporting event showed that, even amidst the most dehumanizing period of history to that date, the human spirit and love of freedom won.

Football remains to this day the most popular sport in the Old Continent.



## Empathy quotations

These quotations can be used as warm-up or wrap-up activities or as stand-alone activities, where you give your students a list of quotations and invite them to choose the quotation they like best and say why.

- *We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided.*

J.K. Rowling

- *For there is nothing heavier than compassion. Not even one's own pain weighs so heavy as the pain one feels with someone, for someone, a pain intensified by the imagination and prolonged by a hundred echoes.*

Milan Kundera

- *Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and, therefore, the foundation of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared.*

J.K. Rowling

- *Opinion is really the lowest form of human knowledge. It requires no accountability, no understanding. The highest form of knowledge... is empathy, for it requires us to suspend our egos and live in another's world.*

Bill Bullard

- *Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.*

Leo Buskaglia

- *All I ever wanted was to reach out and touch another human being not just with my hands but with my heart.*

Tahereh Mafi

- *To perceive is to suffer.*

Aristotle

- *Whenever you are about to find fault with someone, ask yourself the following question: What fault of mine most nearly resembles the one I am about to criticize?*

Marcus Aurelius

- *When we focus on others, our world expands. Our own problems drift to the periphery of the mind and so seem smaller, and we increase our capacity for connection - or compassionate action.*

Daniel Goleman

- *I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person.*

Walt Whitman

- *Shame cannot survive being spoken... And being met with empathy.*

Brené Brown







TOLERANCE





# TOLERANCE

*I disapprove of what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it.*

Voltaire

We have heard so many times: *"One should be tolerant", "he lacks tolerance", "Tolerance is necessary for successful communication..."*

"Tolerance" has become somewhat of a buzzword of our times. In the press and electronic media, in formal and informal daily communication, in politics, as well as in other areas of human action, the word "tolerance" has become unavoidable. But, is the presence of the word at the same time proof of the equal presence of the quality that it denotes? Still, no matter how hard modern societies endeavour to have tolerance as a building block in their very foundations, judging by numerous negative phenomena in this country and beyond, characterized by all things opposite to tolerance (misunderstanding, exclusion, intolerance, egoism, hate), it seems we need to learn much more about tolerance and the ways to foster and strengthen it in ourselves personally, as well as in the wider societal context.

- The term itself stems from the Latin word *tolerantia*, meaning compliance, the acceptance of or patience with the beliefs of others, even if one does not agree with them. The word itself comes from the verb *tolerare*, which means to bear, be considerate, to endure, to allow. (Anić, Klaić, Domović, Rječnik stranih reči, Beograd, 2001)
- Tolerance means showing willingness to allow the existence of opinions or behaviours that one does not necessarily

agree with. (Rečnik srpskog jezika, Novi Sad, 2007)

- Tolerance is "respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity," according to the UNESCO definition of the term (Tolerance, 2008).
- The following definition states: *"A person's standpoint is considered tolerant if the person accepts the beliefs of others (even though they differ from his own) and accepts other behavioural patterns which differ from his own."* (Trimarchi & Papeschi, 1995)

Given such semantics and the definition of the term tolerance, the question that is raised is: how tolerant are we actually? Or more precisely – to what extent are we truly tolerant? and what is only a generalized acceptance of some features of tolerance while actually acting opposite to that? How do we respond to all the things that are different from what we are and the firmly engrained patterns of our world views, our religious or ethnic background, political affiliation, sexual orientation, and various affinities, ideas, and attitudes? Are we ready to accept individuals, attitudes, and ideas that are different from or even in opposition to ours? Are we flexible enough to respect the possibility of the equal existence of something different and are we ready to accept and respect what is different equally as what is ours? And finally, are we wise enough to know that this is the only way for us to expect the same in return, i.e. for what we stand for to be respected and accepted no matter how distant and alien it might seem to others? In order to be truly tolerant, we must have a strong desire to learn and develop, and the awareness that one can always do more and do better, that it is up to each individual not only how understanding we will be towards each other in our immediate environment, but also how the world we live in will continue to develop, whether seen globally, regionally, or locally.

Tolerance is, actually, closely linked with empathy. How able we are to put ourselves in the shoes of another person and understand



their feelings shows that we cannot be tolerant if we are not empathetic. The two are inseparable. Moreover, the experience of today's classrooms – as meeting places of numerous differences – show that taking different points of view encourages students' thinking by being much more complex, more critical, seeking more sources of information, etc.

### The teacher's role

The school has to find various ways of raising awareness of human rights, but also human duties, that stem from morality: to be accepted and to accept, to be respected and to respect, to be understood and to understand the next person, regardless of how atypical, different, or unusual they might be.

The teacher's personality is thus vital. He/she has to possess self-awareness about setting an example for his/her students. The teacher can be a role model for tolerance, but equally so for rigidity and exclusion. Which one will he/she choose? His/her every action sends a message, sets a pattern, serves as a model. In other words, encouraging and expanding tolerance among young people requires a tolerant teacher, being aware of his/her own influence. If the teacher holds the potential within, at every step of the way he/she will continue developing this virtue. In addition, numerous paths for action will open up in any classroom. To name but a few:

- conducting a dialogue on the differences students observe in their immediate environment, but also in films, literature, art, society, sport, etc.;
- creating a classroom climate based on mutual respect, acceptance, assistance, and collaboration;
- developing awareness of personal freedom as a finite space; acceptance and understanding of the fact that our freedom extends only until it endangers the freedom of others, and acting accordingly;
- developing critical thinking skills;
- shattering stereotypes and prejudices as the most frequent causes of intolerance;

- studying other cultures, traditions, habits, customs, lifestyles and developing awareness that true richness lies in the wealth of the multifaceted, infinite possibilities of choice and creation, i.e. richness in diversity, not uniformity, like-mindedness, or single-mindedness.

Young people should also recognize, learn, and apply in their interactions with the world, and should be assisted by their teachers in this, the fact that tolerance is in no way suffering, and that it has its boundaries. We must not have understanding or tolerance for any form of verbal or physical assault, or any form of hatred or any negative and malicious actions of others that go against any of our rights or freedoms.





## WORKSHOP: Similarities and differences

### Goals:

Students will:

- analyse mutual similarities and differences
- consider the importance of tolerance and the ways to encourage tolerance among people

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Material:** internet connection; a link to the short film The DNA Journey

\* \* \*



### What do we have in common?<sup>54</sup> (15 min)

Divide the class into groups and tell them to recall the things they have in common (the list can include things such as the school they attend, the music they like, etc., but also the values, virtues, and skills they share). Make sure to remind the students that the exercise does not ask for similarities in physical appearance. The groups have three minutes at their disposal to complete the task. When the time is up, check which group has the longest list and ask them to read it out loud.

Questions to prompt the discussion:

- Was it easy to find similarities with other group members?
- How can similarities connect us even further?
- Do the differences set us apart?

<sup>54</sup> More ideas available at: <http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/conf/HSHT-Team-Building-Ice-Breaker-Manual-2008-09.pdf>.



### The DNA Journey<sup>55</sup> (15 min.)

Announce to the class that you are going to watch a very interesting film. Once it has finished, ask the class whether they can guess, based on the warm-up activity and the film, which virtue will be the topic of the workshop. Ask them about the attitudes they observed in the actors in the film and what consequences such attitudes have. *What did the test reveal? What power do you think such films have? Do you know of any similar examples? What power does the media have in promoting tolerance? What about families and schools?*



### Tolerance is... (15 min)

Ask your students:

- What does tolerance mean and what other qualities and virtues support tolerance? What is conducive to developing a tolerant attitude?
- Do you consider yourself tolerant, and to what extent?
- Have you ever been a victim of intolerance and how did you react?
- How do you understand the quotation by Marko Miljanov: "Bravery is to defend yourself from others, and humanity is to defend others from yourself"?



<sup>55</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZ3PzIW9eDA>.



## OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Modelled against this workshop, the following activities can be combined, done on their own, or with some other introductory and final games. Through these activities, students learn about tolerance, think about this virtue and its connections with other social and emotional skills, and work on developing it in themselves.

### ▪ In the Name of Identity

Starting from a harmless, frequently asked question, the French author and academician Amin Maalouf examines in his essay the notion of identity, the passion that identity stirs, and its deadly consequences. Maalouf asks: Why is it so difficult to accept all our identities? Why

must self-assertion so often be accompanied with the denigration of the other and of what is different? Will there always be violence in our societies just because we do not all share the same religion, the same skin colour, or the same cultural background? Will there be a law of nature or a law of people that will condemn people who kill each other in the name of their identity?<sup>56</sup> Read out loud the excerpt from Maalouf's essay *In the Name of Identity*. Discuss how the author defines identity, what constitutes the wealth of every human being. What is the main message of the text?

<sup>56</sup> For more details please refer to: [https://www.laguna.rs/n3051\\_knjiga\\_ubilacki\\_identiteti\\_laguna.html](https://www.laguna.rs/n3051_knjiga_ubilacki_identiteti_laguna.html).



## Identity card

*What's known as an identity card carries the holder's family name, given name, date and place of birth, photograph, a list of certain physical features, the holder's signature, and sometimes also his fingerprints—a whole array of details designed to prove without a shadow of doubt or confusion that the bearer of the document is so-and-so, and that amongst all the millions of other human beings there isn't one—not even his double or his twin brother—for whom he could be mistaken. My identity is what prevents me from being identical to anybody else. Defined in this way the word identity reflects a fairly precise idea—one which in theory should not give rise to confusion. Do we really need lengthy arguments to prove that there are not and cannot be two identical individuals? Even if in the near future someone manages, as we fear they may, to “clone” human beings, the clones would at best be identical only at the time of their “birth”; as soon as they started to live they would start being different. Each individual's identity is made up of a number of elements, and these are clearly not restricted to the particulars set down in official records. Of course, for the great majority, these factors include allegiance to a religious tradition; to a nationality, sometimes two; to a profession, an institution, or a particular social milieu.*

*But the list is much longer than that; it is virtually unlimited. A person may feel a more or less strong attachment to a province, a village, a neighbourhood, a clan, a professional team, or one connected with sport, a group of friends, a union, a company, a parish, a community of people with the same passions, the same sexual preferences, the same physical handicaps, or who have to deal with the same kind of pollution or other nuisance. Of course, not all these allegiances are equally strong, at least at any given moment. But none is entirely insignificant, either. All are components of personality—we might almost call them “genes of the soul” so long as we remember that most of them are not innate. While each of these elements may be found separately in many individuals, the same combination of them is never encountered in different people, and it's this that gives every individual richness and value and makes each human being unique and irreplaceable. It can happen that some incident, a fortunate or unfortunate accident, even a chance encounter, influences our sense of identity more strongly than any ancient affiliation.*

(Maalouf, 2016)

## ▪ Stereotypes

Divide the board into two columns headed Women and Men. Tell the class to write down on post-it notes the words and expressions typical of each of the two categories. Some of the typical responses might be:

**Women** – loving, caring, love shopping, love flowers, cry easily, long hair, etc.

**Men** – active, love sports, short hair, hard-working, lorry drivers, strong, etc.

After that, divide the class into several groups to share their lists with other members of the same group and add additional words or phrases describing women and men.

Write their examples on the board and ask some of the following questions:

- *How do you like the list that you came up with? Would you change anything?*
- *Are there any words wrongly attached to a category? Are there any terms that can go under both columns?*
- *Is it the right thing to say “All women are ...” or “All men are...”?*
- *Which behaviours are tolerated in girls and women, but not in boys and men, and vice versa?*
- *Why are there so many more men than women among top managers, for instance government ministers, business executives,*

etc.? Or, why are there so few women in those positions? Are such roles set by written or unwritten conventions? Why are there so few male nurses or preschool teachers? Why is it believed that these are “women’s jobs”?

- What type of household chores do you do? See if there are any differences between boys and girls.

Write the word *stereotype* across the board. Ask your students whether they know its meaning. Write down the dictionary definition. A stereotype means that all members of a group exhibit the same features characteristics for the group.

Write the following statements on the board:

*All elderly people are forgetful.*

*Men are better mathematicians than women.*

*African Americans are the best basketball players.*

Allow the class several minutes to ponder over the statements and then ask them to share their thoughts. Lead them to the conclusion that these statements are too generalized to be true; prompt them to realize that it is not right to form such attitudes. Help your students see the connection between the expressions and the notion of a stereotype.

Ask your students to recall other stereotypes. Tell them to write down and mark the most interesting ones. Write some examples on the board.

*People who wear prescription glasses are smart.*

*Poor people are lazy.*

*Women cook better than men.*

*All doctors are rich.*

Discuss these stereotypes and ask your students whether they think the statements are true. Ask them how they felt during the activity,



what they learned and whether anything during the lesson made them sad or angry. The students are supposed to write down several paragraphs explaining what they have learned from the activity; they need to cite some of the stereotypical statements and explain why they are wrong.

### ▪ The Story of Leila and Muhammed

Divide the class into several groups. Each group gets a copy of the story. Their task is to assess the characters in the story using the chart attached. Members of the group are allowed to have dissenting opinions.

Draw the same table on the board and enter the marks given by groups while reporting back to the plenary. Add all the marks up and calculate the average class mark for each character. It is important also to note down the arguments students give for their marks. Once done, read the solution to the story.



### The Story of Leila and Muhammed<sup>57</sup>

The Nile is a large and long river inhabited by crocodiles, and with bridges to cross the river being few and far between.

LEILA lives by the riverbank. LEILA is 17 and madly in love with MUHAMMED, who lives on the opposite side of the river. LEILA decides to visit her beloved and approaches AHMED, asking him to take her to the other side. Although AHMED has both the time and the boat to do so, he doesn't want to take LEILA to the other side.

LEILA doesn't give up and goes to TARIQ to ask him to take her across. TARIQ agrees, but only on the condition that LEILA spends the night with him and leaves first thing in the morning. So it happens. LEILA wanted to see MUHAMMED so much that she agreed to spend the night with TARIQ and early in the morning he takes her to the other side.

LEILA is excited and runs into the arms of her beloved and tells him about the difficulties she had getting to him. MUHAMMED pushes her away.

Overwhelmed with grief, LEILA walks along the river trying hard not to cry. Then she meets JAFAR. JAFAR asks her why she is so sad and crying. LEILA tells him her story.

JAFAR goes to MUHAMMED and slaps him hard twice without saying a word...

<sup>57</sup> One of the possible online sources: [http://sjz.ba/uimages/novosti/PNHP%20kurikulum\\_2012.pdf](http://sjz.ba/uimages/novosti/PNHP%20kurikulum_2012.pdf).

### Scoreboard

Marks for actions of characters (1 to 5 and cannot be used twice)

Leila	Muhammed	Ahmed	Tariq	Jafar

After summing up the marks and arguments propounded by all groups, read the key. Discuss how they filled in the blanks, formed their attitudes without having enough information. This leads to the notion of prejudice: how they are formed, how dangerous they are, how to fight prejudice, etc.

### Key:

*Leila is a seventeen-year-old schoolgirl, and Muhammed is her teacher. He is happily married. Ahmed is also a teacher in the same school, Muhammed's co-worker. Tariq is Leila's grandfather who has not seen his favourite granddaughter in a while. The two of them spent the night drinking tea and talking. Jafar is a psychopathic killer and it is sheer luck that he just slapped Muhammed.*

## ▪ Alan Turing

Read out loud Alan Turing's biography. If possible, play the film.

**Alan Turing** was a British scientist born in 1912 in London. From early days of his schooling he showed affinities for science. During World War II, Turing worked as an expert for cracking Nazi codes for the Allied Forces, which considerably reduced the advantage of German forces.

During this period Turing invented a machine able to quickly break any German code, going through hundreds of options in a second. Turing's machine and the team were so quick at breaking the codes that German Supreme Command was convinced it had a British spy among its ranks. Turing was also responsible for cracking the infamous naval Enigma code, used by the Axis powers. During the war he went to the USA, continuing his work on cryptanalysis and building another similar machine. Thus, he greatly contributed to the Allies winning the war.

After the war, Turing continued to contribute to science until he committed suicide. It is believed that Turing committed suicide due to the chemical castration that he was subjected to because he was convicted of indecency, or more precisely homosexuality.

Subsequently, Turing was pardoned and received a posthumous apology from the British Government for the conviction and the punishment applied then for homosexuality in Great Britain.

The "Alan Turing Law" is now an informal term for the 2017 law in the United Kingdom that retroactively pardoned men cautioned or convicted under historical legislation that outlawed homosexual acts.

Questions to prompt discussion in smaller groups:

- *To what extent is society in general today more tolerant compared to Turing's time? What about our society?*
- *How would you react to protect someone in a similar situation?*
- *Do we as a society sufficiently respect diversity in sexual orientation?*
- *Are you aware of any example similar to Turing's?*

Invite groups to write on behalf of the British Government a pardon and public apology to Turing.

You can suggest to your students that they watch the film *Bohemian Rhapsody* about the band *Queen* and its frontman Freddie Mercury. In

addition to discussing tolerance and respecting differences in sexual orientation, this film can provoke discussion about friendship, loyalty, honesty, empathy, optimism, and gratitude.



## ▪ Ahmet and Pava

Read out loud the story about Ahmet and Pava.<sup>58</sup> Then discuss:

58 For more details see: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/legenda-o-pavi-i-ahmetu-proglasena-kulturnim-dobrom-crne-gore/27499130.html>.

### Ahmet and Pava

Legend has it that the only daughter of the Duke of Vraneš Nikola Milikić, Pava, got married three and a half centuries ago to Ahmet-Pasha Hasanbegović, who, after many years of being away from his birthplace, returned to Vraneš and fell in love with the beautiful Pava. They decided to get married and agreed that each would keep their religion, their sons would be Muslims, and their daughters Orthodox Christians. Thus, triplets were born – Muša, Hasan and Daut – who would mount horses with gold-plated adornments to take their mother each Sunday to church and wait for her in front of the church door for the service to finish. During her second childbirth, while giving birth to her daughter Anđelija, Pava died. The two of them were buried together, and Ahmet-Pasha, as a sign of his immense love and respect for Pava, named the estates that she had brought as her dowry Pavino polje (Pava's Field). When Ahmet was dying, he had one wish: to be buried next to Pava. To this day, two tombstones, one with an engraved cross, the other with a crescent, remain in Pavino polje – on the road to Pljevlja – as a testimony to their great love.

Prompt the discussion:

*What is the message of the story? Are you aware of similar examples? What kind of an example do Ahmet and Pava set? Are you surprised to hear that in Montenegro at the time it was possible to have such a relationship? Would you enter into a relationship (marriage) with a person of different religious/ethnic background? Explain why (if the answer is no) and similar questions...*

Finally, you can listen to the song *Nevernik* (Infidel) by Đorđe Balašević.<sup>59</sup> Discuss the impressions, how they perceive the lyrics: *Her family didn't like me / They asked too much about my origin...*

59 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHiqm9bGsF8>.

## ▪ A woman who made sitting on a bus a milestone of history<sup>60</sup>

This activity is suited for the history, sociology, or civic education classrooms.

Read the story out loud, and then start the discussion: Rosa Parks clearly broke the law when she refused to give up her seat on the

bus for a white person. Discuss how in this case breaching the law was justified. *What could Rosa Parks have done instead of breaking the law? Would such actions have had the same effect? Rosa Parks risked her life for an idea – the right to equal access to public transportation. Would you be ready to assume a similar risk for something you believe in? If yes, please explain.*

60 For more details about Rosa Parks please refer to: <https://6yka.com/novosti/rosa-parks-majka-modernog-pokreta-zaljudska-prava>; <http://www.znanje.org/i/i2011/11iv07/11iv0720/bojkot%20autobusa.htm>.

