

Dialogic and intercultural competences

Fostering participation: why and how?

The principle of Inclusion aims to implement the ideal of democracy: all human beings are equal and have the same right to exercise their rights. This unit centres on the **implementation of Inclusion in educational settings**, fostering reflection on its challenges and chances as well as presenting a didactic method which can be successfully used in different contexts.

Estimated time

90'

If you go through this unit, you will

- reflect on the concept of inclusion, the chances and challenges connected to its implementation
- be aware of the importance of fostering well-being in educational settings
- develop strategies to improve the quantity and quality of participation of the young people you work with
- get to know a method which you can use in a variety of contexts with young people and adults

Learning goals

Warm-up

“Inclusion” is a word which has been introduced into the international discourse by UNESCO some years ago. **What do you know about this concept and the reason why it has been introduced?**


Share your knowledge and/or assumptions with your buddy.

Learn

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Step 1. Read these slides:


Inclusion is a concept which has been introduced by UNESCO in order to fight the exclusion that people with certain disabilities experience in education as well as numerous other contexts.



But not only people with certain disabilities have to overcome barriers to exercise their rights.

Despite the ideal of equality that inspires democratic societies, their members are embedded in a *matrix of inequality*: depending e.g. on their age, phenotypes, gender, dis/abilities, religion, educational background, nationality/ethnicity, it is for some easier than for others to exercise their rights in certain situations.

Let's consider the **right to education**:




according to the principle of inclusion every student has the right to access the best possible education.

In the framework of inclusion what is 'best' cannot be measured through generalised standards and be imposed on everyone. What is best for me is not necessarily what is best for you!

Exactly this is the shift that the introduction of this concept stimulates: it fosters recognition of the needs of the different students and invites to take them seriously and to develop learning processes which consider these differences.

Education in Time of Inclusion




Under the paradigm of Inclusion, teachers and educators **MUST** therefore conceptualise educational experiences which foster individual developmental processes.

Rigid structures make it difficult to be flexible.

The challenge for policy makers is therefore the flexibilization of the structures in which teachers and educators can display inclusive pedagogical strategies.

The challenge for teachers and educators is to work as inclusive as possible in the given framework.

The Dialogic Approach



A pedagogic approach which favors inclusive educational processes is the dialogic one, i. e. one inspired by *equality*, *empathy* and *empowerment*. Indeed it succeeds to transform the diversity of the group into a resource.

How?

By fostering the creation of a balanced system in which everyone feels like and is able to participate,

- sharing their knowledge and abilities,
- expressing their needs and difficulties,
- taking on small or big responsibilities for themselves and others.

Step 2

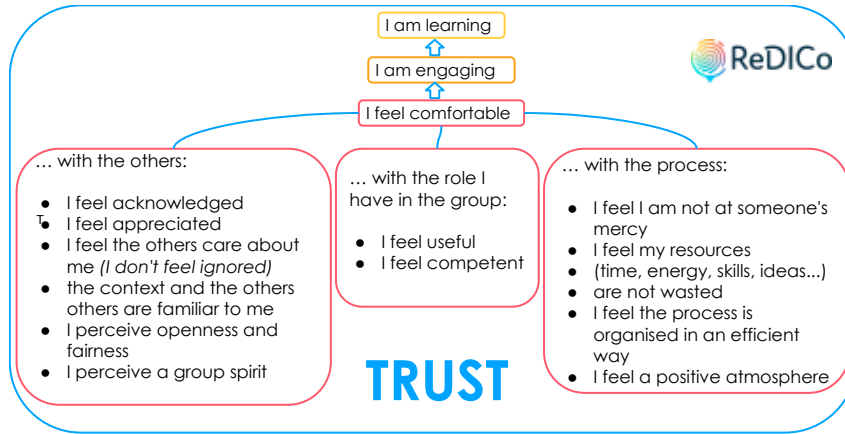
Think of your past experiences in a team or a group:

when did you enjoy participating actively in a group situation? Share your memories with your buddy and do some brainstorming together about the factors which foster participation, starting from your own experience as a participant. Write them down.

When you are done...

Step 3

Look at this model and compare it with your memories and your list. Do they match?

