Social and Emotional Education
Building inclusive schools
and ownership of values

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

Social and Emotional Education

Building inclusive schools and ownership of values

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Programme of activities

2021

Research coordinator

Professor Carmel Cefai, University of Malta

Davina Schembri, University of Malta

Editor

Reni Dimova, Center of Creative Training Association

Authors

Austria

Maria Rottensteiner, World University Service

Nataša Tadić, World University Service

Louise Sperl, World University Service

Bulgaria

Reni Dimova, Center of Creative Training Association

Associate prof. Dr Veneta Uzunova, Phd, Department of Information and In-Service Teacehr Training, Trakia University

Dr Vera Todorova, Department of Information and In-servce Teacher Traning, Trakia University

Greece

Kostas Diamantis Balaskas, Action Synergy

Italy

Research Fellow Paula de Waal Almeida Santos, University Ca' Foscari Venezia

Professor Fiorino Tessaro, University Ca' Foscari Venezia

Malta

Professor Carmel Cefai, University of Malta

Davina Schembri, University of Malta

Romania

Speranța Lavinia Țibu, senior researcher II, PhD. Department of Psycho-social Research in Education, Unit of Research in Education, National Center for Education Policy and Evaluation, Bucharest

Petre Botnariuc, senior researcher I PhD, Department of Psycho-social Research in Education, Unit of Research in Education, National Center for Education Policy and Evaluation, Bucharest

Alina Crăciunescu, researcher, Unit for Education Research, National Center for Education Policy and Evaluation, Bucharest

Aurora Adina Colomeischi, associate professor, PhD, Faculty of Education Sciences- University Ștefan cel Mare of Suceava

Cosmina Mironov, associate professor, PhD, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Bucharest

Marcela Claudia Călineci, school counsellors, Municipal Center and Educational Resources and Assistance of Bucharest

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Young people need to have a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional competences in order to help them navigate successfully through the developmental tasks, situational challenges, and transitions they are set to face in their pathway to adulthood. They need to be able to know themselves and their strengths, regulate their emotions, deal with loss, change and adversity, solve problems effectively and make responsible decisions. They need to believe they can bring about change in their lives, remain determined and focused in the face of challenges, build and maintain healthy relationships, be understanding and empathic, and work collaboratively with others. Young people also need to solve conflicts constructively, appreciate and respect difference and diversity, and take care of themselves, others and their environment (Cefai et al., 2021).

These competences are necessary for young people to successfully navigate the rapid global, social, economic and technological changes taking place in the world today. Around 20% of school children experience mental health problems during their school years, with half of mental health problems developing before the age of 14 years old (WHO, 2018). 35% of 13 year old and 40% of 15 year old European children reported feeling low, nervous and experienced psychosomatic symptoms more than once a week (WHO, 2020). A report just published by UNICEF and the European Union (2021) with more than 10,000 children aged 11-17 years, found that one in five reported growing up unhappy and anxious about the future as a result of bullying, as well as challenges in coping with school-work and loneliness. Although the majority of students across OECD countries reported they felt socially connected at their school, about one in four disagree that they make friends easily at school and about one in five feels like an outsider at school (OECD, 2020). Similarly, the HBSC study shows many school-aged children report that they lack supportive environments, especially as they get older (Inchley et al., 2020). Such students are missing the academic, social and emotional benefits that attachment to school can bring, with schools called to foster a more positive learning environment and trusting and caring relationships for young adolescents.

Social Emotional Education

Social and emotional education (SEE) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, build resilience, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2021). The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) presents five domains of social and emotional competences, namely self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, and interpersonal relationships. Self-awareness is the ability to identify and understand one's personal emotions, thoughts and values and their impact on behaviour. It includes the ability to recognise one's own strengths and weaknesses, self-confidence and self-efficacy. Self-management encompasses the group of abilities related to emotions, thoughts and behaviour management in different situations and contexts to achieve the established objectives successfully. Social awareness refers to the ability to acknowledge others' emotions and strengths, showing empathy and compassion. Relationship skills consist of the ability to form and maintain positive, supportive relationships with various people and groups. These involve communicating clearly, actively listening, collaborating, working in teams to solve problems, negotiating conflicts, seeking and offering help, and standing up for others' rights. Responsible decision-making refers to making ethical, safe, and socially acceptable decisions about personal behaviour and social relations, which involves the realistic appraisal of behaviour repercussions and concern for one's own and others' wellbeing (CASEL, 2021).

The EU Lifelong Learning Competence Personal, Social and Learning to Learn includes three dimensions; personal competence (to develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve one's goals, adopt a healthy and sustainable lifestyle and achieve physical and mental health); social competence (to use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain healthy and collaborative relationships embracing human diversity) and learning to learn competence (to pursue and persist in learning, and to organise one's own learning, including effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups (EU Council, 2018).