**Rosa Parks** (1913–2005) was an African American human rights activist and a seamstress called by the US Congress “the mother of the freedom movement”. She became known when on 1 December 1955 she got on a bus in Montgomery. She took the first unoccupied seat in the “coloured section” next to the whites-only section. After she sat down, the bus driver ordered her and three other African American passengers to relinquish their seats to white passengers who had just got on the bus, and there were no unoccupied seats either in the whites-only or the coloured sections. The remaining three passengers did as they were told. Rose Parks refused to relinquish her seat to a white passenger and remained seated calmly. As a result, she was arrested. **The arrest of Rosa Parks and the ensuing court trial – on the count of civil disobedience – resulted in boycotts of bus transportation in Montgomery.** The role of Rosa Parks in American history made her an icon in American culture, and her actions gave legality to civil rights movements worldwide.

In 1992, she published *Rosa Parks: My Story*, an autobiography aimed at younger readers, which recounts her life leading up to her decision to keep her seat on the bus.

### ▪ Mahatma Gandhi

This activity may be done in the history, sociology or civic education classrooms.

Ask your students what they know about Gandhi. Prompt the discussion with the following questions:

- *Were Gandhi's actions in line with his beliefs?*
- *Why is Gandhi considered a man of exceptional character?*
- *What other leaders can be compared to Gandhi?*
- *How do you show kindness?*
- *Can you recall when you were kind to others? How did you feel then?*
- *Do you believe that people have a moral duty to be kind to others?*

Following the discussion, divide the class into several groups to make an inspirational poster based on Gandhi's words.<sup>61</sup>

*Can such words of wisdom encourage us to make the right decision and do the right thing in face of adversity?* Help your students compare Gandhi's

non-violent protests with the protests of Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, or the civil rights movement.<sup>62</sup>

### ▪ Grandson

Introduce the story about Rainer Höss, the grandson of an Auschwitz Commandant, about his quest for the truth, his own research and rethinking, his struggle, relationship with survivors, with his own family, and then play the documentary *Grandson* about his life. After watching the documentary, each student is supposed to share his or her impression and how they perceive the film and the emotions it stirs.

<sup>61</sup> For more details please refer to: <https://www.google.me/amp/mudrac.com/magazin/procitajte/mahatma-gandhi-10-pravila-koja-menjaju-svet/amp/>.

<sup>62</sup> For more detail please refer to: [https://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokret\\_zagranica\\_91anska\\_prava\\_\(SAD\)](https://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokret_zagranica_91anska_prava_(SAD)).

### Enkel<sup>63</sup>

The documentary film *Enkel* is a story about facing the most monstrous crimes in the history of humankind – the Holocaust – from the perspective of the grandson of Auschwitz Commandant, Rainer Höss, and the survivor Eva Mozes Kor, who agreed in 2014 to symbolically adopt him as her grandson. The two of them signed a pledge for the joint struggle against racism, antisemitism, and xenophobia in today's world.

Rainer Höss is the grandson of Rudolf Franz Ferdinand Höss, who was hanged on 16 April 1947 in Auschwitz for killing two and a half million Jews. Rudolf Höss organized in Auschwitz the systematic extermination of Jews in gas chambers and crematoria within the Nazi project known as the Final Solution, and in spring 1944 he killed 425,000 men, women and children from Hungary in 56 days. During World War II, Bačka was under Hungarian occupation and in 1944 over 10,000 Jews from that area were taken to Auschwitz to their deaths.

As Auschwitz Commandant, Rudolf lived with his family in a villa by the camp, so that Rainer's father Hans Juergen and his three sisters and brother played in the yard not more than 100 metres away from the crematorium where people were burned to death.

After killing over 10,000 people every day, Reiner's grandfather would arrive back home from work and lead a "normal family life".

Rainer Höss, the grandson of a mass murderer, is actually a tragic figure fighting with the ghosts of the past to protect his own children and grandchildren against the dark family legacy.

63 Source: <https://youtu.be/onVRhRv4mx0>.

### ▪ A few more films

Some claim that the film *Philadelphia* alone contributed more to shattering homophobia than any campaign conducted at the time (the film was made in 1993) in America. These are just a few suggestions, and if you have a school film club, you will certainly extend the list of films suitable for fostering tolerance together with your students:

**Philadelphia**, a film about a homosexual who contracted AIDS and who suffered discrimination both on account of his illness and his sexual orientation.

**Milk**, a film about Harvey Milk, the first gay activist who was voted into public office in California, only to be assassinated later.

**The Danish Girl**, a film based on a true story of two artists, in which one partner decides for gender reassignment surgery, one of the first ever.





## Tolerance quotations

As is the case with other virtues, you can use the quotations in warm-up or wrap-up activities or as stand-alone activities where students choose the quotations they like the most.

- *The highest result of education is tolerance.*  
Helen Keller
- *The most sublime act is to set another before you.*  
William Blake
- *The test of courage comes when we are in the minority; the test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority.*  
Ralph Sockman
- *Tolerance is the ability to forgive those who tend to speak before thinking.*  
Catherine Pulsifer
- *Toleration is the greatest gift of the mind; it requires the same effort of the brain that it takes to balance oneself on a bicycle.*  
Helen Keller
- *He who would practice the art of tolerance must guard well against an attitude of superiority, smugness, indifference, and coldness. These qualities are tolerance turned wrong side out.*  
Wilfred Peterson
- *Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding.*  
Mahatma Gandhi
- *For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.*  
Nelson Mandela
- *Tolerance is possessing a heart or a spirit that gives room at all times for people's weakness and imperfection with a view to fostering peace and promoting friendship.*  
Bishop Dr John Ibenu
- *I identify tolerance as a personal and world issue, one that is fundamentally important for the welfare of people. ... I define tolerance as an action-oriented doctrine requiring more than passive acceptance of other people. Involved, active, caring tolerance is part of the way to meet challenges we face in neighbourhoods and among the nations of the world.*  
John Carmack
- *Laws alone cannot secure freedom of expression; in order that every man present his views without penalty, there must be spirit of tolerance in the entire population.*  
Albert Einstein
- *If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships – the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace.*  
Franklin D. Roosevelt
- *Tolerance is a fundamental character trait of great people and a part of the attitudes and practices of those we admire and respect. People without tolerance are diminished and poor.*  
John Carmack





OPTIMISM







# OPTIMISM

*For as long as there is darkness, there will be a dawn.*

I. Andrić

People today often feel that reality makes them worried, depressed, and anxious. Anxiety has become one of the most prevalent existential conditions. Burdened with duties, and daily family, business, financial, and social issues, we tend to paint a gloomy picture of life and the world around us, and often perceive things to be much worse than they actually are. Nevertheless, modern science proves that it is possible to dispel such dark clouds and not allow the dark side of our being to push the rest aside.

Optimism is a positive outlook on the future. To a large degree, optimism is the result of rational thinking, a chosen point of view, as a result of the comprehension that we ourselves choose the angle to take when looking at a phenomenon or a problem. This certainly does not mean that the world is to be seen through rose-coloured glasses or to laugh when there is nothing to laugh about. This does not mean that we are to expect a favourable outcome when circumstances are clearly and indubitably bad. This does not mean either that our understanding of the given life circumstances or of people should be unrealistic, or that we should claim something to be good and nice, when it is clearly far from it. Optimism means the strength to face an unpleasant truth, retain control in the hardest of times, and the conviction that a positive outcome is possible, particularly if we invest effort to achieve what we are striving for.

Recent research (Seligman, 1990)<sup>64</sup> shows that people are more prone to optimism than pessimism. People often naïvely wish to believe that bad things happen to somebody else, somewhere else, not in their closest environment or to themselves. People tend to believe that death, disease, divorce, loss of job, an unwanted pregnancy, or the breakup of a longstanding relationship will happen to somebody else, not them. Then the storms come and we can hardly stand on our feet. This is unfounded and unrealistic optimism, which can only turn out badly – without being ready to face difficult situations in life, to fight with oneself in times of crisis, which can lead to new problems and new challenges, too difficult for an excessive optimist.

That is why it is important to say that the only type of optimism that is welcome is one based on reason and thinking, and which, apart from the belief that everything will turn out right eventually, has also developed precautionary measures, in case things take an unwanted turn. Realistic optimism gives the necessary momentum, the positive impulse, the internal power to move forward, to fight, despite adversity, but also to have a back-up plan, a forced landing technique in unwelcome territories. A realistic optimist is aware that at times he/she might face greater or lesser challenges but is convinced that he/she will be able to deal with them, investing efforts and using his/her own abilities and experiences.

By way of example, constant changes in the labour market and the fact that one cannot count on a single steady and stable path are a frequent challenge for the modern human. However, if one is focused on realistic and achievable goals and is able to see the big picture and identify as many options as possible which can lead to the desired goal, than one will see the challenges as an opportunity to grow stronger, to gain new experiences, and for overall progress.

<sup>64</sup> <http://positivepsychology.org.uk/optimism-pessimism-theory/>.

To that effect, a pessimistic outlook is not necessarily a bad one, particularly when it comes to one's job and career. Of course, we do not imply here the kind of pessimism which is characterized by fatalism, but rather a defensive pessimism which helps deal with problems if things go wrong, in such a way as to be armed and prepared to fight, no matter what might befall us. This kind of pessimism prepares us for uncertainties and helps foresee steps for addressing possible problems. Those who are pessimistically defensive regarding their future will probably invest more in preparatory or precautionary measures. One has only to be careful not to go too far in that direction.

### ***The teacher's role***

Young people need to be shown how indispensable optimism is, but the sound and reasonable kind of optimism, which includes a rational understanding of their own abilities, skills, and powers. In the words of a wise man – we all come to this world armed, we just need to see what arms we have and use them wisely in pursuit of our goals. Good self-assessment is a good precondition for realistic optimism. Given that young people are, on one hand, aware of various risks and dangers, and on the other are convinced that nothing bad will happen to them, a teacher is the one who needs to be calling them all the time to reason and reminding them, testifying with his/her knowledge and experiences, that this is not the case.

Students also need encouragement to set and achieve their goals. We need to stand ready to praise everything that is a result of their true efforts and commitment. A teacher should think and put in place the preconditions for every student, within their abilities and under the right circumstances, to feel success in what he/she is doing and where he/she is investing efforts persistently.

Thus, the teacher sends a message of having faith in students and knowing that they can

do it (in greater quality and quantity, despite the obstacles) and supports them along the way until they succeed. By being encouraging, by engaging in long patient talks, by pointing out to all the potentials that students still fail to see as sound and important, the teacher will manage to prevent them from giving up at the times of dispiritedness. (Giving praise overly lightly – “great... good job... well done” – where no effort has been invested can do more harm than good.)

Moreover, young people need to be taught not to blame and hate themselves when they make a mistake. Error is an integral part of learning. No success in life has ever come without some impediment being encountered or error being made. Students need to be assisted in seeing the silver lining. For instance: *Had I not failed English, I would have never understood how important it is and how much I love it. I spent the summer studying, and it helped me set the firm foundations for a foreign language that I would need in my future job, given that I want to be a programmer.*

The stories about the lives and work of famous scientists, artists, and athletes who had to overcome numerous obstacles and to come to terms with their errors before succeeding are also very effective. Perseverance, self-control, and self-confidence are inseparable from realistic optimism. All those features put together make a young person feel, and actually be, successful.

Starting with the first autonomous step, children – adolescents included – never stop being fascinated with their own achievements. This makes them proud, happy, self-confident, powerful, and bigger – all of which are sources of optimism (I can when I want to... if I try hard... and I will be able to do the same in the future!). The teacher should encourage any attempt at independent work in students, even with all their imperfections visible. The feeling a young person has when he/she has seen something through, completed it – accompanied by realistic praise – does wonders for developing

optimism, but also for self-esteem and self-confidence. Even better independent creations may develop from there, generating even more satisfaction with oneself and life in general.

The teacher's optimistic attitude towards life, towards work and his/her students, is desirable and welcome, both for creating a pleasant classroom climate, and for developing optimism in the students. By showing understanding if a lesson has remained unlearned or a test has been done poorly, and by believing things will get better in future, the teacher conveys such a pattern of behaviour to his/her students and leads them to understand that, yes, they did make mistakes, but not everything was lost,

and things can be changed for the better if they invest effort. Thus, any information about a failure or a poorer-than-expected result or mark should be accompanied by the teacher's belief that it was something temporary, and by the desire to solve the problem together. Your well-intentioned smile, understanding look, kind and loving word, a handful of well-intentioned humour are sometimes worth more than many lessons in biology or history or any other subject. Not only does it provoke love in your students and instil a positive attitude towards people and life in general, but such gestures also bring your subject closer to their hearts and make it more readily achievable.





## Workshop: Why optimism is important

### Goals:

Students will:

- understand the difference between realistic and unrealistic optimism
- analyse how optimistic and pessimistic views affect feelings, behaviour, and self-image

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Material:** board, paper, chalk

\* \* \*



### A glass of water (10 min)

Draw on the board a picture that we all know, more or less: a half-filled glass of water – and ask your students what they see. Who among them sees a half-full or a half-empty glass?

Record on the board the number of each response.

*What can we conclude about ourselves by this example?* The goal is for students to understand that the point is not whether we are right or wrong, but rather that we observe, understand, and interpret things and phenomena differently. Some saw the glass half-full, some half-empty... *Although we were looking at the same thing (a glass of water), we perceived it differently and gave different interpretations of what we saw. This is something innate to all people.*

Instead or after the example with the glass of water, you can use the following anecdote:

*Two shoe salesmen were sent to explore export markets in the Pacific islands. One sent a telegram saying: Regretfully, no one here is wearing shoes. Stop. Coming back immediately. The other sent the message: No one here is wearing shoes. Stop. Send all that you have in stock.*

Tell the class that this was just a warm-up and a symbolic way of starting a discussion about two attitudes to life: the optimistic and the pessimistic ones. These attitudes depend on many factors (e.g. current feelings, needs) and on ourselves (what situation we are in, what event we are responding to, who are the people around us), and as such are not unchangeable. It is possible to learn how to respond to life events with realistic optimism.



### What is optimism and what is pessimism? (5 min)

In a short discussion check what meanings students ascribe to the notion of optimism. What do they mean by optimism, and what do they mean by pessimism? Do they make any difference between realistic and unrealistic optimism? Use the information from theoretical inputs to help students understand the difference if they fail to see it.



### Talking to oneself (30 min)

Invite your students to think of a (recent) situation that was unpleasant, painful, or challenging for them (e.g. with their parents, peers, in school, or with a partner). Then divide them into groups of four (pairs from two adjacent desks) to share the descriptions of such situations.

Remind them that all of us, in such situations, may feel disappointment, anger with ourselves and others, or see no light at the end of the tunnel. Then we talk to ourselves – an internal monologue – and send messages to ourselves. Some can be unpleasant (e.g. accusing, self-derogatory), and some the opposite (e.g. comforting or encouraging ourselves).

*What negative messages did you have for yourself in the situation? (E.g. I'm cursed... this can only happen to me... I deserve that, since I'm like this...).* Students are supposed to share these messages within their groups and make a short list of negative messages they have sent themselves in such situations.

Now the group task is to think together about whether the negative messages are accurate (analyse each message individually):

- *Am I truly the way I describe myself in this situation?*
- *Which of my characteristics/actions/abilities says the opposite?*
- *Can the situation I am describing be seen from different angles? How do others see it? (peer suggestions)*

- *What have I learned about myself, others?*
- *What strengths/abilities/skills/experiences can I rely on to respond with more optimism in subsequent situations? Do you recognize the link between optimism and other social and emotional skills?*

Finally, they can mention some people they are close to or other personalities whom they see as role models for optimism and recall the messages that others often give us when we need encouragement, for example: chin up – hang on; there is always light at the end of the tunnel; when a door closes, a window opens; when life serves you lemons, make lemonade; after the rain, comes the sun...







## OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Modelled on the workshop, the activities below may be combined, done independently or with some other warm-up or wrap-up activities. Through these activities, students learn about optimism, think about the significance of optimism for success in life, as well as the preservation of their physical and mental health. By extension, it fosters optimism.

### ▪ **The world can do nothing to a man who sings in the face of adversity**

Read out loud the excerpt from Sabato's essay *The Resistance*. Ask them about the feelings stirred in them by what they have heard. *Which sentences in particular speak of the significance of optimism? What values, often forgotten today, are stressed by Sabato? What is the link between optimism and other social and emotional skills? Do they know any quotations about optimism?*

*A human being is capable of turning obstacles into new paths, because in life, in order to regenerate, a space the size of a crack would suffice. In doing so, the paramount thing is not to stifle what can keep us alive, to defend, as was heroically done by oppressed nations, a tradition which shows how sacred a human being is. Not to allow the appeal of small moments of freedom that we can enjoy slip away from us: sitting together at the table with the ones we hold dear, helping the helpless, taking long strolls into the woods, the gratefulness we feel in somebody's arms... The world can do no harm to a person who sings in the face of adversity.*

(Ernesto Sabato, 2004)

### ▪ **Let's learn from those who persevered despite incredible obstacles**

Tell your students to search for the biographies of famous people who managed, thanks to their optimism, to overcome almost insurmountable obstacles. Here we will give only some examples of famous personalities who were not halted on their path to success even by major health issues. Your students can look for other similar examples, but can also learn about the biographies of other famous personalities that encountered obstacles of a different nature on their path to success. Generally speaking, all people, famous and successful personalities

included, experience failures and overcome numerous obstacles in the course of their lives and careers. Teenagers tend to think that careers are stable and unchangeable; however, the reality is somewhat different... Thus, it is important to discuss with them the significance of perseverance and believing in one's dreams. Encourage your students to discuss what they have learned from the biographies below<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> You may expand the list, for instance, by the very inspiring biography of Stephen Hawking, and the activity will be more effective if students themselves do the research and take as many examples as possible.

## Helen Keller<sup>66</sup>

*When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.* Helen Keller

Decades before the dawn of the positive psychology movement and a century before what neuroscience taught us about the benefits of optimism, Helen Keller, a remarkable woman who grew up without sight and hearing until, with the help of her teacher Anne Sullivan she learned to speak, read and write, in 1903 published a timeless treatise on optimism as a philosophy of life, simply titled *Optimism*<sup>67</sup>.

Helen Adams Keller was born on 27 June 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama. She talked when she was six months old, and started walking after she turned one. However, in 1882 Helen contracted an illness diagnosed by doctors as brain inflammation. Her actual diagnosis remains unknown to this date, but some experts think it was meningitis. After several days her parents noticed that Helen was not responding to any movement. When she was 18 months old, Helen lost both her sight and her hearing. When she turned six, Helen had frequent tantrums that later, in her autobiography, she described as a consequence of the absence of any form of communication with the outer world.

Helen Keller's life changed radically in 1887. In March of that year, Anne Sullivan, her teacher, came to Tuscumbia. At first, Helen was very hostile and unapproachable. She lived with Anne in a house in the garden adjacent to her parents' home. With almost unsurmountable difficulties, and with tremendous patience, Anne first taught the girl by spelling words on her hand. Then she taught her to speak and understand loud speech by mutually touching the lips and the throat. Helen increasingly showed her intellectual giftedness and her wish to learn – after a month she had learned 21 words, after a year 900 words in the hand alphabet. She soon learned the Braille system and started writing even longer letters. When she was 14, the teaching she had received until then was replaced by formal education, and at the age of 18 she was accepted into regular high school. Anne did not leave her, but was instrumental in her education.