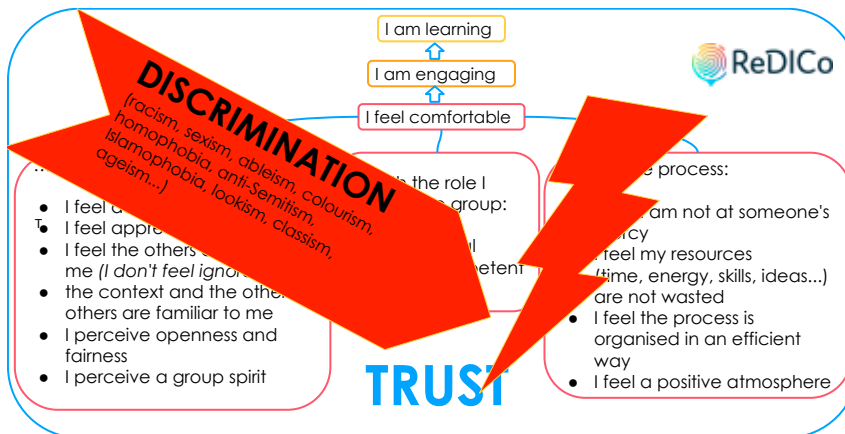


Step 4

When you have discussed this question, please think of the different children, teenagers and/or young adults you work with. How comfortable do each of them feel in relation to the different points?

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Step 1



Look together at this image.

How do you think stereotypes and prejudices influence (usually unconsciously) the quantity and quality of participation of the different members of your group? How do they influence the way

- you foster/hinder the participation of each of them?
- they foster participation of some instead of others or instead of their own?
- they engage?

Write down notes for all three points. You have 10 minutes.

Step 2

When you are done, decide what points you would like to share with your buddy. Share them.

Step 3

Choose one of the challenges you have recognized and think of one or more strategies you could apply in your respective contexts.

As soon as you have a chance, try it/them out!

Transfer

In the framework of the international European project SHARMED (SHARed MEMories and Dialogues, www.sharmed.eu) a method has been tested which you can implement in very different kinds of contexts in order to reach a variety of goals.

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THE SHARMED-METHOD:

all group members show a picture they brought, which represents a memory they'd like to share with the others.

Everyone describes their picture, telling anything they wish to say about it.

The rest of the group asks at least one question.

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Setting:

big group or small groups; new groups or old groups; children, youth, adults.

Versions:

- Short presentation of the picture and one question per picture from the group.
- Longer time for exchange on the picture and beyond.

Never use in a group where there are people who have a conflictual relationship and could use that what has been told for teasing the other.


Main **aims** you can reach, depending on the context, time, group:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To get to know each other (better)• To learn from each other• To see the others outside of the usual categories, finding commonalities• To shift learners in the position of the experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To let them display their agency• To foster peer-learning• To foster the development of various skills, e.g. literacy, dialogic skills• To build/strengthen trust• To tighten relationships |
|---|---|


If there is a facilitator, and the facilitator is you:
be dialogic!

That means:



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • don't decide yourself • don't speak for the others • Don't teach • don't correct the language if not strictly necessary • don't moralize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • don't comment everything • don't speak too often • don't censor • don't repeat things if not necessary • don't evaluate
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BUT...



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a positive atmosphere • trust and be curious • ask open questions, when needed focused ones • be present but not dominant • help with points which are important for someone not to get overlooked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordinate the exchange, by distributing participation • allow feelings to come up and support their management • be ready to react in a dialogic way to unexpected situations • give impulses for reflection processes
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Reflection

Attitude is as always the key to success. A positive attitude towards the diversity of your group of young people is a prerequisite for the implementation of the strategies you have developed.

If you went through the unit, reflected about your prejudices and stereotypes, about the relationships and dynamics among the young people you work with, developed and tested some strategies for making everyone feel at ease, taking their rights and dignity seriously, you certainly have the right attitude!

But the way is challenging. What will help you to stay on track and keep on empowering every child, every adolescent, every young adult whose way will cross yours?

What do you want to promise to yourself and not forget?

Write down some notes on one or more sticky notes which you can put on your wall and share them with your buddy.