

Teaching students valuing diversity



Specific Scholastic Issue

We all want children to grow up in a world free from bias and discrimination, to reach for their dreams and feel that whatever they want to accomplish in life is possible. We want them to feel loved and included and never to experience the pain of rejection or exclusion. But the reality is that we do live in a world in which discrimination, stereotyping, racism and other forms of bias continue to affect us and leave scars that can last a lifetime, affecting goals, ambitions, life choices, and feelings of self-worth. How can we best prepare children to meet the challenges and reap the benefits of the increasingly diverse world they will inherit? Schools can and should raise children to celebrate and value diversity and to be proud of themselves and their family traditions, to respect and value other people regardless of the color of their skin, their physical abilities, or the language they speak.

As our nations grow increasingly diverse, there has never been a better opportunity for children to learn to live respectfully together and benefit from one another's wisdom and experiences. But sometimes fear, uncertainty, or discomfort prevents people from talking to each other. This is especially true when it comes to the topics of race and racism, cultural differences, language and bilingualism, and the myriad questions that arise in a world where these issues have such a powerful place in children's lives.



Project Number: 2020-1-FR01-KA201-080108

It is important to begin teaching anti-bias lessons early. If schools reinforce these lessons, children will learn to appreciate, rather than fear, differences and to recognize bias and stereotypes when they see them. Children learn early on — from television, books, magazines, photographs, and, of course, interactions — how others view people like themselves. Uncomfortable reactions can alert children to the negative significance some people put on differences.

Schools have to teach children to be critical thinkers, specifically about prejudice and discrimination. Young children can begin to develop these skills, to know when a word or an image is unfair or hurtful. Teachers must listen carefully to what children are saying, ask questions before answering to get a clearer idea of what they really want to know and the ideas they already have on the subject. Teachers have to shape their response to the child's age and personality. Generally, children want to know why people are different, what this means, and how those differences relate to them. It is necessary to pay particular attention to situations that can either promote prejudice or inhibit a child's openness to diversity. Schools should make sure their program reflects diversity in books, magazines, dolls, puzzles, paintings, music, and so on and should not let racist and prejudicial remarks go by without intervening. It's important to let children know from a very early age that name-calling of any kind, whether it's about someone's religion, race, ethnic background, or sexual orientation, is hurtful and wrong. Schools have to create opportunities for children to interact and make friends with people who are different from them.

Objectives

- Promotion of EU citizenship, EU and democratic values and human rights
- Enhancement of empathy outside school
- Development of empathic behaviour at school

Emotional Intelligence Areas

- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
- Empathy
- Internal motivation
- Social skills

Learning Path

Teaching resources selected aim to encourage the perception of diversity in the classroom, reflection on it and what it can mean to participants themselves and others around them. Activities help lead discussions on diversity, stereotyping, prejudices and discrimination and increase students' awareness and understanding of importance of tolerance, mutual respect and inclusion.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).



Project Number: 2020-1-FR01-KA201-080108

Diversity bingo

Diversity bingo is a quick and easy activity for pupils to get to know each other better in a fun and relaxed way. However, it also gives teacher an opportunity to address stereotyping, prejudices and discrimination. For the activity the facilitator has to prepare and distribute a sheet “diversity bingo” to all of the participants and give them the task to walk around the class and find as many people as possible who correspond to the statements in the boxes, and then put their name in a single box. Bingo statements are formulated in a way teacher can identify possible grounds for discrimination in last part of the activity - debriefing.

When they finish the exercise, the students are invited to share the experience from the exercise and discuss the following questions:

- How do you feel after this activity?
- What did you think about this activity? Was it difficult, easy? Why?
- Have you ever thought of a certain person for the specific box,
- That would fit the description? Why do you think that happened?
- In what way did you then approach these persons?
- Have you ever been (cheated) by a feeling?
- How would you explain the concept of diversity? What are your thoughts and feelings about diversity in your class? What about our society?
- How do people behave in real life? Does it ever happen that we predict how people are even before we know their stories?
- How would you explain what a stereotype is? Which stereotypes about different social groups do you know?
- How can a generally prevalent stereotype about some social group influence ours behaviour towards a member of this social groups?
- Is there anything you would/will do different after this activity?