With such assistance, Helen was able to cover the curriculum, and at the age of 19 she started reading literature and history at university. She graduated from Radcliffe College in 1904. She learned to read in four languages and became a prominent author. Later, she became an inspector for the American institutes for the deaf and mute. She published several books that have been translated into foreign languages: *The Story of My Life* (1902), *Optimism* (1903), *The World I Live In* (1908), and others. Her books were about her extraordinary destiny. Helen was skilled at horse-back riding, swimming, sailing, and cycling. She enjoyed the jokes and wit of Mark Twain, reading his works with the tips of her fingers. Enrico Caruso also poured his golden voice over the palm of her hand. Jascha Heifetz, a virtuoso, played his violin especially for her, while she lightly touched his instrument. Helen died in 1968, at the age of 87, and is today mentioned worldwide with great respect and admiration. She devoted her whole life to helping the deaf and the blind, whom she often referred to as the loneliest people alive, that they are the ones "staring into the dark with nothing but the dark staring back".

<sup>66</sup> For more details please refer to: <http://srednjeskole.edukacija.rs/biografije-poznatih-licnosti/helen-keler>; [https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr-el/%D0%A5%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD\\_%D0%9A%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%80](https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr-el/%D0%A5%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD_%D0%9A%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%80).

<sup>67</sup> 71 For more details please refer to: <https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/06/21/helen-keller-on-optimism/>.

### Frida Kahlo<sup>68</sup>

*I am not sick. I am broken. But I am happy to be alive as long as I can paint.* Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo (1907–1954) was a Mexican painter. At the age of six, she contracted polio, leaving her right leg much thinner than her left leg. She used to hide this with long colourful dresses later in her life. She despised showing any sign of weakness and she never cried. She could not skip with a rope, but she practiced wrestling and boxing instead, and swam faster than the other girls of her age. In September 1925 she was in a traffic accident, when a bus and a tram collided. No one believed she would survive. Following the accident, she had 32 surgeries. She was bed-ridden for four months. To keep her from depression, her mother brought her brushes and a painting canvas.

This is how her passion for painting was born. She was the first Mexican painter whose work was exhibited in the Louvre in Paris. Not even then, in 1939, when her first painting was bought, did she believe she was famous. Relying on her personal experiences, including her marriage, miscarriages, and numerous surgeries, her works often feature a sharp presentation of pain. Out of her 143 paintings, 55 are self-portraits, often with a symbolic presentation of her physical and mental wounds. She used to say: *"I never paint dreams or nightmares. I paint my own reality."*

68 More details available at: [https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr-el/%D0%A4%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B0\\_%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BE](https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr-el/%D0%A4%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B0_%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BE); <https://wannabemagazine.com/zanimljive-cinjenice-frida-kahlo/>; <http://srednjeskole.edukacija.rs/biografije-poznatih-licnosti/frida-kalo>.

### Christopher Reeve<sup>69</sup>

The famous American actor Christopher Reeve, who will be remembered most for playing Superman, was wheelchair-bound from 1995, when he broke two vertebrae during a horse riding accident. He did not succumb to his condition and acted following the accident in several films, including a remake of Hitchcock's legendary *Rear Window*. He was paralysed from the head down, but despite his condition he was an avid supporter and fund-raiser for medical research into spinal cord injuries. He lobbied the US Congress to enable better collection of insurance claims following disabling injuries. Before the members of the American Film Academy, during the Oscar awards ceremony, Christopher Reeve went before his fellow actors in his wheelchair and advocated that film-makers should focus more on social issues.

In an interview, his daughter Alexandra<sup>70</sup> said that in the days after the accident, Reeve contemplated suicide. But, his loved ones by his side dissuaded him. She said he was also comforted by the numerous letters he received from around the world: "Reading letters from kids in schools around the country who had sent get-well cards, who had drawn pictures, and we started writing back to them as well. Just letting people know that we felt their love, felt their support, and that we were going to be OK."

69 More available at: [https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/christopher\\_reeve](https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/christopher_reeve).

70 More available at: <https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/christopher-reeves-daughter-talks-growing-up-with-superman-keeping-his-legacy-alive>.

Some thoughts by Christopher Reeve:

- *A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.*
- *I am optimistic. But I also know that, with time, I'm beginning to fight issues of aging as well as long-term paralysis.*
- *What makes Superman a hero is not that he has power, but that he has the wisdom and the maturity to use the power wisely.*
- *A hero is someone who, in spite of weakness, doubt or not always knowing the answers, goes ahead and overcomes anyway...*
- *Either you decide to stay in the shallow end of the pool or you go out in the ocean.*
- *Success is finding satisfaction in giving a little more than you take.*

### ▪ Athletes and optimism

*I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.*

Michael Jordan

Encourage your students to research biographies of their favourite athletes and bring them to class. This can be a good exercise, because athletes often may have strong inspirational messages, as well as be good role models for discipline and perseverance. In addition, students tend to be interested to learn more about athletes they admire.

Likewise, athletes may give excellent advice how to deal with failure, and that is a very important skill for teenagers. Reading texts about even the most famous, successful athletes often experiencing failures in pursuit of their dreams helps teenagers learn that everyone at some point comes to a standstill. Receiving advice by reading such texts, and the need to be optimistic and persistent are very useful for teenagers.

After discussing the biographies of athletes, invite them to think of their own positive characteristics. Let them tell each other what their own positive skills are, such as: being well-organized, persistent, a good sense of humour,

etc. Every student is to make a list of at least 10 positive characteristics for themselves. Once they have finished, they should write down at least three strategies for positive thinking to be used when facing problems or difficulties.

### ▪ A letter to my future self

Apart from homeroom classes, this activity is also suitable for literature or foreign language classrooms when dealing with language literacy and practicing writing letters or e-mails. First play for the class the song *Imagine* by John Lennon<sup>71</sup>, and then tell them to write a letter to their future selves (in 10 or 15 years' time) in which they will write about themselves today, their hopes, plans, expectations, wishes, what they would like to achieve, where they expect to be when they receive the letter, etc.

You do the same exercise. Once finished, everybody reads their letter, and the lesson ends by playing the song *What a Wonderful World*<sup>72</sup>.

The task for the following activity may be for students to explore and bring "optimistic" songs. The genre of music can be any, classical, pop, or rock.

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkgkThdzX-8>.

<sup>72</sup> <https://youtu.be/CWzrABouyeE>.

For example: S.A.R.S. *Mir i ljubav (Peace and Love)*<sup>73</sup> 77 or *JINX – Tamo gdje je sve po mome (The Place Where Everything Goes My Way)*<sup>74</sup>, etc.

- **Invite your students to encourage each other once a week**

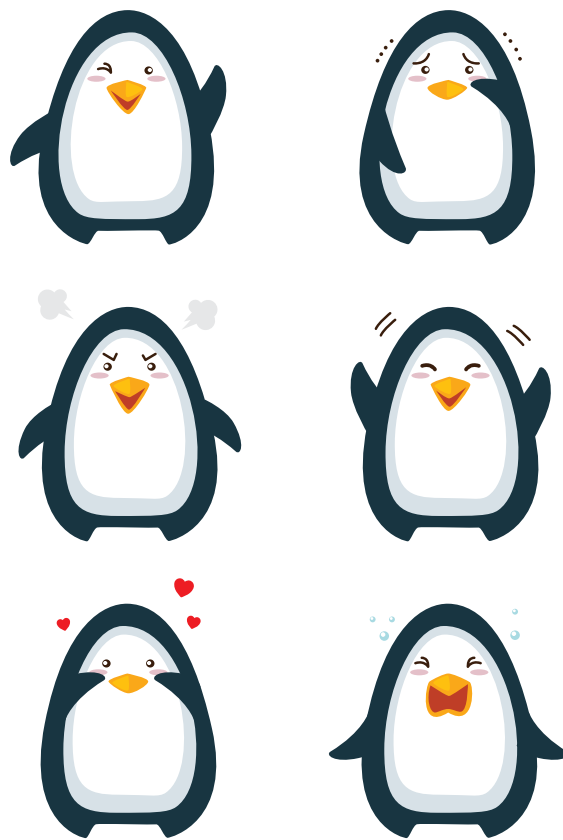
This activity may be done in homeroom classes where students write encouraging messages to their classmates, or they can stand in a big circle and say something nice to each other or give praise and compliments.

- **Optimism leads to success and better health**<sup>75</sup>

Ask your students whether they think we are born more optimistic or realistic? *How do you get along with others? Who among you believes that they are in the lower 25%, and who believes that they are in the top 25% according to the following characteristics: how interesting you are; how attractive; honest; modest you are? Keep records of the number of responses in each category.*

Then together with the class watch the TED Talk by Tali Sharot, a professor of cognitive neuroscience at University College London. If it is not possible to play the original recording, you can read out the transcript.<sup>76</sup> Tali Sharot is presenting new research which explains that our brains are wired to look on the bright side—and how that can be both dangerous and beneficial. When you have seen or read the talk, go back to the responses from the beginning and comment on them.

If you're one of those pessimistic penguins up there who just do not believe they can fly, you certainly never will. Because to make any kind of progress, we need to be able to imagine a different reality, and then we need to believe



that that reality is possible. But if you are an extremely optimistic penguin who just jumps down blindly hoping for the best, you might find yourself in a bit of a mess when you hit the ground. But if you're an optimistic penguin who believes he can fly, but then adjusts a parachute to your back just in case things don't work out exactly as you had planned, you will soar like an eagle, even if you're just a penguin.

Ask your students how they perceive themselves, what group of penguins they belong to. Do they need to work on their realistic optimism?

- **How optimistic are you?**<sup>77</sup>

In the English classroom you can do the optimism test. Before doing the test, watch a scene from the popular series *Otvorena vrata (Open Doors)*.<sup>78</sup>

73 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yx1fiU2vgN0>.

74 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFk3CtHVZ0I>.

75 The TED Talk by Tali Sharot is available at: [https://www.ted.com/talks/tali\\_sharot\\_the\\_optimism\\_bias](https://www.ted.com/talks/tali_sharot_the_optimism_bias).

76 Available at: <http://www.6yka.com/novosti/nauka-potvrtila-optimizam-vodi-ka-uspjehu-i-boljem-zdravlju>.

77 The test is available at: <https://web.stanford.edu/class/msande271/onlinetools/LearnedOpt.html>.

78 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHDWxyB-Shc>.



## ■ How can we be more optimistic?<sup>79</sup>

Work in groups and come up with behaviours/ techniques which may help them develop optimism. After the groups have presented their ideas, compile them and, if needed, add to them.

These are some strategies for boosting optimism that you can share with the students:

- Pay attention to the good things happening to you. At the end of each day, take 10 minutes to go through the day and think about the things that you are grateful for. Write them down in a journal or use a motivational app on your mobile or tablet.
- Practice believing that good things can happen in your life. Acquire the habit of telling yourself certain things that you can do to succeed. For example: "If I study, I can get a better mark"; "If I rehearse, I will do well at the audition"; "If I go on a trip, I will meet new friends".
- Don't blame yourselves if things go wrong. What does your inner voice say when things don't go as planned? Instead of thinking: "I did the test poorly because I suck at maths"; tell yourself "I failed the test because I didn't study hard enough. I won't let that happen again!"
- Instead of saying: "Petra broke up with me because I'm a loser", think: "Now I know why people say breakups are painful, but hanging out with my friends will help me feel better."
- When something good happens, take credit for that. Think about what you have done to make the good outcome possible. Did you study for the test? Think about the benefits you made use of and how they helped you succeed.

- Remind yourself that standstills are temporary. As soon as something goes wrong, remind yourself it will pass and come up with a plan of how to overcome the situation. For example: "My results are not as I'd hoped, but I can study harder and take the test again."
- Pay attention to how others talk about themselves. Are your friends and family members more optimistic or pessimistic?

Draw the conclusion: Optimism is a style of thinking that can be learned, which means that pessimism can also be learned! It may last for a while, so don't be discouraged. Just keep telling yourself: *"I can be more optimistic and I will continue practicing!"*



<sup>79</sup> More information is available at: <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/optimism.html>.

## ▪ Another story about optimism

This activity can be done in the literature, history, sociology, and civic education classrooms.

Maya Angelou (1928–2014)<sup>80</sup> **was an African American author, singer, actor, and poet.** Her poems, which celebrate women's beauty and freedom, are considered a true anthem for African Americans. She wrote poetry, plays, even scripts, and is most famous for her autobiographies, seven in total. She was a recipient of numerous literary awards, and her first autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) made her famous worldwide. She was a civil rights activist, she gained the confidence of Martin Luther King, and contributed greatly to the development of African American culture. In 1979 she became close to the then unknown anchor Oprah Winfrey, who became her disciple. Oprah admired her ability to survive, to make room for herself in the worlds previously reserved for educated white people, and her literary popularity. Oprah Winfrey, who rose up to be the queen of American television and who set up her own literary club, was a great support to Maya Angelou.

Born as Marguerite Annie Johnson, the famous author had a difficult childhood and tumultuous youth; when she was seven years old she was raped by her mother's boyfriend at the time. After she testified against the abuser, an angry crowd chased him and beat him to death. Too young to understand what had happened, the young Maya blamed herself for his death: "My seven-and-a-half-year-old logic concluded that my voice had killed him, so I stopped talking for almost six years." Mrs Bertha Flowers, a family friend who discovered Maya's affinity towards books, offered Maya her hand and encouraged her to stop the self-imposed silence. She gave her books from her library, on the condition that the young girl would read aloud all the books she borrowed. Maya accepted the deal and, under the influence of Mrs Flowers, regained her voice. However, Maya also needed to regain her spirit. It took a hard and brave choice to forgive and gather the strength to move on. She managed – she forgave and moved on.

She became a famous poet, her words inspired thousands of her readers. But the most inspiring, the most powerful image she left behind her was not the ones she committed to paper, but the brave and optimistic way in which she described her life. The example of Maya Angelou teaches us that optimism is so much more than a naïve faith in tomorrow. It is an attitude forged through a series of tough choices.

Some quotations by Maya Angelou:

- *There is a 19th-century African American song which is great and which says: when it looks like the sun wasn't going to shine anymore, God put a rainbow in the clouds. Imagine! I've had so many rainbows in my clouds. I had a lot of clouds, but I had so many rainbows. I always carry these "rainbows" with me to my speaking and teaching engagements, whether in a large venue or intimate classroom. I bring everyone who has ever been kind to me with me. Black, white, Asian, Spanish-speaking, Native American, gay, straight, everybody. I said, 'Come on with me. I'm going on the stage. Come with me. I need you now.' I don't ever feel I have no help. I had rainbows in my clouds. The thing to do, it seems to me, is to prepare yourself so you can*

<sup>80</sup> Some of the sources where you can find more about Maya Angelou: <http://edukacija.rs/zanimljivosti/maja-andjelo-borac-za-ljudska-prava-i-zensku-slobodu>; <https://admin.nedeljnik.rs/magazin/portalnews/maja-andelo-fantasticni-zivot-spisateljice-koja-je-recitovala-klintonu/>; <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Maya-Angelou>; <https://www.mayaangelou.com/>.

*be a rainbow in somebody else's cloud. Somebody who may not look like you. May not call God the same name you call God — if they call God at all. See? I may not eat the same meals as you, I may not dance your dances or speak your language. But be a blessing to somebody. That's what I think.*

- *We cannot change the past, but we can change our attitude toward it.*
- *If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain.*
- *It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.*
- *I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back.*
- *All great achievements require time.*
- *If you have only one smile in you, give it to the people you love.*
- *I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.*
- *I learned a long time ago the wisest thing I can do is be on my own side, be an advocate for myself and others like me.*
- *I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it.*
- *All great artists draw from the same resource: the human heart, which tells us that we are all more alike than we are unlike.*
- *Whatever you want to do, if you want to be great at it, you have to love it and be able to make sacrifices for it.*
- *We allow our ignorance to prevail upon us and make us think we can survive alone, alone in patches, alone in groups, alone in races, even alone in genders.*
- *We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.*

Briefly tell the class the story of Maya Angelou, or you can ask them in advance to explore her truly impressive biography for themselves. Make copies for the students or read her inspiring quotations one by one. Encourage your students to recognize which social or emotional skill that quotation is mostly linked with. This can prompt discussion about the linkages between social and emotional skills.

### ▪ **Amelie**

The film *Amelie*, which features in the list of best movies ever made, speaks of the courage

and optimism of an unusual girl. This is a story about simple people, their wishes, hopes and dreams, and the little bit of luck needed for making them come true. This film can be a good introduction into the discussion of optimism, but also creativity, empathy, and helping others.

## Quotations about optimism

You can use the quotations as a warm-up, or a wrap-up, or a stand-alone activity where students choose the quotation they like the most and explain why. You can also tell them to find more optimism-related quotations themselves.

- *Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it.*  
M. Gandhi
- *I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship.*  
L. M. Alcott
- *For as long as there is darkness, there is a dawn.*  
I. Andrić
- *What a wonderful thought it is that some of the best days of our lives haven't even happened yet.*  
A. Frank
- *Whoever believes in miracles, works miracles.*  
D. Radović
- *Every one loves more what has cost him trouble.*  
Aristotle
- *A battle is won by the side that is absolutely determined to win.*  
L. N. Tolstoy
- *We are what we think. All that we are arises from our thoughts. With our thoughts we change the world.*  
Buddha
- *The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.*  
E. Roosevelt
- *A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.*  
W. Churchill
- *Man is what he believes.*  
A. P. Chekhov
- *Once you choose hope, anything's possible.*  
C. Reeve
- *I don't consider myself a pessimist. I think of a pessimist as someone who is waiting for it to rain. And I feel soaked to the skin.*  
L. Cohen
- *Pessimism never won any battle.*  
D. Eisenhower
- *You can complain because rose bushes have thorns or rejoice that thorn bushes have roses.*  
Confucius







SELF-  
CONFIDENCE





# SELF-CONFIDENCE

*Never bend your head. Always hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye.*

Helen Keller

Stereotypes about young people have always been present – the story only slightly changes with changes in the times we live in, but its bulk is passed on, like an echo, from one generation to another – young people today are selfish, self-absorbed, uninterested, spoilt, full of themselves... Such lamentation usually ends with the only-too-familiar opening line – “When we were young...” Nevertheless, it is difficult to bring about essential change. The common denominator for all generations of young people is the need to develop their own selves, and the need to develop, understand, or come to terms with their own identity. All young people ask essential questions regarding their current and future life: Who am I? What do I aspire to? What would I like to be in 10 years? What are my weaknesses? What are my strengths? How do I look? How am I perceived by others? To what extent does my self-image coincide with the image that society has of me?

All these questions are directly related to self-confidence, a social and emotional skill that is often either missing completely or is not developed enough in young people. The importance of this characteristic is visible at almost every step of the way. Self-understanding is an important factor in the development of personality. It strongly affects who we are, from seemingly irrelevant things, such as clothes or hairstyle, to the life choices we make, such as the choice of profession or of life partner. Therefore, it is extremely important how young

people see and perceive themselves and to what extent they believe in their own abilities.

The terms self-esteem and self-confidence are related to these. Although quite similar, these are actually two separate concepts.

Self-esteem primarily refers to our overall – both cognitive and emotional – experience of ourselves, embodied in the question: How much self-respect and love for ourselves do we have? If our self-image is acceptable and if it elicits in us positive feelings, then we have good self-esteem.

Self-confidence, on the other hand, refers to how we feel about our abilities and this may vary from one situation to another. A self-confident person is ready to face new challenges, to take up new opportunities, to face unwanted circumstances and assume responsibility, even when life sets a person hard tests. Self-confidence leads to success; likewise, success can lead to self-confidence. The more we are assured of our abilities in theory and in practice, the more confidence we have in ourselves.

It is also noteworthy that it is possible to have healthy self-esteem but with low self-confidence in situations which we believe relate to something where we consider ourselves weak.

For example, we can have an acceptable self-image, hence, respect ourselves, but lack self-confidence when it comes to mathematics, and conversely, we can be very self-confident when it comes to our proficiency in foreign languages. On the other hand, a person who is obviously intelligent, successful in various areas of life, attractive, etc. can have a very negative self-image and refuse to accept the justified impressions of others as being true. Research has shown that others are more likely to perceive us positively if we project a positive self-image (provided that it is sufficiently realistic). It is not a rare occurrence that some people, particularly the young, given their preoccupation with physical appearance, equate self-esteem with body image – they believe they are worth as much as their body is likable or not. Today, more than ever before, young people are exposed

to the influence of the media that promotes unrealistic beauty standards and overall body image. It is, therefore, important to talk with young people about how their appearance will change over the coming few years.

At times, they will not like the changes. It is only natural to compare themselves with others, but they should also accept and love themselves the way they are. If they have a healthy attitude towards their appearance, if they feel good in their body, and if they value themselves as a person, they will have a positive self-image and a high level of self-confidence. If we develop ourselves and our potentials and truly wish to improve ourselves and build our character, we can at the same time boost both our self-confidence and our self-esteem. For example, people with low self-esteem, who think that they are “not good enough” can transform their complete self-image if they recognize in themselves something they are good at, if they identify an ability that gives them a sense of security or discover an area that suits their personality and in which they can successfully express themselves. By focusing on all that, not only will their level of self-confidence go up, but also their self-esteem.

A vast body of research in the area of social psychology shows that people overall tend to appreciate themselves, to have a clear self-image, and to feel successful. In addition, research shows that a deterioration of self-esteem and self-confidence correlates with a number of psychological disorders, somatic diseases, or situations that generate fear. It comes as no surprise, thus, that young people say they need more knowledge and skills to overcome a lack of confidence in themselves and their own abilities.

### ***The teacher's role***

Each teacher must be aware that his or her words and actions have particular weight in classroom, the he/she can never know what imprint a certain judgment, side remark, opinion, or non-verbal message can leave on the psyche of a young person. There are

numerous ways for developing self-confidence in students; however, certain preconditions need to be put in place – love, interest, and the wish to build relationships with your students that are based on trust, mutual respect, assistance, and collaboration, and to develop your own competencies in the process – certain knowledge and skills that will help you understand which “tools” to use to achieve that.

This is the only approach to developing any social and emotional skill, self-confidence included. Teachers who are rigid, cold, distant, and cantankerous can hardly expect to develop a good rapport with their students and create an atmosphere conducive to character building. The opposite would actually be the case – with such an attitude teachers would encourage the things they do not want to see in themselves – the lack of any enthusiasm, aloofness, moroseness, passivity, and even a rejection of any type of cooperation – all the characteristics that they fail to recognize in themselves, but that hugely bother them in their students.

If they want to truly boost this quality, teachers need to be open in communicating with their students to discuss what is a problem for them, for instance, overly complex and incomprehensible lessons, and to try all the time to emphasize the students' strengths, what they are successful at, and not point out their weaknesses.

Every teacher can show his/her students the things they do not know; however, isn't it so much better to help them see what they actually know and can do?! What prompts the teacher to search for ignorance and errors that his/her students make? Can such a teacher be conducive to character building and developing social and emotional skills in his/her students in the first place? We are afraid not. Here we already touch upon other social and emotional skills, such as empathy or honesty. If teachers lack these, there can be no hope of such teachers fostering them in their students.

The messages that we send out with student assessment is closely related to this. A high rate of failure in a class should be perceived as a





serious issue by the teacher and seen largely as his/her own failure, rather than as the students' failure. It is indubitably the teacher who bears the greatest responsibility for such situations.

However, reality contradicts us – many students are convinced that they are not able to learn enough to get a pass mark in specific subjects (often mathematics, physics, biology, and history) and see themselves as the only problem. Naturally, this whole situation diminishes their self-confidence. Therefore, it is very important for the teacher to more thoroughly approach the most complex of all tasks in the classroom – student assessment and providing feedback on students' achievements, aware of so many different levels of knowledge, and so few different marks.

Hence, teachers can easily misjudge and thus directly undermine their rapport with students, cause injustice, shatter self-confidence, and finally, weaken their own position in the classroom, no matter how strong this position might seem and the feeling that the teachers are on top of things. One should be aware that neither students' self-confidence nor teachers' authority can be built with a large proportion of fail marks in a classroom. Teachers who think so are gravely mistaken. Another mistake often

made by teachers is to compare their students with each other. Just as it is not good for a parent to compare a younger child with his/her elder sibling, or conversely, it is not a good idea for a teacher to compare a lower-achiever with a higher-achiever in the classroom, emphasizing the competence of one over the incompetence of another, easily judging and making qualifications: ... *you don't know that or you can't learn that like him/her... look up to your partner a bit...*

A lack of self-confidence is just a part of the harm being done, which also includes weakened motivation, undermining friendly relationships between classmates, etc. We should not forget that parents and teachers are, first and foremost, responsible for building character and that the level of self-confidence that young people have in life is highly linked with what was done and said by their parents and educators from the earliest age to the end of adolescence.

Finally, we can recall a saying that "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world". It is up to adults to take a whole-child approach, for all-round personalities that will enrich the world with their knowledge and skills. This is no small responsibility.



## WORKSHOP: My self-confidence

### Goals:

Students will:

- explore the meaning of self-confidence and other related social and emotional skills
- identify their own potentials and weaknesses, and the goals they aspire to

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Material:** sheets of paper with beginnings of sentences

\* \* \*



### Complete the sentences... (10 min)

Pass out the sheets with the beginnings of sentences or write them on the board. They are supposed to copy and complete them.

Once done, tell them: *Now read to yourselves one statement at a time, several times over. Try to make sure that each statement resonates with you, believing what you have written.*

The statements:

- What I'm good at is...
- I'm proud of...
- One of my achievements is...
- One of my best qualities is...
- A positive and realistic goal I aspire to in the future is...

Volunteers can share one or more of the sentences they have written. Ask them about

the feelings that such statements about themselves inspire.



### What is self-confidence? (10 min)

Ask your students what self-confidence means for them: *Self-confidence is.../A self-confident person is one who...* Let them brainstorm. You can ask them to name the people (e.g. in their immediate environment or a famous athlete, musician, etc.) they see as role models of self-confidence and why. *How do such people act and feel? What are they successful at? What would you like to learn/take from them?*

If needed, additionally explain the notion by using the information from the theoretical input. You can also use some of the quotations provided.



### The things I can be even better at (20 min)

Remind your students that in the first activity they focused on their strengths, and that realistic self-confidence also comes with the awareness of their own characteristics and potentials that are still not developed to the level desired.

What would I like to do about:

- my habits ..... and how?
- my immediate goals ..... and how?
- my academic achievements ..... and how?
- my appearance ..... and how?

After all these activities, ask them how they assess their own self-confidence, e.g. sufficient – insufficient – can't tell.

Do others see his/her self-confidence the same way?



### A letter to myself (5 min)

All the students are to write a letter to themselves talking about their own wishes and goals. They are to put the letter in an envelope

and seal it; they will receive it a year later. While doing the activity, students can refer to <https://www.futureme.org/>. The aim is to see whether there have been any changes in their opinions, feelings, or attitudes after a year.



### OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Modelled on the above workshop, the activities below may be combined, done independently, or with some other warm-up or wrap-up activities. Through these activities, students

learn about self-confidence, think about the significance of this virtue, and foster own self-confidence.

### ▪ How are baby elephants trained?

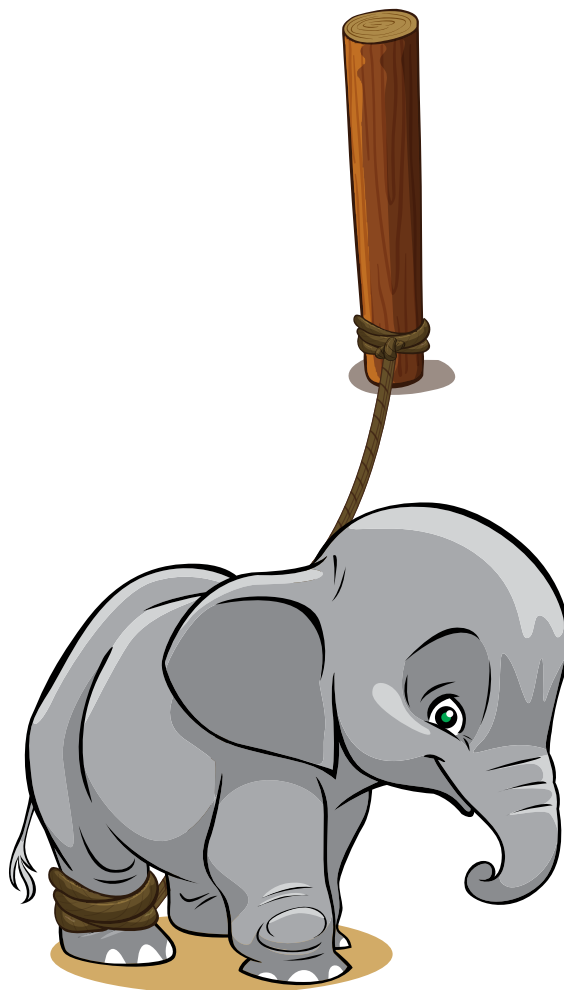
Read out loud the following story:

#### How are baby elephants trained?

*The elephants in captivity are trained while still small so that they do not wander off. One leg of a baby elephant is tied with a strong rope to a secure wooden pole. The baby elephant can move only as much as the rope allows. At first, the baby elephant tries to break free, but the rope is too strong.*

*Thus, the baby elephant “learns” that it cannot break the rope. The baby elephant grows, becomes very powerful, and could easily break the rope. But, given the belief that it cannot break the rope acquired when it was just a small and weak baby, the adult elephant still believes it and does not even try to do it.*

*People behave the same way – at an early age we gain some knowledge about ourselves and as adults we still believe it, even if it is not true. Luckily, people are born with the ability to make decisions, which is an important step in changing their self-awareness.*



Tell your students that by filling out the questionnaire *What I Believe in* they will discover which beliefs they acquired when they were younger, and which still continue to affect their self-confidence.

Give them the following instruction:

Fill out the questionnaire *What I Believe in* to identify your beliefs.

Keep this questionnaire close at hand the next time you experience low self-confidence, or you don't feel happy, or are judging yourself. At such times, read the questionnaire, identify the beliefs that are stifling your self-confidence, and start creating new beliefs that will have a positive effect on your self-confidence.

<b>1. What are the beliefs you gained about yourself based on what you were told by your:</b>	
a) Mother	
b) Father	
c) Sibling	
d) Friends	
e) Teachers	
f) Others	
<b>2. Which of these messages are still predominant in your thoughts and attitudes about yourself?</b>	
<b>3. Which messages support, and which messages stifle your self-confidence and happiness?</b>	
<b>4. Are these messages true?</b>	
<b>5. Which messages do you want to change to boost your self-confidence?</b>	
<b>6. Write down some new thoughts you want to believe in, and which may boost your self-esteem, self-confidence and happiness.</b>	

Remind your students of Kanjoš Macedonović<sup>81</sup> whose belief in himself and his ideals, his acumen, and resourcefulness helped him win an utterly unfair fight. In the pages below you will find short biographies of famous people who experienced personal and professional failure before they were given a chance.

### ▪ How others affect our self-perception<sup>82</sup>

For this activity tell your students in advance to bring photographs, magazines, and advertisements targeting teenagers. These can be newspaper clippings or television recordings or found online.

Prompt the discussion by the following questions:

- *Do you ever compare yourself to other young people or celebrities?*
- *Have you ever felt bad because of such comparisons with others?*
- *What can happen when we compare ourselves to others?*
- *Are we sometimes too critical of our physical appearance? Give some examples.*
- *How can we know whether we are too harsh on ourselves?*

Then divide the class into several groups. Encourage them to talk about the physical appearance of ordinary people. While the groups are discussing, pass out the magazines, scissors, glue, and poster-size paper. Tell them to leaf through the magazines and cut out the photographs of celebrities.

Each group is to make a collage on the poster paper. The students discuss what they see on the panel.

Prompt them to discuss how the media affects the way we perceive people, whether they put

pressure on celebrities to be thin and beautiful, even if they use Photoshop to create an image of specific, usually unattainable, looks.

Ask them: *What can we do to change the perception of what teenagers should look like?*

Tell your students that their appearance is bound to change over the next few years, and that they might not like some of the changes. It is natural for them to compare themselves to others, but at the same time they should come to terms with their looks and come to like their body.

If they have a healthy attitude regarding their looks, if they feel comfortable in their own skin, and if they value themselves as a person, they will have a positive self-image and a high level of self-confidence.

### ▪ What a lack of self-confidence looks like

This is an activity done in pairs.

Person A is trying to recall a situation when he/she lacked self-confidence when he/she was supposed to do something important or make an important decision.

Person B listens attentively to person A describing the event and speaking of his/her feelings and thoughts. Then choose several person B's to tell the experiences told by the person A's but as if these happened to them. Then switch roles and do the activity again. The other students listen and ask questions if needed.

### ▪ Boosting self-confidence

Tell the class to do any of the following:

- *Your best friend is crying because someone told her she is "fat". How will you comfort her? What kind of advice will you give her?*
- *Working in pairs or smaller groups, students write a poem promoting self-confidence.*

81 The short story Kanjoš Macedonović by S. M. Ljubiša is on the reading list for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of general high school.

82 The ideas for activities are taken from: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/body-image/>.



- Tell your students to ask their family members if they have ever felt bad when it comes to their physical appearance. What did they do about it?
- Tell your students to find in magazines, on social media, or in daily communication encouraging and discouraging terms and expressions.

In the English classroom, students can translate the song *Beautiful* by Christina Aguilera<sup>83</sup>. Then listen to the song together and discuss how it talks about self-confidence.

### ▪ Never give up<sup>84</sup>

Tell the class that you are about to see a video for the song *Never Give Up*.

After hearing the song, divide the class into smaller groups. Their task is to come up with a story/devise a character who will venture into situations in which he/she has to show courage and self-confidence. Discuss the importance of self-confidence, but also tolerance, empathy, etc.

### ▪ A superhero

Students talk about obstacles they often have to tackle and which require self-confidence (e.g. oral examination, tests, meeting new people, talking about problems, public speaking, public performance (music, recitals, etc.)...).

Divide the class into groups to make up a young superhero who will manage to deal with all these problems. What skills are needed to overcome obstacles and solve problems?

During this activity it is possible to design short plays, acting exercises, or dialogues in which it is also possible to use personification, i.e. the obstacles can talk about the problems they cause to the superhero in order to undermine his confidence.

83 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aoYEQgG4-JY>.

84 A video by YouTuber Ana Lazarević, a girl who is different from others because she plays football, available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G\\_a--W6QEBY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_a--W6QEBY).

### ▪ I am...<sup>85</sup>

This is one of the most popular classroom activities to build self-esteem and self-confidence. Students are encouraged to write down the positive thoughts and attitudes about themselves. On the paper, students create a list of "I am"s. Some examples include: "I am a hard worker", "I am good at basketball", etc. The students can decorate their list by adding magazine cut-outs of things they like or by drawing, etc. The lists with positive thoughts can be hung up in the classroom to remind them of the fine qualities they possess at the times when they doubt themselves.

### ▪ Problem solving

During this activity students, working on their own, make a list of their own mistakes, failures, and obstacles in life. Each problem is written on a separate piece of paper. Then divide the class into smaller groups, pass them out an equal number of pieces of paper with problems written on them and tell them to think how to address the problems.

For instance: I failed maths. Possible solutions: I will study hard to do better at the test next time, or, I will ask the teacher to help me understand the lessons better.

The group rapporteurs present the problems and solution, and the teacher helps them sum things up.

### ▪ Failures that turned into successes

Read the short stories about successful people<sup>86</sup> who had to overcome major obstacles before succeeding: Albert Einstein started talking at the age of four, and his teachers believed he had no potential for learning; Michael Jordan came back home and cried after he was chosen

85 The ideas for the activities have been taken from: <https://teach.com/blog/6-self-esteem-building-activities-for-middle-school-students/>.

86 Available at: <http://project-management-srbija.com/motivacija/6-najvecih-neuspeha-koji-su-prerasli-u-uspeh>.

for the school basketball team; Walt Disney was fired from a job with the explanation that he lacked imagination and creative ideas; Steve Jobs was thrown out of the company he established; at the beginning of their career The Beatles were told they had no prospects... Read the stories, then discuss what all these people have in common.

Maybe one of the most interesting biographies when it comes to overcoming life obstacles is the story of the US President Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865). Then start a discussion: *What would have happened if he had never tried and if he were afraid of making a mistake? Would anyone have ever heard of him?*

### **The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing<sup>87</sup>**

When he was seven, Abraham Lincoln and his family were thrown out of their home. The boy had to work to help his family. When he was nine, his mother died.

At the age of 22, he lost his job in a store. At the age of 23, he ran for the state legislature, but failed. The same year he launched his own business. He failed, and was left with a debt that he was repaying for the following 17 years.

At the age of 31 he was defeated in the election for the position of an elector. Until the age of 35 he was twice defeated in running for Congress. The same year he finally ensured his seat in Congress, but it was short-lived, because he did not manage to get a second term.

At the age of 41, he suffered another great loss, when his four-year-old son died. Four years later he ran for Senate and lost. At the age of 47 he lost the seat of the Deputy President, and at the age of 49 he was again defeated in the run for Senate.

Finally, at the age of 51 he became the President of the United States of America. He left a lasting imprint on American and world history.

Lincoln is a symbol of moral fortitude, honesty, tolerance, and modesty, and he fell victim to what he was fighting against. His life can be a huge lesson for all of us and a source of inspiration to always move forward. There will always be failures in life, but it will remain a failure only if we learn nothing from it, if we go through it with our eyes shut. Learning from failures and seeing opportunities in them is important for winning. This is what Lincoln meant when he once said: "I will prepare and some day my chance will come!"

<sup>87</sup> Available at: <http://project-management-srbija.com/motivacija/lideri>

### **▪ Famous women who will inspire you to never give up**

Read out loud to the class the stories of these three famous women whose paths to fame were quite rocky. Discuss which social and emotional skills, apart from optimism, they recognize in them. Ask them if they know of

any other details from their biographies. Give them the assignment to research heroines in Montenegro.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> For this assignment you may propose that they check <https://www.muzejzena.me/>, or you can make a choice of stories from this source and discuss them with your students.

## **Famous women who will inspire you to never give up<sup>89</sup>**

### **J.K. Rowling**

J.K. Rowling had just gotten a divorce, was on government aid, and could barely afford to feed her baby in 1994, just three years before the first Harry Potter book – Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone – was published. When she was typing it out, she was so poor she couldn’t afford a computer or even the cost of photocopying the 90,000-word novel, so she manually typed out each version to send to publishers. It was rejected dozens of times until finally Bloomsbury, a small London publisher, gave it a second chance after the CEO’s 8-year-old daughter fell in love with it.

### **Sarah Jessica Parker**

Parker was born in a poor coal-mining town in rural Ohio, the youngest of four children. Her parents divorced when she was two, and her mother remarried shortly thereafter and had an additional four children. Parker’s stepfather, a truck driver, was often out of work, so the future starlet took up singing and dancing at a very young age to help supplement her mother’s teaching income and feed their 10-person family.