These questions help the facilitator start a discussion with students about the diversity we live in and how diverse people who live around them are in terms of appearance, age, personality traits, gender... The facilitator has to emphasize the fact that because of so much variety and diversity our brains begin to simplify and “drain” through a process called stereotyping. Therefore, it is important to stress the importance and fortune that nature has provided us with an unimaginable variety and diversity of all kinds living beings, as well as our society is much more diverse than the one, we sometimes try to imagine and that all this diversity needs to be valued and respected.

Identity Molecule

After Diversity bingo students will know each other better and feel more comfortable engaging and participating in the classroom. The activity Identity Molecule will follow, which is an activity that offers



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).



Project Number: 2020-1-FR01-KA201-080108

opportunity to self-identify, rather than be labelled by others, and it can establish a broad definition of diversity in a seemingly homogeneous group. Goal of the activity is for the students to reflect their own (cultural) identity and become aware of commonalities and differences. They recognize their own diverse group affiliations, the affinity to minority or majority groups and the experiences involved with it.

Through the activity they understand that identity of each individual is shaped by many different belongings or senses of belonging to certain groups of people. They understand that the more senses of belonging we recognise in ourselves, the more aware we become of the complexity of our identity. At the same time, each of these senses of belonging opens us up to a new group of people. The more senses of belonging we are aware of, the more able we are to relate to and interact with other people. In other words, identity – if it is considered in all its complexity – while distinguishing us from others, also implies openness to different individuals, other groups and our common humanity.

After identifying the identities they discuss which identities and affiliations have had a particular influence on them, which personal, political or social events have had shaped them, how different living environments and backgrounds (family, spare time, national culture and traditions...) have shaped their character, what is the particular significance and importance of being a member of specific group, what makes it easy or difficult to be a member of this group?

Understanding identity is the key to opening minds to new learning and perspectives, changing attitudes, encouraging empathy and interest in peaceful coexistence and creating a stronger sense of social responsibility. This method is a good method as an intro to discussions about personal and social identities and as a building block to further methods and activities to talk about antidiscrimination and stereotypes.

Cultural Meetup

We can continue with Cultural Meetup activity that tries to challenge participants to face their own stereotypes. It wants the participants to see the process of how we create and use our stereotypes to understand and categorize people around us, so that we can become aware of how our brain automatically creates these boxes and categories. The objective of the activity is to learn about the different communication attitudes, signs and their messages, interpretations.

During the exercise students are divided into 4 groups, with every group having different rules/code of behaviour. While communicating with other groups they must stick to these rules/code of conduct.

After a round of meeting and communicating with other groups, we invite students to get back to their initial groups where they discuss about their experiences with members of other groups. Each group has to name itself and also other groups. A representative of each group summarizes the perceptions, experiences and discussion in his/her group and out loud reads / describes the rules of conduct of his group, the name they gave themselves and the reasons for it. A representative then reveals the names they have given to others groups and the reasons for this. When all the groups share their experiences, we invite students to sit in a circle and start a group conversation around these questions:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- How you felt talking to other students?
- Was it easy or difficult to communicate with others? Why easy or difficult?
- How did you feel when you talked to a person from your group?



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).



Project Number: 2020-1-FR01-KA201-080108

- You may have misunderstood or misjudged the approach of the person from another group to you? What would you say are the reasons for it?
- How did you create the image of other groups and how did you come up with a name for them?
- How did you feel when you heard the names that were given to your group by other groups?
- What parallels can we find with the real world? How do you usually communicate
- With someone from a culture not your own? Do you pay special attention to something?
- How do you think a prevailed opinion of one group in society would influence your own opinion?
- How stereotypes affect our acceptance other cultures? What stereotypes do you know? How would you define stereotype?
- Did you experience any aha-moments in the activity? When was it?

During the conversation it is very important that we offer students space and time to express themselves, their feelings and the emotions they felt during group activity. Let's emphasize that the positive opinion of some groups often we design based on personal experience, negatively on the basis of stereotypical information, which we get through the media, education and society. Although we do not consciously think about stereotypes, they affect us as they build standards, expectations and assumptions that are unfair and not necessarily aligned with reality. When we stereotype a group, we actually ignore all those things that they make each individual unique. That is why personal contacts are important for going beyond and questioning the often unjust and false stereotypes. At the same time, we have to in contact with culture that is not ours always be aware that we look at everything through our own "cultural glasses" and that it is because of them that some actions or habits we estimate incorrectly or differently than as it is.

Good Practice Highlighted in the Area 2 (Teaching Source)

- [Diversity bingo](#)
- Cultural Meetup
- [Circles](#)

Best Practice Video



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).