Despite hard times and occasionally being on welfare, Parker’s mother continued to encourage her children’s interest in the arts. The family moved to Cincinnati, where Parker was enrolled in a ballet, music, and theatre school on a scholarship. When she was 11 years old, the family took a trip to New York City so that Parker could audition for a Broadway play. The trip was a success—she and her brother were both cast, and the family relocated to New York, where Sarah gained acting fame.

### **Oprah Winfrey**

Oprah has dealt with a lot throughout her public life—criticism about her weight, racism, intrusive questions about her sexuality, just to name a few—but she never let it get in the way of her ambition and drive. When you look at her childhood, her personal triumphs are cast in an even more remarkable light.

Growing up, Oprah was reportedly a victim of sexual abuse and was repeatedly molested by her cousin, an uncle, and a family friend. Later, she became pregnant and gave birth to a child at age 14, who passed away just two weeks later. But Oprah persevered, going on to finish high school as an honours student, earning a full scholarship to college, and working her way up through the ranks of television, from being a local network anchor in Nashville to an international superstar and the creator of her OWN network.

<sup>89</sup> Available at: <https://www.themuse.com/advice/9-famous-people-who-will-inspire-you-to-never-give-up>.

## Desiderata<sup>90</sup>

One of the most famous inspirational texts of all times was written by the American lawyer and poet Max Ehrmann (1872–1945). He wrote the poem *Desiderata*<sup>91</sup> about what we can wish for in life back in 1927, but the text, and its author became famous only decades after his death.

In 2010, the city of Terre Haute, Indiana, his birthplace, honoured Ehrmann with a statue.

The bronze Ehrmann is sitting on a bench in a park, and passers-by on a path leading past his bench can read verses of *Desiderata*. Make copies of the poem – one per pair will suffice. Tell them to work in pairs and highlight the sentences that refer to self-confidence. Then encourage them to recognize other social and emotional skills as well.

90 Available at: <http://alternativainformacije.com/2016/01/07/desiderata-istina-o-jednom-od-najinspirativnijih-tekstova/>.

91 The Latin term *desideratum* means something desirable, hence something missing, absent, a void to be filled.

### Desiderata

*Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.  
As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.  
Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.  
Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit.  
If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.  
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.  
Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.  
Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery.  
But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.  
Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.  
Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.  
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.  
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.  
Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.  
You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.  
And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.  
Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be.  
And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.  
With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.  
Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.*

## ■ My life motto – quotations

Students choose a quotation that best describes themselves or which is the motto of their life. They can give their own quotations beyond the list below.

### Self-confidence quotes

- *We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.*

Aristotle

- *No one can make you feel inferior without your consent!*

Eleanor Roosevelt

- *Your success will be determined by your own confidence and fortitude.*

Michelle Obama

- *The only man who never makes mistakes is the man who never does anything.*

Theodore Roosevelt

- *Turn your wounds into wisdom.*

Oprah Winfrey

- *People who boast about their I.Q. are losers.*

Stephen Hawking

- *Remember always that you not only have the right to be an individual, you have an obligation to be one.*

Eleanor Roosevelt

- *Never bend your head. Always hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye.*

Helen Keller

- *Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.*

Carl Gustav Jung

- *It is never too late to be what you might have been.*

George Eliot

- *We are still masters of our fate. We are still captains of our souls.*

Winston Churchill

- *Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

- *Things do not happen. Things are made to happen.*

John F. Kennedy





Bowman's  
space

Bowman's  
capsule



HONESTY





# HONESTY

*We cannot call honest those who refrain from a shameful act out of fear of disgrace or the law or judgment.*

Cicero

Having an internal moral compass and managing to stay on the right course in a society of deteriorated values is extremely hard. On top of that, to be young, inexperienced, naïve, to have a dream-like outlook on the future that is constantly undermined by the present – that is the position of a young person today, one who manages to resist the challenges that come with such times, and who, despite the temptations, chooses an honest and ethical path to his/her own goals. However, what about all those who do not choose such a path or who are running the danger of, every so often, indulging a weakness of theirs and, advocating for any of the high moral principles they were told about by their parents and teachers, obtaining short-term satisfaction in the form of success gained overnight. And success may come in many shapes and forms: a mark received through favouritism, an exam passed through bribery, a graduation paper, master's or doctor's thesis plagiarized, a job obtained by pulling strings, money got through deceit, etc. The famous quotation that "the end justifies the means" is very characteristic of the many role models of our children and students. The undermining of the value system and many traditional moral norms is not only ours, but rather a global phenomenon. In addition, it is in the nature of people to rationalize their actions – explain them or defend them by "justified" reasons (I'm not the only one, others do the same, just look at the time/the society we live in...)

We cannot shut our eyes and pretend that there are no such occurrences in today's world and that young people do not often resort to them, just like adults. Here, we should not forget that young people are merely a reflection of us and that all their faults are always a consequence of our wrong steps taken in their social and emotional development.

Such problems are indicative of society's dire need to continuously invest efforts in building the characters of young people, in shaping their identity and integrity, together with developing honesty as the (key) virtue without which a human personality can be neither complete nor progressive.

Children are not born with integrity, with moral values and virtues embodied in honesty, honour, respect, social responsibility, and the courage to stand for what they believe in. These virtues are acquired in the long process of individual moral development in parallel with socialization and the influence of other societal factors (family, school, role models, peer group, the media, the internet, social networks, etc.). The school environment and the time spent on schooling make educational institutions, at all levels, indispensable for supporting the moral development of children and young people.

In the widest sense of the word, honesty is the set of moral and ethical principles a person is guided by in social, professional, and personal actions. To put it simply, being honest means not hiding the truth, not breaking the rules to get an advantage, and not taking anything that does not belong to you – not doing anything that we would have to hide because it goes against what we believe to be right. Honesty implies honest relations with others, but also with oneself. Consciousness is the voice and the inner feeling that reminds us whether something is right or wrong, even when no one is looking.

*This above all: to thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

(W. Shakespeare, Hamlet)



In everyday speech honesty is often seen as being synonymous with integrity. The term integrity comes from the Latin noun *integritas*, meaning integral, complete. In that sense, integrity would be the inner feeling of being complete, integral – a person who acts in line with his/her beliefs; someone who is consistent and perceived by others as such. Such people do not say one thing and do the opposite. They respect themselves by following their own beliefs, ideas, moral principles, and do so even when it is neither simple nor easy, but may lead to certain negative consequences. In addition, a person of integrity cares for others, shows solidarity, helps, is humane. It is the inner impulse of a person of integrity. Such people have the power to admit their own mistakes without blaming others for their actions. Integrity actually implies honesty. We can be honest without integrity, but cannot have integrity without honesty. According to the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI), the five fundamental values of academic integrity are: responsibility, respect, fairness, trust, and honesty.<sup>92</sup>

Issues of academic integrity are mostly raised due to cheating, which has become even more complex with the emergence of new technologies. Thus, schools have the primary responsibility to promote and demonstrate the significance of honesty as a practical and ethical value. Unfortunately, many schools today fail to do so. Of all the negative phenomena that dissolve the school's "moral fibre", cheating is among the most harmful, since it casts doubts on a school's devotion to truth and fairness. Cheating in school is immoral for a number of reasons: it gives an unfair advantage to those who cheat over those who do not, it constitutes a violation of trust between the students and teachers, and undermines the code of conduct and the social order in the school.

This is a global problem in education. Students continue to cheat in known ways: cheating in tests, plagiarizing home assignments, playing

truant on days when tests are scheduled, and modern technologies have only increased the options for plagiarism and cheating. Students are aware that what they are doing is not right, but justify their actions by saying they are left with no choice because they are under tremendous pressure to get good marks and test results.

### ***The teacher's role***

Teachers bear a huge duty and responsibility to do their utmost to prepare their students for life, by equipping them with knowledge, but also with skills and values that will offer an opportunity to be active, satisfied, fulfilled, and complete personalities, doing good to themselves and to others. Teachers are the ones who need to remind their students that life is a daily string of choices we make, and that the decisions and the actions we take show our integrity to others. They teach them to be honest, responsible, courageous, empathetic, and respectful, and make it clear to them that by doing so they are building their integrity and reputation that will make other people, future employers included, able to trust them.

However, as is the case with any other social and emotional skills, honesty included, indicating, reminding, and teaching is not enough. You are the role model. Your honest approach towards your students, towards your work, and you yourself is a concept that can be adopted and copied without necessarily being aware of it. We do not have the moral right to demand from students their honest approach to the subject and the assignments we give unless we ourselves, as teachers, have an honest attitude towards what we do in classroom. We have the moral right to demand a lot only if we offer a lot in return.

Modern technologies have surpassed the most fanciful imagination and put teachers in a position of not being aware of all the ways that students may cheat in a classroom. Regretfully, it often puts us in a difficult spot

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.academicintegrity.org/ica/home.php>.

to play invigilator and monitor, but it does not relieve us of responsibility. We cannot give up on the idea of honesty. If we allow our students to take in ready-made scripts available online, we will never teach them to write an essay or a paper. If we look the other way when they cheat on a maths test, not only will they never learn mathematics, but they will even conclude that something like that is admirable and normal.

We live in a society today in which many things that should be stigmatized as immoral are generally accepted as desired and normal. Therefore, the teacher must not forget that it all starts with seemingly benign things. Someone might say: Well, he only cheated a little! Or even: OK, he only stole a chocolate bar, look at what other people steal... What if today's cheating turns into plagiarizing somebody's graduation paper tomorrow, or stealing a chocolate bar turns into hacking somebody's bank account?!

Thus, teachers and educators must not take lightly such actions with a condoning smile or even help them cheat.

We often hear that someone who has made his/her fortune and climbed to a high position in society quickly and rather dubiously is described as being "resourceful". Students themselves highlight this characteristic, which is not on the list of virtue and actually does not mean much, as something desirable. We, their educators, are obliged to teach them that the aim is not to be "resourceful", but to be a good and honest person, someone who gives, and does not snatch away, someone who earns his/her living through honest work, not becoming overnight the owner of flashy cars, designer clothes, and all sorts of other things. Someone who has attained certain knowledge, who is a person of integrity, who can love and respect will gain love and respect from others.





## WORKSHOP: Decisions

### Goals:

Students will:

- analyse the notion and meaning of honesty in interpersonal relationships
- analyse the process of making the right choice and what affects our choices

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Material:** enough copies of problem situations

\* \* \*



### The song *Honesty* (10 min)

Start the workshop by announcing the class that you will be discussing honesty, and that the song *Honesty*<sup>93</sup> (Billy Joel) will serve as an inspiration.

Note: If you think that listening to the song in English might pose problems for them, students can, in collaboration with their English teacher, get hold of a translation beforehand.<sup>94</sup>

After listening to the song, invite your students to say how they understand the lyrics. *Is honesty such a lonely word? What does honesty mean for them? How would they define it?*

An alternative: If it is not possible to listen to the song, you can start the discussion by

brainstorming about honesty, eventually providing the definition of honesty together with the teacher.



### Problem situations (25 min)

#### Warm-up activity

In life, things are not usually black or white – there is also a “grey” area, where it is not easy to decide what the right decision is. These are not rare occurrences when we face ethical choices/ moral dilemmas, when there are arguments both in favour and against a certain decision and when we are not certain how to proceed.

In such situations, the following questions may be of help: *What would a person I appreciate do in such a situation? What would someone, whose opinion I appreciate, say regarding my decision? What does my conscience say? What have I been taught by...? How will my decision affect others? Can I imagine myself in the shoes of that other person? What will the consequences be?*

In situations like this, what plays a major role is empathy, i.e. the ability to understand the emotions of other people. In addition, it is important that we care about the truth, that we are committed to telling the truth even when it is hard. Self-control is also a virtue which helps us make the right decision. When we have a dilemma about what to do, we should take our time and think, weigh the arguments, think about the consequences and not take any rushed decisions.

Divide the class into groups and give them copies of problem situations, one at a time. They choose some of the solutions offered. After they have finished, the group rapporteurs read out their solutions. Tell them that individuals are allowed to have dissenting opinions if they do not agree with the rest of the group. Prompt and guide the discussion by confronting these opposing views and analysing certain solutions. When they have discussed their choice, share with them the solutions with explanations. Then discuss why the solution offered is the best one and similar issues.

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuF5coO4tb0>.

<sup>94</sup> Translated lyrics are available at: <https://lyricstranslate.com/sr/honesty-%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82.html>.

### Situation 1

You are in your first year into the university. You receive an annual scholarship of €1000. In order to keep receiving it, your average mark needs to be at least 8.5. You can maintain the required average level if you get at least 9 in physics. You doubt you can achieve that, since physics is not your strong suit. You meet the physics professor after classes. He is kind and says a way needs to be found to resolve your problem. He apologises and leaves for the restrooms. He looks towards a folder on the table that has the label "Physics – June exams", which contains copies of the June tests. You think that the professor may have intentionally left the room to give you the opportunity to take the test. Would you do that?

- a) Yes, but only if I were pretty sure that the professor wanted me to do that.
- b) Yes. Even if he didn't do it intentionally, it would be foolish to leave the tests like that.
- c) Yes, but only if I were certain I wouldn't get caught.
- d) Yes. The mark is very important to me.
- e) No. If I get caught, I could lose the scholarship altogether.
- f) I would not like to lose the trust of the professor or other people who know me.
- g) Cheating is not OK.

### Situation 1 – solutions:

- a) This response is unacceptable, even if the professor let you do that – cheating is cheating!
- b) This response attempts to shift the responsibility for your own bad actions onto the professor.
- c) If something is (not) done out of fear alone, it does not mean that we're truly honest!
- d) Sometimes we have to sacrifice our own personal interests for moral principles.
- e) A seemingly right action, because the test paper was not taken, but this was only out of the fear of the long-term consequences. This is not ethical either.
- f) This is an acceptable answer because it shows you want to be a trustworthy person.
- g) The obvious ethical choice.

### Situation 2

You are the captain of your school tennis team, one of the best in the country. The coach is new and has not got to know all the players yet. There is an extra player on the team. The coach asks you, as the captain, to decide which of the two players should remain on the team. One of them is your best friend who really wants to play, and the other one is better and could truly contribute to the team. Would you choose your friend?

- a) Yes. Loyalty is very important.
- b) Yes. If it were the other way round, I'd expect my friend to pick me.
- c) No. I owe it to the team to pick the best player.
- d) No. It is also in my best interest to have the best possible players.
- e) No. It wouldn't be fair on the other, better player.

### Situation 2 – solutions:

Loyalty is an important virtue, but only if it is not in conflict with other moral norms. The best responses are under c) and e).

### Situation 3

A good friend of yours confides in you that she was sexually assaulted by a boy, the star player in the football team. She asks you to promise not to tell anyone, but you see that she has started performing poorly at school and that it will be difficult for her to get into the university that she wants. She has even mentioned suicide several times. You are trying to persuade her to go to therapy, but she refuses. Will you keep the promise you made and not say a thing?

- a) Yes. Friendship means keeping a promise.
- b) Yes. If I'd say anything, she might become the subject of gossip.
- c) Yes. Even if I said anything, no one would believe me anyway.
- d) Friendship requires me to do what is in her best interest, and in this case she needs help.
- e) No. Her health and well-being are more important than our friendship.
- f) No. The football player can do the same to someone else if no one stops him.

### Situation 3 – solutions:

This is the hardest situation, because of the values of loyalty and keeping one's promises conflicting with the values of care and a different view of loyalty. Given a very high stake (the mentioning of a suicide), you should be guided by the best interest of your friend.

The best responses are under d) and e), because they refer to selfless readiness to sacrifice friendship to help the friend. The response under f) is also a good option, because it shows care for others, and for justice.



### Summing up – excuses (10 min)

Highlight and discuss the arguments used by the students when explaining/justifying their decision that could not be called honest.





## OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Modelled on the above workshop, the ensuing activities can be combined, done on their own or with some other warm-up and wrap-up games. These activities will help students learn about honesty, think about this virtue, and build their character.

### ▪ Humanity

*A man has worth only for as long as he can tell the truth to everybody's face.*

Marko Miljanov

In the language and literature or homeroom classroom read excerpts from *Examples of Humanity and Bravery* by Marko Miljanov.

Tell your students in advance to find similar examples in their communities, write them down, and present them to the class. The class can be divided into groups of three, telling them to each find five examples from their town, village, extended family, etc.<sup>95</sup>

In the end, the students compile all the examples into one “book” to be named the “Class Book of Examples of Humanity and Bravery”. Before they do the task, explain to them how Marko Miljanov defined humanity and bravery, and tell them to focus on examples of humanity more.

<sup>95</sup> An example from Nikšić could be, for example, the local boxer Zoran Vujačić and the world champion from Ukraine, Wladimir Klitschko: <https://www.onogost.me/drustvo/zoran-vujacic-u-klincu-sa-teskom-bolescu>.

### ▪ Kanjoš and a few more things

The students are familiar with the story of Kanjoš Macedonović by Stefan Mitrov Ljubiša.<sup>96</sup> Prompt them to recall the virtues Kanjoš has. Then read the following excerpt:

<sup>96</sup> This short story is on the mandatory reading list for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of general high school.

*Following the Divine Service, the Doge went with Kanjoš on his right, and the ruler and his entourage to the grand chamber where doges are crowned and tsars received. The dome was lined with gold embroidery, the marble pillars were intertwined in golden wires, the tables covered in velvet with pearl fringes, and the Doge's throne was made of ivory and decorated with laurel. The Doge sat down on the throne and started speaking in Italian. When he stopped, one of the noblemen present translated the Doge's words for Kanjoš, all honey-like and grateful to him and the municipium that had sent him. – Now – the interpreter said – here we present to you the treasures of St Mark's: approach and take as much as you like and deem fit. Kanjoš approached the iron chest with three locks, and saw a chest full to the brim of gold ducats. Kanjoš looked at the treasure, and with a disdainful smile took a ducat from his purse and threw it into the chest. – What are you doing? – cried the interpreter in surprise. Kanjoš retorted: If things were taken from this chest without putting something back in, the treasure would soon vanish: you would soon see the bottom of it.*

(Ljubiša, 1988)

Discuss the text: *What quality does Kanjoš display? Do you know anyone who would do the same today? What does the statement – Better an honest inquiry, than a disgraceful pursuit – mean?*

Then read quotations from other stories by S. M. Ljubiša, one at a time. Analyse their meaning together with the class. *How relevant are these to them? Are there universal values for all times?*

- *When a hare jumps, every dog barks. ("Šćepan Mali")*
- *The best service to one's master is to open his mind's eye to see the truth and renounce injustice. He who is a servant to truth and justice shall live forever. ("Skočidjevojka")*
- *What you chip falls at your feet. ("Skočidjevojka")*
- *But, to tell the truth, the court is not so much to blame as people. If people were good, there would be no need for any court! ("Skočidjevojka")*

## ■ Are people more honest than we think?

Ask the class how many people they think (in percentages) would return a lost wallet to its owner. Write the answers down.

Then share with them the results of **a mass social experiment<sup>97</sup> with "lost wallets", conducted in 40 countries around the world, which showed that people mostly return the wallets to their owners, particularly if they contain a lot of money.**

A group of economists put the honesty of people to the test with over 17,000 "lost" wallets. Based on the results, they tried to draw some general conclusions. Research assistants would go mostly to public places in large cities – such as squares, museums, theatres, banks, even police stations – pretending they had just found a wallet, drop it in a hurry and leave. The lost wallets contained different amounts of money, some a sizable amount, some a small amount, while there were also wallets with no money. Apart from a

grocery list, the wallets also contained business cards with an e-mail address or a phone number of the "owner" so that honest people who find it would be able to return it. To the surprise of the researchers, people mostly returned the wallets and, contrary to traditional economic logic, the more money there was inside the wallet, the more likely people were to return it. Overall, 51% of the wallets with smaller amounts of cash were returned compared with 40% of those without notes or coins. Interestingly, the wallets with large amounts of money were returned by as many as 72% of people. The rates differed, however, from one country to another. The lowest rates were recorded in China, Morocco, Kazakhstan, and Kenya, with only 8–20% of the lucky finders returning the wallets to the supposed owner. When it came to returning empty wallets, Switzerland was top of the list. However, notwithstanding the differences between countries, the main finding of the experiment was that people are more likely to return a wallet if it contains a larger amount of money than one with less money in it.

Ask your students: *Why do you think that the result of the experiment was the way it was?* Discuss the responses, and then share with the class the conclusions that the researchers themselves made:

The study authors believe that the explanation behind the results lies in a combination of two factors. The first one is altruism – the finders were worried about the harm that the owner could sustain. But, although they admit that altruism does play a certain motivational role when deciding to return the wallet, the economists – given the prior work on the same topic – still believe that people mostly care more about themselves. This led them to conclude that the second (and key) factor and the main motive behind the actions of honest finders was the disinclination to see themselves as thieves. "Keeping a found wallet means having to adapt one's self-image, which comes with psychological costs", explains Michel Maréchal, an economics professor at the University of Zurich, who helped lead the study. "These psychological forces were far stronger than the financial ones."

<sup>97</sup> More information available at: <http://elementarium.cpn.rs/teme/da-li-su-ljudi-posteniji-nego-sto-mislite/?lang=lat>.

This is confirmed by the survey responses. Respondents say that keeping a wallet without money looked less like a theft, and the more money there was in the wallet the more it looked like theft. In other words, the more money there was in a lost wallet, the more the finders found it difficult to keep it, because it would make them feel like thieves.

Discuss such findings with the class: how interesting or (un)expected are such findings? Ask them if they could cite other examples from their own experience or something they learned from other sources.

## ■ A letter to a teacher

A touching letter to his son's teacher when he was starting school is ascribed to Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), an American statesman.<sup>98</sup> Read out loud or make copies of the letter and then discuss what Abraham Lincoln asked the teacher to do. *What does his son need to know, is it knowledge from books or something else? What virtues does Lincoln want for his son? In which sentences do you recognize the significance of honesty?*

<sup>98</sup> Available at: <https://mnemagazin.me/2015/09/01/procitajte-pismo-abrahama-linkolna-ucitelju-svog-sina-prvaka/>.

### **In school it is far more honourable to fail than to cheat**

*My son starts school today. It is all going to be strange and new to him for a while and I wish you would treat him gently. It is an adventure that might take him across continents. All adventures that probably include wars, tragedy and sorrow. To live this life will require faith, love and courage.*

*So dear Teacher, will you please take him by his hand and teach him things he will have to know, teaching him – but gently, if you can. Teach him that for every enemy, there is a friend. He will have to know that all men are not just, that all men are not true. But teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero, that for every crooked politician, there is a dedicated leader.*

*Teach him if you can that 10 cents earned is of far more value than a dollar found. In school, teacher, it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat. Teach him to learn how to gracefully lose, and enjoy winning when he does win.*

*Teach him to be gentle with people, tough with tough people. Steer him away from envy if you can and teach him the secret of quiet laughter. Teach him if you can – how to laugh when he is sad, teach him there is no shame in tears. Teach him there can be glory in failure and despair in success. Teach him to scoff at cynics.*

*Teach him if you can the wonders of books, but also give time to ponder the extreme mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun and flowers on a green hill. Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if every one tell him they are wrong.*

*Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone else is doing it. Teach him to listen to every one, but teach him also to filter all that he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.*

*Teach him to sell his talents and brains to the highest bidder but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul. Let him have the courage to be impatient, let him have the patient to be brave. Teach him to have sublime faith in himself, because then he will always have sublime faith in mankind, in God.*

*This is the order, teacher but see what best you can do. He is such a nice little boy and he is my son.*

(Abraham Lincoln)

## ▪ Academic integrity

Ask the class to define academic integrity. *Which areas does it refer to? Encourage them to cite as many examples as possible. What constitutes honesty/integrity in school/ what are the key aspects?* Add, if needed: doing tests independently, no cheating, no plagiarism/ proper citing of references, or paraphrasing the works of others.

Prompt the discussion further with the following questions: *What does intellectual property mean? What does copyright mean? When writing essays and papers, do you think about how copying things found online, without citing the source, is simply a theft like any other? Do you think that academic dishonesty is more prevalent today than ever before? If 'yes,' then why? What is the cause or who is to blame? Do you think that cheating is always wrong? Why 'yes' or why 'no'? Do teachers and school instruct you enough about the proper use of sources?* Divide the class into groups and tell them to come up with a strategy for addressing the issue of cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty in school. Once the groups have finished, discuss and sum up the proposals.

## ▪ I accuse

After covering the history lesson on the consequences of World War I/II, tell the students to write indictments against those responsible for atrocities the way they think such indictments should be written.

## ▪ Fair play: Luz Long and Jesse Owens

Apart from in the homeroom classes, this story can also be used in history and PE lessons. Tell the story about Jesse Owens and Ludwig (Luz) Long, about Long's honesty, self-sacrifice, and optimism, and then comment – from the angle of history and of sport – on the lives and actions of Owens and Long.

Online you may find various versions of the story about Luz Long and Jesse Owens. You can analyse their credibility in the history lessons, but in order to discuss honesty the information given below should suffice:

**Carl Ludwig (Luz) Long** (1913–1943) was a German athlete specializing in the long jump and triple jump. He was a silver medallist at the Summer Olympics in Berlin in 1936, and he is also known for the advice he gave the winner, Jesse Owens (1913–1980), although he was his biggest competitor. It all happened in the arena, in front of Hitler, who was in the ceremonial box. Luz, several times over the best long-jumper in Germany, was expected to win the gold medal at the 1936 Olympics. Germans expected a safe win in the long jump. His main competitor was the American Jesse Owens. In the preliminary round, Owens's two jumps were declared fouls, so he was nervous before his decisive third jump. This is the moment when one of the most iconic images from sport fields of all times was made. Luz Long was placed next to Owens and was watching his jumps and tried to point out his mistake. He simply calmed Owens down and told him to try to jump from a spot several inches before the take-off board, because he would easily make a distance far greater than the minimum of 7.15 m. In the finals, Luz won the silver medal, behind Owens who set a world record with his jump of 8.06 m. This record remained until 1960.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>99</sup> More information available at: [https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr-el/%D0%9B%D1%83%D1%86\\_%D0%9B%D0%BE%D0%B D%D0%B3](https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr-el/%D0%9B%D1%83%D1%86_%D0%9B%D0%BE%D0%B D%D0%B3).

## ▪ A world in which we can trust no one

Tell students the story about a girl writing a blog about a world in which we can trust no one. She cites two simple examples: ordering food in a restaurant or asking passers-by for directions.<sup>100</sup> Encourage your students to give their examples to show that honesty and trust are important and essential for a society to function as such.

Then start a discussion prompted by the following: students are supposed to say the name of a person who is important to them, and then ask them the following: *What role does honesty play in your relationship with that person? Mention the situations when you noticed they were dishonest to you. What did you think at the time? How did you feel? What did you do? Would you do the same thing again? Was it difficult to start again trusting that person? Give an example when dishonesty got out of hand. What exactly happened and how did you correct the wrong done?*

Pair work: students are supposed to mention a situation when they were dishonest and when someone was dishonest with them. Each student should describe what he/she was thinking and how he/she was feeling at the moment. Use one half of the board to write down the thoughts and feelings of students in situations when they were dishonest, and the other half for thoughts and feelings in situations when somebody else was dishonest with them.

Compare and discuss.

## ▪ Moral dilemmas

*Act according to the maxim that you would wish all other rational people to follow, as if it were a universal law.*

**Kant's categorical imperative**

In the introductory workshop students dealt with some examples of moral dilemmas. Now give them examples of oral dilemmas from

literature, newspapers, films, etc. They are supposed to choose and justify the decision they would have made in the given situation. Discuss what guided them in making such a decision and why they see such a solution as better. Examples: film "Sophie's Choice", the folk poems "Banović Strahinja" and "Hasanaginica".

**The film "The Light Between Oceans":** Tom and Isabel live on an isolated island, where he is the lighthouse keeper. Several years later, after two miscarriages and one stillborn, the desperate Isabel hears a baby crying. A rowing boat containing a dead man and a newborn baby washes ashore. Tom, who lived by the rules and whose moral principles survived the horrible war, wishes to report the dead man and the baby straight away. But Isabel claims that the baby was a "gift from God" and, despite Tom's opinion, passes the baby off as her own and names her Lucy. When Lucy is two years old, Tom learns who her mother was and how she came to them. Since that moment he is torn by moral dilemmas... He cannot live with the knowledge that Lucy's mother is searching for her daughter, and he knows that, if he discovers the truth, it would destroy his own wife.

After the film, you can organize a debate about whether Tom made the right choice or not.

## ▪ Thought experiments

You can ask the students to imagine scripts for the given topics. The idea behind this approach is to reveal the ethical importance of a decision in a given situation, to highlight it and test it in the light of other options. Plato in his *Republic* uses the story of the Ring of Gyges and asks his interlocutor to imagine the consequences or how he would react if he received a ring that would make him invisible. The fundamental principles for contemplation in the story are the power of our ethical choices and the source of moral motivation (e.g. fear of punishment, virtue, etc.).

You can give the same task to your students: *What would you do if you found a ring that would make you invisible?*

<sup>100</sup> The inspiration for the activity: <https://www.livewiremedia.com/TheTrustConnection>.



## ▪ Word searches

This activity is suitable for an English language classroom. Make copies of the word search<sup>101</sup> (also in pairs), and the terms they are supposed to find refer to honesty.

## ▪ Fake news or media (dis)honesty

The activity may be done during regular teaching in the information technology, sociology or psychology classrooms.

Introduction for the teacher: The power of the mass media in modern society is indisputable. The media pervades our lives and occupies our daily routines. Every second of our lives we are bombarded by various messages and content – over an increasing number of communication channels, from television, over the internet, to the press. They direct us to what is important, and what is not, what is trendy and what is not, what is right and what is wrong, etc. In the abundance of news appearing each day in the world, it is becoming harder to separate genuine from fake news. The problem is that fake news spreads by means of one click without the one spreading it having actually

read what the “news” is actually about. That lies spread fast is proven by research carried out at MIT<sup>102</sup>: on Twitter fake news spreads six times faster than genuine news and is 70% more likely to be retweeted. Today literally anyone can become an influencer by publishing various nonsense, including fake news, to increase the number of followers and thus earn more money from sponsors whose products they advertise. And their followers often share and blindly defend the fake news of their role models – the influencers. According to a survey conducted by UNICEF and the AEM, 51% of parents and 62% of children have never heard the term “fake news”, and even more of them do not know what it means. The survey revealed that for young people aged 12–17 the internet is the primary source of information.<sup>103</sup>

Ask your students: *Have you ever shared fake news because it was interesting and because you wanted to be the first to spread it to your friends on social media? Did you retract it when you realized it was not true? What were the consequences of it spreading and what responsibility does each individual who participates in spreading such news have?*

<sup>101</sup> Available at: [http://www.whenwewordsearch.com/word\\_search/fairness\\_and\\_honesty\\_/5860/word\\_search.jsp](http://www.whenwewordsearch.com/word_search/fairness_and_honesty_/5860/word_search.jsp).

<sup>102</sup> Taken from: <https://wcmprod.unicef.org/montenegro/price/fake-news-opasno-po-%C5%BEivot>.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Fake news can be life-threatening. If we consider, for example, the issue of immunization. Science is fairly clear here – vaccines save lives. However, people around the world have been exposed to a multitude of fake news regarding immunization that has been spread on social networks.

Scary pseudo-scientific facts shared online have managed to reduce immunization rates, leading to the outbreak of diseases that had been virtually eradicated. Some children have lost their lives as a consequence of fake news.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

Divide the class into groups and give them the task to come up with strategies for recognizing fake news. After the groups have reported back to the rest of the class, if necessary, add to

what they have come up with. Media literacy is key to preventing people from falling for fake news, and some of the ways which can help us to critically assess the media content we are

exposed to, including checking the source of the information, help us navigate through the media landscape with more ease, and with more understanding: Who is the author? Is the source credible? Who was the media content made for? Who finances it and for what purpose?

Considering the great risk of spreading fake news, various guides are available online that can help us recognize fake news.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.bljesak.info/sci-tech/internet/kako-prepoznati-lazne-vijesti/263425>; author IFLA – <http://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174>, CC BY 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=56970304>.

## Quotations about honesty

The quotations can be used as warm-up or wrap-up activities, but also independently, as an activity where students would read the quotations, choose the ones they like the most, and explain their choice.

- *Truth exists; only lies are invented.*  
Georges Braque
- *A harmful truth is better than a useful lie.*  
Thomas Mann
- *A lie can annihilate a thousand truths.*  
Ashanti
- *Be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others.*  
Bacon
- *Even that which is not prohibited, may not be honest.*  
Valtazar Bogišić
- *Honesty can be defeated but it cannot be destroyed.*  
Malagasy proverb
- *Let us regard life as a children's game in which nothing is serious apart from honesty.*  
Kant
- *Honest men fear neither the light nor the dark.*  
Thomas Fuller
- *A thread will tie an honest man better than a rope a rogue.*  
An English saying
- *An honest man is always a child.*  
Socrates
- *He who is honest, is also noble.*  
Ante Starčević
- *If you add to the truth, you subtract from it.*  
Talmud
- *When in doubt tell the truth.*  
Mark Twain
- *Always be ready to speak your mind, and a base man will avoid you.*  
William Blake
- *Truth can never be told so as to be understood, and not to be believed... Everything possible to be believed is an image of truth.*  
William Blake
- *A truth that's told with bad intent / Beats all the lies you can invent.*  
William Blake
- *A lie may take of the present, but it has no future.*  
Unknown
- *If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything.*  
Mark Twain
- *He that does not speak Truth to me, does not believe me when I speak Truth.*  
Thomas Fuller
- *No legacy is so rich as honesty.*  
Shakespeare
- *Truth is always the strongest argument.*  
Sophocles
- *We cannot call honest those who refrain from a shameful act out of fear of disgrace or the law or judgment.*  
Cicero



GRATITUDE







# GRATITUDE

*Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.*

Cicero

A simple “thank you” can make someone’s day. We have heard this said numerous times and have our own experience to prove it, and still saying “thank you” seems costly, barely affordable to ourselves and others, or else too cheap, said in passing, just for sake of appearances. And in actual fact, these simple words of thankfulness hide something much bigger and more important, something that has got hidden in the rat race of life where, swamped by so many things to do and constrained by a lack of time, we fail to stop for a moment and become aware of all the benefits we enjoy and are surrounded with. We truly need to elevate ourselves to an awareness of the importance of thankfulness in the lives of all of us. A “thank you” said lightly, without grasping its essence, is nothing more but verbal civility, a sign of good manners. Even such a “thank you”, which is always nice to hear and receive, is often missing. We forget to say “thank you” for the little, seemingly insignificant things that people constantly do for us. Parents tend to be the ones whose actions children fail to notice. Or even if they notice, they tend to believe that these things go without saying and that there is no need to say “thank you” or express thankfulness by any other means, with a hug, for instance. But, aren’t children a mere reflection of us?! People tend to take all good things for granted, as if someone is obliged to do a multitude of “small” favours each day to facilitate their lives and make them feel comfortable and pampered. A woman in the

role of a mother or a wife is an invisible miracle-worker who often goes without even a simple “thank you” from the ones closest to her.

True gratitude is so much more than a respect for propriety and the actual words said. It is a feeling that makes us capable of appreciating what others have done or intended to do for us, a feeling that prompts us to show this, to respond, to reciprocate. Once we are aware of the importance of what others are doing for our benefit and when we feel and express true gratitude, we will be able to understand and appreciate the joy of giving and receiving, the joy of selflessness, love, and togetherness. Moreover, gratitude does not just mean an awareness of what others do for us, but also the awareness that every new day, every new meeting, every detail of beauty that surrounds us is a reason to appreciate life and be thankful for what we have. In itself, it is a huge reason for joy and happiness.

Our greatest need and greatest goal is to reach a feeling of fulfilment and meaning in life. It may spring from gratitude, i.e. the awareness that every moment offers a multitude of reasons to be satisfied. David Steindl says in his famous talk<sup>106</sup> that the method for adopting gratefulness as a lifestyle or a view of life is simple. We need to build in ourselves “stop signs” and do as we would when crossing the street – stop, look left and right, then go. Hence, we truly need to stop that frantic race through our own life and stop, and look around and see all the reasons for joy that are at the tips of our fingers, but which we just did not allow ourselves to see and which passed us by unnoticed.

We can do that constantly, we can sharpen our internal vision and live through a continuous sense of gratitude, with gratitude. Such a soothing feeling, or a state of mind even, will be conducive to developing virtues such as optimism, empathy, sacrifice, humanitarianism, or character building in general. A human being can obviously not be grateful for all the things

<sup>106</sup> Available at: [https://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_steindl\\_rast\\_want\\_to\\_be\\_happy\\_be\\_grateful/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_steindl_rast_want_to_be_happy_be_grateful/transcript).

that happen in the world and in their lives – we cannot be grateful for violence, wars, natural disasters, nor bereavement, nor any difficult moment inevitable in life. But we can, and should, be grateful for every new moment and all the beauty of it. We have to keep our eyes wide open and see the multitude of reasons for a big “thank you” to life. With such a feeling of gratitude for all the good things, we will find it easier to cope with what is bad, painful, and difficult.

Given all the above, it is very important to continuously develop gratitude, starting from the earliest age. Adults from the child’s immediate environment must lead by example and encourage behaviour that develops gratitude. As claimed by Robert Emmons, a psychology professor at the University of California, we cannot pass on to children what we lack ourselves. We, adults, are unaware of how much we can and must improve ourselves, if not for our own sake, then for the sake of children for whom we are, whether we like it or not, a good or a bad role model for behaviour.

Research has shown that gratitude and its effects are measurable and yield obvious benefits. According to a new study published in *School Psychology Review* (2014)<sup>107</sup>, the feeling of gratitude doubled among a group of 122 primary school students who learned about the concept of selflessness over one week.

Here we particularly emphasize the results of our survey (2015) in primary schools<sup>108</sup> and the finding that students, unlike their parents and teachers, consider gratitude to be a desired quality. They also believe it would be important for them to learn in school how to develop such a quality, which was not typical of the views of their parents or teachers.

<sup>107</sup> Available at: <https://www.ernweb.com/educational-research-articles/gratitude-students-social-emotional-learning-relationships/>.

<sup>108</sup> The role of schools in developing students’ character, values and skills – The report on the results of the research (2015), the Bureau of Education and UNICEF, available as a hard copy and at: [http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/UNICEF\\_-\\_Uloga\\_skole\\_u\\_razovju\\_vrlina\\_vrijednosti\\_i\\_vjestina\\_ucenika\\_i\\_ucenica.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/UNICEF_-_Uloga_skole_u_razovju_vrlina_vrijednosti_i_vjestina_ucenika_i_ucenica.pdf).

## **The teacher’s role**

Just as they have to be aware that they can largely affect the development of creativity, self-confidence, or some other social and emotional skill, teachers also have to be aware that they hold the possible development of gratitude in their hands, as something that can make the lives of their students much more fulfilled. But, in order for something like that to be possible, teachers themselves must be determined to and continuously work on their own spiritual development and, with the required measure of humility, be aware that one can always know more and be better, a spiritually richer person. Such teachers are bound, at one point of their development, to comprehend, if this has not already happened, the blessing of their calling, the privilege of living their life with children, with pure life energy, with the greatest power in society, with the ones the world will be passed on to. Such teachers also know that every interaction with young people enriches them, lifts their own spirit and body, keeps them young and joyful, gives strength to overcome the trying moments in the teaching profession. Teachers must be grateful for all that. And then they, whether they are aware of it or not, transfer the feeling of gratitude to their students and teach them how to look at life, at the people they are destined to be linked with, the profession we have chosen and love and that gives back to us tenfold what we give and invest in a way which cannot be paid with money. Thus, a teacher is a role model, a bright spot, someone whose views are accepted and mimicked. If we manage to make our students aware of the need to feel gratitude and convince them that a life with gratitude is a life with joy and love, then we have done a great missionary task that can and should make us proud.

The opportunities to indicate the human need for gratitude are infinite. The classroom offers plenty of such opportunities. There are days and lessons when the atmosphere is pronouncedly agreeable and conducive to work, when students participate with interest,

analyse, and think about the topic. This is the moment to take a pause and lift the “stop sign”, invite them to become aware of the beauty of the moment, to recognize the pleasant feelings of the moment (which they will confirm with their looks and smiles), and then remind them of the danger of not taking stock of their time at school – everybody agrees it has a lot of beauty which, unfortunately, we tend to notice only once it is over. Invite them then to be grateful for the lessons, for the school bell, for the classmate they share a desk with, for the school trip, for going to the theatre, for a medal won in a school competition. Invite them to say a deeply felt “thank you” to each other, to the school, and to life in general. This will be beneficial for them at many levels: for them as future adults, who need to continue loving and appreciating life in all its shapes and forms and to build their life path as grateful beings.

This is just one possible detail out of the wealth that goes by in their lives, often quietly and unnoticed, notwithstanding all the objective beauty. A no less effective path is to use opposite examples for raising such awareness – human anguish, poverty, famine, thirst, wars, and the suffering of their peers... Remind them that, while we waste huge quantities of water, in places in Africa children drink from ponds, pray for rain, and appreciate every drop of water, which is in scarce supply, as real treasure. Ask them whether the truth alone is not a sufficient reason for taking a deep bow and giving a huge “thank you” for living in peace and abundance. If you are convincing enough, the ensuing silence will be more powerful than words.





## WORKSHOP:

### Let's start by opening our eyes

#### Goals:

Students will:

- *analyse their own feelings and the feelings of others in a situation when expressing gratitude*
- *understand why gratitude is important for feelings and good interpersonal relationships*

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Material:** sheets of A4 paper divided into halves

\* \* \*



#### Gratitude is... (15 min)

Ask your students what gratitude means for them. Write the key words on the board. Then watch the gratitude video together.<sup>109</sup>

Description of the video: You think this is just another day in your life. It is not just another day; it is the one day that is given to you today. It's given to you. It is a gift. It's the only gift that you have right to now, and the only appropriate response is gratitude. If you do nothing else but cultivate that response to the great gift that this unique day is, if you learn to respond as if it were the first day of your life, and the very last day, then you will have spent this day very well. Begin by opening your eyes and be surprised that you have eyes you can open, that incredible array of

colours that is constantly offered to us for pure enjoyment. Look at the sky. We so rarely look at the sky. We rarely note how different it is from moment to moment with clouds coming and going. And even when we do think about the weather, we don't think of all the many nuances of weather. We just think of good weather and bad weather. This day right now has unique weather, maybe a kind that will never come again exactly in that form. The formation of clouds in the sky will never be the same as it is right now. Open your eyes. Look at that. Look at the faces of people that you meet. Each one has an incredible story behind their face, a story that you could never fully fathom. Not only their own story, but the story of their ancestors. We all go back so far. And at this present moment on this day all the people you meet, all that life from generations and from so many places all over the world flows together and meets you here like life-giving water, if only you open your heart and drink. Open your heart to the incredible gifts that civilization gives to us. You flip a switch and there is electric light. You turn a tap and there is warm water and cold water and drinkable water. It is a gift that millions and millions in the world will never experience. So these are just a few of an enormous number of gifts to which you can open your heart. And so I wish for you that you will open your heart to all these blessings and let them flow through you, that everyone whom you meet on this day will be blessed.

Tell the students to write down one thing they particularly liked while watching the video. Ask them to put their notes on the poster.

Ask the class: *What did you notice in the video? What were you thinking about? How did you feel while watching the video? What left the strongest impression on you? What are you grateful for?*



#### A message/letter of gratitude (30 min)

Pass out A4 sheets of paper. The students' task is to write a short letter to individuals of their choice about what they are grateful for. Then

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nj2ofrX7jAk&x>



they display the letters on the wall or the board for everyone to read.

Discuss how they felt while writing the letter: *How will the person who gets the letter feel? Did the letter help you understand something you*

*previously hadn't understood? Will you do this in future? When?*

They can also decorate the letters and send them to the addressees.



## OR YOU CAN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

Modelled on this workshop, the following activities can be combined, used independently, or with some other warm-up and wrap-up games. This activity will help the students learn about gratitude, think about this virtue, and develop it.

### ▪ About stories, storytelling and gratitude

Ivo Andrić started and finished his speech on the occasion of accepting the Nobel Prize in

Stockholm with words of gratitude.<sup>110</sup> Read out loud excerpts from his speech. Discuss how gratitude may be expressed in different ways. *Does Andrić thank on his own behalf? What other virtues do you recognize in these excerpts? What other purpose should literature serve?*

<sup>110</sup>The speech is available at: <https://www.pismenica.rs/knjizevnost/ivo-andric-o-prici-i-pricanju/>.

At the beginning Andrić says: *My country is indeed a "small country between the worlds", as it has aptly been characterized by one of our writers, a country which, at break-neck speed and at the cost of great sacrifices and prodigious efforts, is trying in all fields, including the field of culture, to make up for those things of which it has been deprived by a singularly turbulent and hostile past. In choosing the recipient of this award you have cast a shining light upon the literary activity of that country, at the very moment when, thanks to a number of new names and original works, that country's literature is beginning to gain recognition through an honest endeavour to make its contribution to world literature. There is no doubt that your distinction of a writer of this country is an encouragement which calls for our gratitude; I am happy to have the opportunity to express this gratitude to you in this place and at this time, simply but sincerely.*

And this is how Andrić ends his speech: *But, in conclusion, it is to be hoped that the story told by today's author to his contemporaries, irrespective of its form and content, should be neither tarnished by hate nor obscured by the noise of homicidal machines, but that it should be born out of love and inspired by the breadth of ideas of a free and serene human mind. For the storyteller and his work serve no purpose unless they serve, in one way or another, man and humanity. That is the essential point. And that is what I have attempted to bring out in these brief reflections inspired by the occasion and which, with your permission, I shall conclude as I began them, with the repeated expression of a profound and sincere gratitude.*



## ▪ We should appreciate anew the little place we live in

Read with your students the excerpts from Sabato's essay *Before the End*. Discuss with the class what attitude towards today's society

the author expresses in his text. *How can we contribute to the protection of humanity? What should we recognize and value? What should we be grateful for? In our daily rush do we tend to lose sight of the purpose in life? Do we forget one another?*

### ***Before the End***

*There are, however, ways to contribute to the protection of humanity – not to resign ourselves to the situation as it is. Not to watch indifferently as the infinite wealth of the world around us, with all its colours, sounds and smells, disappears from sight...*

*There is no other way for a man to reach eternity except to live in the moment, nor there is other way to get to life in general except to start from our individual life: here and now. And then what? We should appreciate anew the little place we live in and the little life we have, which have nothing to do with the magnificent scenery we can see on television, but which are in a truly dedicated manner pervaded by the humanity of us people living in it...*

*Human presence is seen in the arrangement of things on a table, the way gramophone records are stacked, how a book is left, or a toy. The touch with anything created by human hands is reminiscent of the life of another human being, who left behind traces to recognize and find him. If we live as machines, like blind people, we will not be able to see the traces people leave behind for us, like Hansel and Gretel dropping stones in the hope they will be found.*

(Ernesto Sabato, 2002)

## ▪ Give a book

In homeroom classes, tell the students to write their name on a piece of paper and put it in a hat/box. The students then draw names from the hat and give a book of their choice to the person whose name they have drawn. There will also be a Book of Impressions available in classroom, where each student will write a message of gratitude to the classmate he/she received a book from, and after reading the book, his/her impressions of the book. You can also make a bookshelf where students will leave the books they would like their classmates to read or books from the compulsory reading list which are unavailable in the school library.

## ▪ Gratitude jar

This activity is a good method for giving a voice to more reticent students. As a part of

the morning routine, students write one thing they are grateful for on a piece of paper. When you have time, let the jar make a round through the classroom with students drawing notes and reading out loud what is written on them.

## ▪ Gratitude tree

There are different creative ways for expressing gratitude in an artistic manner, and one of the most popular ways is to make a gratitude tree. Students can write down or draw something they are grateful for and put it on the gratitude tree. Students will appreciate gratitude more if you show them that you are grateful to people around you. Remember: teaching students gratitude can change their lives.,

## ▪ Gratitude journal

Task the students with writing down every day three things they are grateful for.

This can be used also as an activity for students who complete their classroom assignments ahead of time. Students should fill out and illustrate a gratitude journal.

The topics and questions for the gratitude journal:

- Whom do I appreciate?
- What experiences am I grateful for?
- What talents/qualities am I grateful for?
- What have other people done for me?
- The challenges and difficulties that made me stronger.
- The friendships I am grateful for.
- When am I grateful the most?
- My family traditions that I am grateful for.
- The opportunities that I am grateful for.
- How do I show gratitude?
- What makes me happy?

The teacher advises the students to read the gratitude journal when oppressed by some negative feelings. It will remind them of the

people, things, and life values they should be grateful for.

## ▪ Gratitude film

Working in groups, students make a short film or a music video (3–5 minutes long) in which they thank somebody for something. They can use their mobile phones to make the recordings. This can also be arranged as a school competition.

## ▪ Say 'thank you' every day

You can also have a music lesson focusing on gratitude. In advance, tell students to seek and bring to the class recordings of songs that speak about gratitude. Below are some examples:

Del Arno Bend: Svakog dana reci hvala<sup>111</sup>

Various artists: S one strane duge<sup>112</sup>

Various artists: Za milion godina<sup>113</sup>

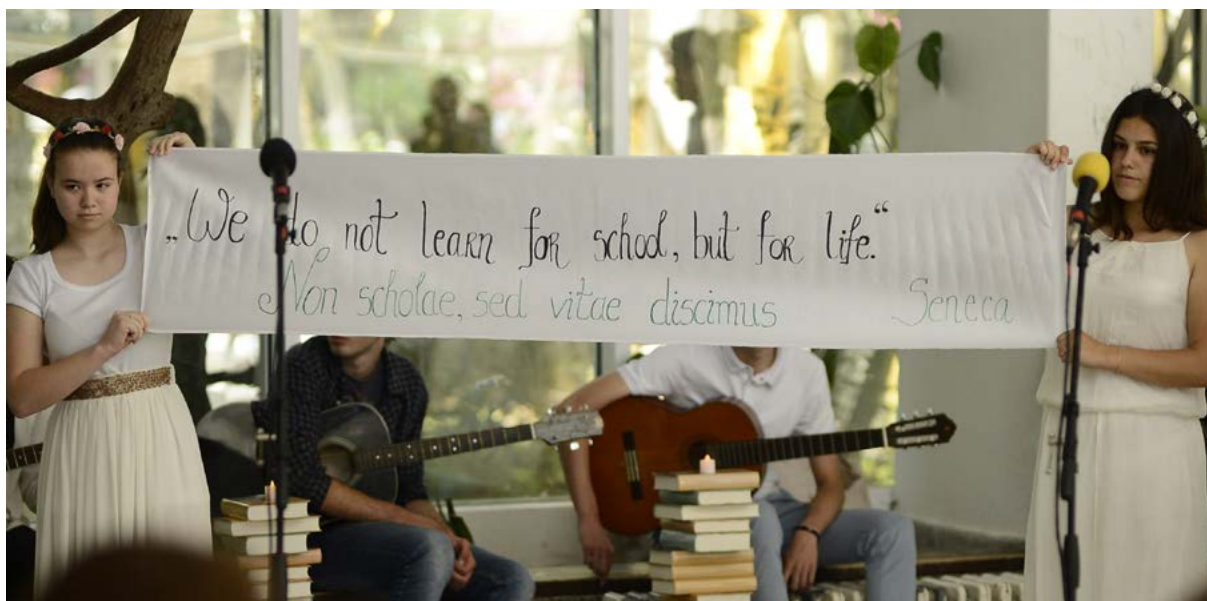
EKV: Zemlja<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq0x-g\\_50fE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq0x-g_50fE) 117.

<sup>112</sup> S one strane duge: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-ZWIkWkOeE>.

<sup>113</sup> Za milion godina: [https://debojj.net/video/id\\_hRdyL6PkZKM](https://debojj.net/video/id_hRdyL6PkZKM).

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMh0ZqrEJVs>.



## ▪ A true story

Read out loud the story about the actor Miodrag Petrović Čkalja, recorded by the journalist and author Pero Radović.

Discuss with the class: *When you heard the beginning of the story, did you expect such a reaction from Čkalja's father? How did Čkalja show gratitude for his father's big gesture? Do you know of any other similar example?*

### A meeting with Čkalja

*Miodrag Petrović Čkalja (1924–2003), a great stage and film actor and comedian, was very popular. He was born in Kruševac, by some twist of fate on 1 April, April Fool's Day. At the time of our meeting sometime in the 1970s, shows were being aired on television where he acted and captured the attention of audiences for his acting and incredibly convincing comedy. He was also a film actor, but television brought him enormous popularity.*

*I was in Belgrade on some other television business and contacted him, arranged a meeting intending to interview him for the "Zadugar" newspaper. At the time agreed, I came to the theatre. He was waiting for me in his dressing room and, what surprised me, was his seriousness throughout the interview. And I was used to expecting humour and laughter in anything connected with Čkalja. In the interview he focused particularly on his days at secondary school. He talked about the learning problems he had had at general high school, once he even went to remedial classes. When again next year he failed several subjects, his mother was aghast and threatened:*

*– Your father is coming home soon, then see with him what happens next.*

*When his father came, his mother shared the news about the son. The father listened in silence, then told his son to get dressed to go out. No one knew what he was up to.*

*– We went – Čkalja said – downtown. Father was still silent, and I was trying to figure out what was on his mind. We paused in front of a clothes shop. He looked at the shop window, and then we went in. He asked the shop assistant to show him suits of my size. Then I relaxed. He asked me if I liked the suit he had chosen. I said yes, contrite, but also with a hint of delight, because it was expensive for our family means, and even more of a surprise as such.*

*I put on the new suit, the assistant packed my old sweater and trousers. We also chose a hat. (Although we were inside he had his hat on, maybe unrelated to the story of the old days, but still...). I have loved hats ever since. In another shop we bought shoes, and when we left the shop, he tapped me on the shoulder and said: "Son, try not to have such problems in school anymore." He went into town, and I, all dressed up, went back home, to my mother's great surprise.*

*She wasn't sorry, however, that my drama had ended in that way. From that time I became a good student and decided to become a stable man – said the great comedian. – In all the things I did and accomplished since then the great gesture of my father was present, even if only subconsciously.*

*(Pero Radović, 2015)*



### ▪ An instructive story

Read out loud the story below. Discuss the story and its messages: *What is the moral of the story? What did the castaway learn? What should we be*

*grateful for? Are there some situations in your life when you think – if only I had a brand-new phone and designer shoes and clothes? Do you ever pause and think – what truly makes me happy? Are you grateful for that?*

#### A castaway's luck<sup>115</sup>

*During the Second World War a man was adrift on a raft for twenty-one days before he was rescued.*

*Asked if he had learnt anything from the experience he replied, "Yes. If I can only have an abundance of food to eat and plenty of water to drink I shall be riotously happy for the rest of my life."*

*An old man says he complained only once in all his life – when his feet were bare and he had no money to buy shoes.*

*Then he saw a happy man who had no feet. And he never complained again.*

(Anthony de Mello, 2005)

<sup>115</sup> The story was taken from the book *The Prayer of the Frog* by Anthony de Mello, an Indian psychotherapist, priest, and author. The stories belong to different countries, cultures and religions, spiritual legacy, and folk humour of humanity.



## ▪ Gratitude of a Nobel laureate to his teacher<sup>116</sup>

Apart from the homeroom classes, this activity can also be done in literature classrooms.

Albert Camus (1913–1960), the French writer, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957, grew up in a poor French family in Algeria. His father died in the Battle of the Marne, and his

illiterate, nearly deaf mother had to raise her children on her own, as best she could and knew how. A teacher named Louis Germaine was of huge help and had a great influence on the development of this poor boy. He helped him selflessly, and the boy, when he became an author and a Nobel laureate, knew who he owed gratitude to.

He wrote a letter of gratitude to his teacher:

<sup>116</sup> Taken from: <https://zelenaucionica.com/zahvalnost-jednog-nobelovca-svom-ucitelju-2/>.

19 November 1957

Dear Monsieur Germain,

*I have let the commotion around me these days subside a bit before speaking to you from the bottom of my heart. I have just been given far too great an honour, one I neither sought nor solicited. But when I heard the news, my first thought, after my mother, was of you. Without you, without the affectionate hand you extended to the small poor child that I was, without your teaching and example, none of all this would have happened. I don't make too much of this sort of honour. But at least it gives me the opportunity to tell you what you have been and still are for me, and to assure you that your efforts, your work, and the generous heart you put into it still live in one of your little schoolboys who, despite the years, has never stopped being your grateful pupil.*

*I embrace you with all my heart.*

*Albert Camus*

If your students do not know the facts about Camus's life already, tell them briefly, and then read his letter to his teacher.

Discuss what the letter says about Camus, which virtues it reveals. *Do you have a person in school that someday you would like to write a similar letter to? What is the importance of school and teachers in your growing up?*





## Quotations about gratitude

As is the case with all the other virtues, these quotations may be used in the warm-up and wrap-up sections or as a separate activity where students choose the quotation they like the most and justify their choice.

- *Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.*

Cicero

- *Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.*

Marcel Proust

- *We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.*

Thornton Wilder

- *As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest form of appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.*

John F. Kennedy

- *At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.*

Albert Schweitzer

- *The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.*

William James

- *He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.*

Epictetus

- *We are happy only when we ask nothing of tomorrow, and receive with gratitude what today brings us.*

Hermann Hesse

- *I hate ingratitude more in a man / Than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness, / Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption / Inhabits our frail blood.*

Shakespeare

- *Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough.*

Oprah Winfrey

- *Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.*

Mark Twain



## SCHOOL-BASED CAMPAIGNS

*We are what we do repeatedly. Therefore, the power of control over our doing is the power of control over our character, and the power of control over our character is the power of control over our life.*

Aristotle

Encouraging students to become familiar with and to understand virtues, to talk and think about them, to use the “language of virtues” in mandatory classes or in workshops is important, but not enough. At the beginning we said that a school is truly devoted to the development of social and emotional skills only if it is understood that EVERYTHING that goes on in the school affects the development of desirable characteristics in students, and that is the joint task of EVERYBODY in the school. This means that every segment of school life and work and all the participants in the process offer opportunities for developing the students’ personalities: the teacher, curriculum, teaching and learning, extracurricular activities, assessment and monitoring, peers, school management, and the partnership with parents and the community.

School-based actions, in the broadest sense, imply activities planned and organized in the school outside of regular instruction, and are a link between the school and life. These include all extra-curricular activities, but also the work of the Student Parliaments, the involvement of parents and the community in the life and work of the school, as well as the outward presentation of the school to the local and wider community. This all put together makes

an integral part of the school’s development and other plans, and is a part of the school’s daily life, to which an additional dimension may be added – the development and promotion of the social and emotional skills of students.

During the training delivered for secondary school teachers for applying the My Values and Virtues programme, we recorded examples that are already part of standard practice in many school, but also those ideas that came out of the training itself, as well as from implementation of the programme in pilot schools.<sup>117</sup>

We will cite only a few examples of possible actions for you to use as such, or that will serve as an inspiration for coming up with new ideas.

**School messages:** posters in classrooms and in the assembly hall, thematic displays, and messages on the school website and social networks are a quite simple, yet effective way of promoting values and virtues. An example from our school practice<sup>118</sup> for which is applicable in schools where there is no classroom change, but each class has its own classroom, is a classroom decoration competition. Give students freedom in decorating their classrooms, and the following are some ideas only: bring a pot plant, write a motivational message, make a bookshelf, put up posters of favourite films, athletes, scientists, etc. Give them several days to do so, then announce the winners, the best-looking and most creative classrooms, with a symbolic award for the given class. This helps develop creativity and teamwork, while turning classrooms into more appealing learning environments.

**School-based projects** may be organized either as interdisciplinary projects or within one school subject. Regardless of the topic, working on projects helps develop teamwork skills, creativity, honesty, perseverance,

<sup>117</sup> Segments of a regular lesson, and of the poetry and music programme organized to promote values and virtues on the occasion of UNICEF’s visit to “Niko Rolović” General Secondary School are available at: <https://www.facebook.com/unicefmontenegro/videos/411985526224398/>.

<sup>118</sup> “Panto Mališić” General Secondary School, Berane.



entrepreneurial skills, etc. Some activities proposed for developing certain virtues are accompanied by ideas for diverse, smaller- or bigger-scale school-based projects.

**Celebrating significant days** is done in every school, and these activities could be better focused on developing social and emotional skills, since it is often believed that promoting values and virtues goes without saying with such programmes. Nevertheless, practice shows that the effects are better if you are explicit about the goals being pursued, including by naming the project and pointing directly to role-models, values, and virtues.

**Careers Day:** Representatives of various universities visit schools and promote their programmes, but this most often gets announced only formally. Design a Careers Day by encouraging guests/participants to speak, in addition to other information relevant for various professions, and also about the social and emotional skills significant for certain professions.

**A school newspaper** offers numerous opportunities to talk directly about virtues. You may have thematic issues, and we believe that the activities proposed may serve as an inspiration for devising new approaches to developing school newspapers.

**Thematic literary and artistic competitions** can be organized around virtues. Apart from the usual poetry recitals, schools can organize, for example, poetry recital competitions whose theme is optimism, or making short videos on a specific issue, for instance gratitude. Some ideas for similar activities are given on the previous pages.

**Sports events** are also regular activities in all schools. If we approach them somewhat differently, by also declaring those who played fair and square as winners, not only those who have scored the most, this will encourage students to think about the importance of these characteristics. Good examples are the stories and activities about Ludwig Long and Jesse

Owens, as well as the football game played at Christmas in World War I (sections on empathy and honesty).

**Volunteering and charity:** Often various actions to raise aid for people in need are organized in schools. However, these are most often not accompanied by any discussion about benefaction, empathy, helping others, being charitable and humane, etc. When designing such activities, the sections of this Handbook on tolerance, empathy, and gratitude may prove to be particularly helpful.

The **Value and Virtue Corner**<sup>119</sup> is an idea that was carried out in Berane's general secondary school. Namely, a section of one school corridor was specially designed to encourage responsibility among students by exchanging books: students and teachers can leave here books that they recommend to others as reading materials. Once read, the books are to be returned to the shelves for others to borrow. In another section of the corner, students are able to take certain school stationery, respecting the fact that everything has its value.

**Student Parliament** offers an opportunity for students to partake in making decisions that affect them, to launch initiatives and campaigns (charities, clean-ups, etc.). It is a testing ground for developing teamwork, leadership, entrepreneurship, responsibility, tolerance, perseverance, etc. The students who take part in the work of the Parliament are expected to be role models for other students in the way they communicate, make decisions, and show initiative and creativity.

**School clubs:** The options are immense; here we mention the example of the "Biblioduh" Book Club<sup>120</sup> in "Niko Rolović" General Secondary School, set up on World Character Day in 2018. Its mission is to develop a reading

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/gimberane/posts/2539295186092151/>

<sup>120</sup> More information on the activities of the "Biblioduh" Book Club is available on the Facebook page of "Niko Rolović" General Secondary School: <https://www.facebook.com/Gimnazija-Niko-Rolovic-1560931317558415/>.

culture, but also a tea-drinking culture, which gave rise to a creative logo designed by its members. Apart from creativity and developing a love for fiction, their method of work and the climate of trust built while talking about books are helping develop self-confidence, so that they feel freer to express their own views than in a traditional classroom environment,

exercise self-control by waiting for their turn and listening to others to express their opinions; students develop empathy not only by developing an understanding about literary characters and their stories, but also through mutual understanding; then there is tolerance towards different views, and the books covered offer myriad opportunities to discuss this virtue.



*Values and Virtues Corner, Berane General Secondary School*

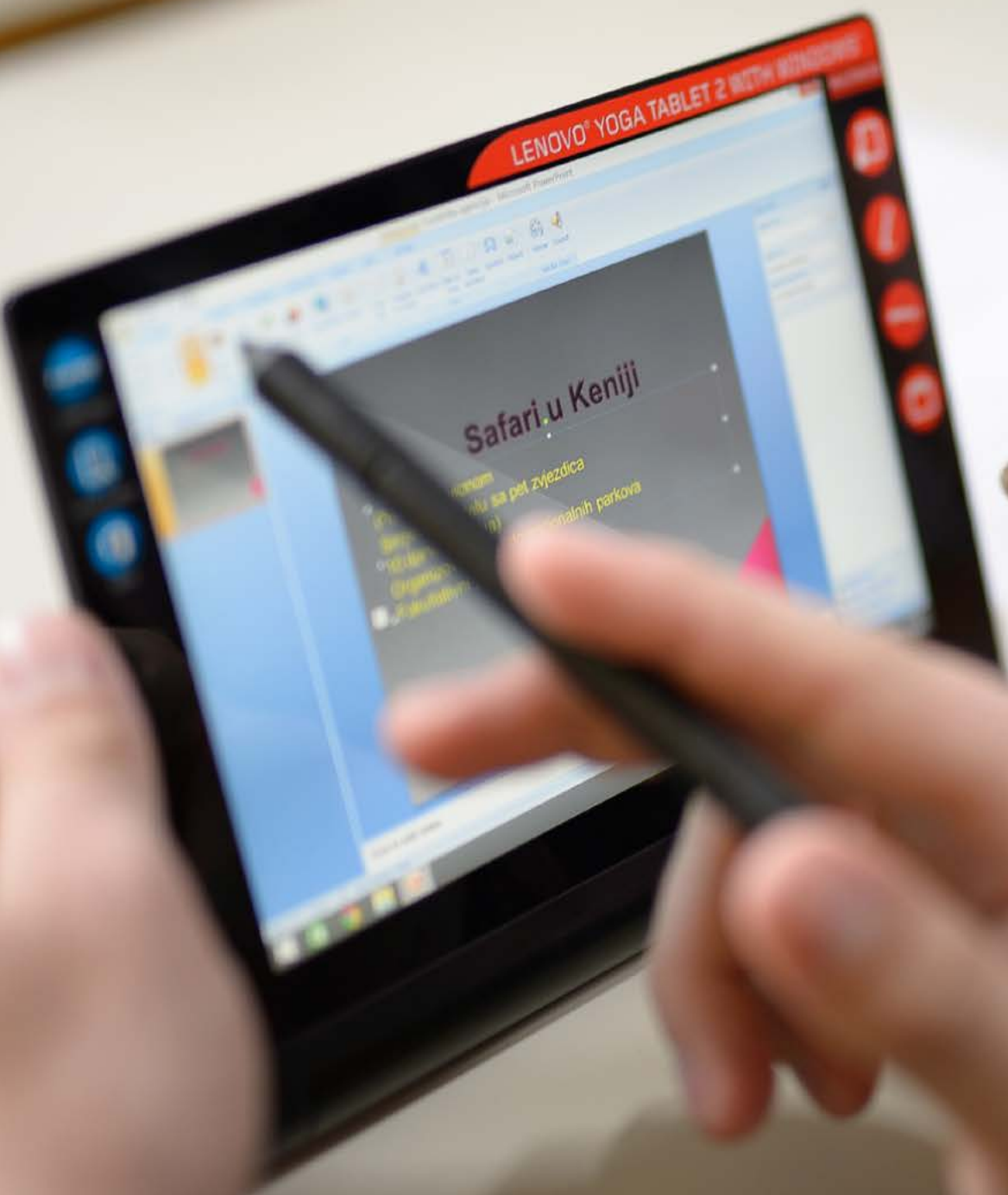


Logo of the Biblioduh Readers' Club, Bar General Secondary School





# APPENDIX



# APPENDIX

## DESCRIPTION OF SOME SELECTED TEACHING METHODS

### 1. *Fishbowl*

Description	<p>Fishbowl is a simple, mostly dynamic alternative to a panel discussion</p> <p><b>It is suitable for developing social skills and forming attitudes.</b></p>
How	<p>Students form two circles – one inner and one outer – to create an arena. The inner circle has 4–6 chairs facing inwards, while the outer circle has chairs for the other students.</p> <p><b>The game <i>Fishbowl</i> has the following rules:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Only the students in the inner circle are allowed to discuss, the participants in the outer circle are not allowed to join in.</li> <li>2. If any of the students from the outer circle wishes to join in the discussion, they may sit on either a spare chair in the inner circle or a chair behind such a chair. Once the discussant has fully formulated his/her ideas, he/she must leave the inner circle, with somebody else then sitting on that seat.</li> <li>3. Any of the inner-circle participants may at any point in time leave their place if they wish to take some time off the discussion.</li> <li>4. Whoever leaves the inner circle, may also return. The students who do that repeatedly become conspicuous. This enables group domination to become visible.</li> <li>5. In practice, following an initial period of uncertainty, the students' entering or leaving the inner circle becomes more spontaneous and happens without interrupting the discussion.</li> </ol> <p>The activity has to be clearly presented at the beginning, emphasizing that they need to take turns. It is important that once the activity has started, there must be no "higher instance", something that needs to be clearly spelled out. It means that from that moment onwards, students alone are in charge of guiding the course of the discussion, without external intervention.</p> <p>Initially, students tend to be reluctant to enter the inner circle. This is something to be noted in the introduction. This can be eased by initially placing 1–2 spare chairs in the middle to enable rapid movement between the inner and the outer circles. Students should be made aware that those in the inner circle have to be clear and loud so that others can follow.</p>

<b>Pros</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Particularly suited to highly contested issues.</li> <li>▪ Suitable for open discussions (measuring up alternatives, argument exchanges, etc.) in a larger circle (approx. 20 people).</li> <li>▪ May be useful for <b>critical (self-)reflection</b>, e.g. following an action, a process or for group issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Cons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Less suited to creative idea gathering or decision making. Still, this method can be used prior to making decisions, at the stage of confronting different views.</li> <li>▪ Not suited to theoretical discussion, mere knowledge transfer</li> <li>▪ Not suited to experience sharing free of any conflicting views</li> </ul>

## 2. Presentation

Description	<p>A teaching method in which the teacher presents information to students using visual teaching aids. This method is a combination of verbal presentation and the use of visual aids, starting from a pre-arranged board/flipchart to technologies (e.g. PowerPoint presentations).</p> <p><b>Suited to theoretical teaching.</b></p>
How	Verbal presentation of content supported by visual aids.
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Works well with large groups.</li> <li>▪ The whole group is focused on the same topic.</li> <li>▪ Can be combined with other methods.</li> <li>▪ Can be made very appealing.</li> <li>▪ Engages several senses.</li> </ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students tend to be passive.</li> <li>▪ Students may become more interested in the aid used than in the content presented.</li> <li>▪ Costly equipment.</li> <li>▪ The teacher has to practice using visual aids.</li> </ul>



### 3. Brainstorming

Description	A teaching method generating a large number of ideas as inputs for a short ensuing discussion. <b>Creates an atmosphere conducive to active participation.</b>
How	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The teacher introduces the topic in such a way that the students can understand.</li><li>2. The teacher invites students to contribute key words and ideas, which get written down without any criticism or censorship.</li><li>3. The teacher groups the keywords and ideas into categories, and then manages the discussion to reach possible solutions.</li></ol>
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Keeps students interested and engaged.</b></li><li>▪ Relies on students' knowledge and experiences.</li><li>▪ Generates offbeat and creative solutions.</li></ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Demanding.</li><li>▪ Does not last long.</li><li>▪ Some students do not take part.</li></ul>

### 4. Group discussion

Description	An active teaching method which relies on the participation and interaction of students discussing a specific topic. The group analyses and assesses certain issues, explores the topic. <b>This method is conducive to forming attitudes, and helps change poor or inadequate attitudes.</b>
How	By presenting the topic and making it possible for students to discuss it. The teacher acts as a facilitator enabling and guiding the process.
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Keeps students interested and engaged.</li><li>▪ Students share knowledge and experiences.</li><li>▪ Students criticize a view or an opinion, not the person.</li><li>▪ Creative solutions to problems are reached.</li><li>▪ It expands horizons.</li><li>▪ It offers interesting feedback on how students understand the topic and what skills they possess.</li><li>▪ Quite easy to implement.</li><li>▪ <b>Useful for changing attitudes.</b></li><li>▪ <b>Builds the skills of establishing a rapport with others.</b></li></ul>

Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time-consuming.</li> <li>▪ Difficult to control.</li> <li>▪ Easy digression from the topic.</li> <li>▪ Requires careful planning.</li> <li>▪ Requires a skilful facilitator.</li> </ul>
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## 5. Debate

Description	<p>A teaching method similar to a discussion, but more structured. Used in cases where there is more than one solution. Both sides in the debate benefit from further exploration and studying of the topic.</p> <p><b>The method is effective in strengthening communication skills for presenting arguments for and against.</b></p>
How	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The teacher appoints a chairperson who will act impartially and see that the rules are observed; the teacher gives instructions to the chairperson.</li> <li>2. The teacher chooses the topic of the debate and presents the pros and cons; guides students to look for arguments themselves.</li> <li>3. The teacher then divides the class into for, against, and abstentions.</li> <li>4. Teacher chooses representatives for each group and gives them time to prepare for the debate.</li> </ol>
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Keeps students interested and engaged.</li> <li>▪ <b>Students share knowledge and experiences.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Students improve their skills of argumentation.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Develops teamwork.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Develops critical thinking.</b></li> <li>▪ Students take part with great interest</li> </ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time-consuming.</li> <li>▪ Several students dominate.</li> </ul>

## 6. Simulation

Description	<p>A teaching method which involves the use of aids, equipment, or situations which mimic real life. In this exercise, the characteristics and opportunities provided by those aids, equipment, or situations look real.</p> <p><b>It is suitable for skill building.</b></p>
How	<p>By providing a specific scenario and instructing students to behave as if in a real-life situation.</p>
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Practicing complex technical, mechanical, operational and decision-making skills for real life.</b></li><li>▪ Useful for applying principles learned from experience.</li><li>▪ Keeps students active and responsible for their learning.</li></ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Adequate time for preparation and delivery needs to be ensured.</li><li>▪ Enough time should be allocated for debriefing.</li><li>▪ Cannot be easily adapted to the needs of every student.</li></ul>

## 7. Role playing

Description	<p>A teaching method that enables students, by acting out real-life situations, to practice and examine new forms of behaviour that they can apply in real life.</p> <p><b>Suitable for affective aspects of learning.</b></p>
How	<p>By providing a specific scenario and instructing students to behave as if in a real-life situation.</p>
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Simulates <i>real life</i>.</li><li>▪ Keeps students active.</li><li>▪ <b>Fosters emotions and showing emotions.</b></li><li>▪ <b>A good way to “shape” attitudes.</b></li><li>▪ <b>Students are enabled to see things from a different angle.</b></li></ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Hard to control.</li><li>▪ Teacher may lose sight of those students who do not take part in role playing.</li><li>▪ Enough time should be allocated for debriefing.</li></ul>

## 8. Games

Description	<p>A teaching method which involves a quiz, a problem, a brain teaser or some other activity in which reaching the result depends on skill, knowledge, and chance, and competition and/or collaboration are used for revision or recap.</p> <p><b>Suitable for theoretical, affective, and practical aspects of teaching.</b></p>
How	By presenting the game and its rules and giving guidance.
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Builds self-awareness.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Keeps students active and engaged.</b></li> <li>▪ Is fun.</li> <li>▪ Students stay active even after the instructions.</li> <li>▪ <b>Builds skills of establishing rapport with others.</b></li> </ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time-consuming.</li> <li>▪ Enough time should be allocated for debriefing.</li> <li>▪ A negative atmosphere can build up in the classroom</li> </ul>

## 9. Value continuum

Description	<p>An activity which enables students to deal with values and their clarification in a structured way. It helps for complex views in reference to diverse topics of instruction to go beyond the “either...or” approach.</p> <p><b>Very suitable for controversial issues.</b></p>
How	First identify the content or the attitude to be discussed. Draw a horizontal line on the floor or the board. The endpoints are the extreme points, so-called polar extremes which mark maximum agreement or maximum disagreement with the given view. The midpoint is marked “0”. Each student marks the point on the continuum that expresses his/her level of (dis)agreement. They identify their position in reference to others, explain their views, ask questions. Following that, the teacher asks whether they would now like to change their original position and why.
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A good way to deal with controversial issues.</li> <li>▪ <b>Increases awareness of values (one’s own and other people’s).</b></li> <li>▪ Gives insight into the strength of peer pressure.</li> <li>▪ <b>Increases self-awareness and confidence (assertiveness).</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Fosters tolerance for a difference of views.</b></li> </ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May stir up emotions.</li> <li>▪ Requires a skilled moderator/facilitator. Enough time should be allocated for post-exercise analysis.</li> </ul>

## 10. Projects and research

Description	<p>This is a research-based activity. It is characterized by a focus on the points of students' interest. The objective, methodology and research options are set by the teacher and students jointly. It is important that every student has a specific assignment – it is to be determined during the planning stage what should be done, by whom, when and where. This method is also characterized by its interdisciplinary nature, where the boundaries between subjects and between school and real life are not so clear-cut. The result, i.e. what is to be learned, is not pre-set, but evolves through the joint efforts of the teacher and students.</p> <p><b>By working together, on the same topic, the students develop teamwork skills, the ability to search for information autonomously and to assess it critically.</b></p>
How	<p>It can be applied as a so-called mega-project, led by a team of teachers and lasting anywhere between six months and two years. Usually, projects take between a week and a month, and are led by one teacher, with the whole class participating. The projected learning is not extensive and takes between one and three periods (a smaller segment of an issue is researched). The main stages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ deciding on the topic;</li> <li>▪ formulating the objectives;</li> <li>▪ planning;</li> <li>▪ project preparation;</li> <li>▪ project implementation;</li> <li>▪ project review (a very important stage since it enables students to learn from their mistakes).</li> </ul>
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Builds self-awareness.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Develops readiness to act.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Fosters the taking of responsibility for one's own learning.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Develops creativity.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Builds planning, research, critical assessment and presentation skills.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Develops communication and cooperation skills.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Offers the possibilities for exploring one's own potentials.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Builds unbiased argumentation skills.</b></li> </ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time-consuming.</li> </ul>





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