Social and emotional education helps to improve social and emotional competences, positive attitudes, prosocial behaviour and academic achievement, and reduce mental

health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse and antisocial behaviour (Cefai et al., 2018; Durlak et al., 2011; Weare & Nind, 2011). It is particularly helpful in helping secondary school students navigate the personal, social and academic challenges they are set to face in their adolescent years. During this time adolescents are learning how to manage new demands in secondary school and their social life while simultaneously experiencing new, intense emotions (both negative and positive). They are also met with this feeling that they should be doing all of this without the guidance of an adult. SEE helps adolescents cope with their difficulties more effectively by improving their skills and mindsets. Adolescence is marked by the onset of puberty which is associated with changes in hormone activity and brain structure that can make even small social difficulties such as peer rejection very painful and difficult to deal with. The biological changes that adolescents experience will also result in a more intense thrill from engaging in risky behaviours, especially if the behaviours win admiration from their peers. SEE can help prevent outcomes such as dropping out of school, unwanted pregnancy and violent crime. It can also promote greater thriving, including better health, a greater love of learning and having less stress. It also makes adolescents feel respected both by peers and adults and provides them with the opportunity to gain status and admiration from the individuals whose opinions they value. With regard to academic achievement, there is evidence that academic performance is connected to students' ability to identify, utilise and manage their emotions (APA, 2019). This highlights the necessity to promote students' social and emotional competence and include SEE in the school curriculum as this will help them develop their social and emotional competence and subsequently contribute to their academic success.

▶ **What is adolescence?**

Adolescence is the stage in development which is marked by tremendous changes that occur in the psychosocial and physical development of students at this age as a result of growth and how these changes affect students, their self-esteem, behaviour and their relationships with family, peers and teachers (Erwin, 2014).

▶ **Why is it important to promote understanding of adolescence development amongst secondary school students?**

Although adolescent experiences vary around the world, it is helpful to understand the similarities among young people from different countries as they make the transition between childhood and adulthood (APA, 2002; Brown, Larson, & Saraswathi, 2002). The period of adolescence is recognised for the fast rate of growth and maturity when

compared to the other stages of development (excluding infancy) (McNeely & Blanchard, 2010). Adolescent development is not always predictable and it can be inconsistent. This results in great variability across youths of the same age, and even within individuals themselves. As a result adults often find it difficult to understand these unpredictable and often conflicting abilities of adolescents. It is important to promote understanding of adolescence development because by recognizing that these differences are typical, schools will be able to plan for appropriate guidance and support as students navigate these inconsistent changes (Sackman & Terway, 2016).

The SEEVAL Programme of Activities

The SEEVAL project is an Erasmus + project co-funded by the European Commission which aims to develop an in-service training program to develop educators' skills for the implementation of a whole school approach to Social and Emotional Education (SEE) in middle and secondary schools. The project partners worked together to produce a social and emotional education programme of activities focused on the development of the social and emotional competences in secondary school students through a whole school approach. More specifically the project is particularly focused on how subject teachers in middle and secondary schools may promote students' social and emotional competences through their teaching and their relationship with the students. The programme of activities has been developed on the basis of the following principles:

- Within a whole school approach to SEE, all school teachers are responsible for teaching, facilitating and reinforcing students' social and emotional competences;
- Subject teachers can help develop students' social and emotional competences through direct instruction at curricular and cross curricular levels, such as by infusing social and emotional education in their academic subjects;
- Social and emotional competences are best learned through an experiential, collaborative and skills based approach, where students have the opportunity to learn and practice the skills together. In this respect learning becomes more student-directed;
- In secondary school, the classroom climate is particularly effective in promoting students' social and emotional competence. Classroom teachers can help to create such a climate by paying particular attention to their attitudes, behaviour and relationships in their teaching and classroom management. A classroom climate conducive to the development of social and emotional competence is marked by the

teacher's instructional support, such as positive and constructive feedback promoting high expectations and facilitating critical thinking and deep learning, and challenging and relevant tasks; socio-emotional support such as warmth, safety, connectedness and responsive teacher interactions; classroom organisation and management such as fair and consistent classroom rules, positive behavioural support, and instructional and preventive management strategies. These processes help to create an optimal classroom environment in which students have the opportunity to engage in various learning activities as well as positive interactions with teachers and peers, and to practice their social and emotional competences (Cefai et al., 2021);

- All classroom teachers need to develop social and emotional competences themselves in order to practice and role model these competences in their teaching and classroom management;

- In the secondary school, students are more likely to engage in social and emotional education activities when they themselves are actively involved in the design of material and activities as these are more likely to be meaningful and relevant to them.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EDUCATION – Building inclusive schools and ownership of values (SEEVAL) [1] is an Erasmus + project (2020-2023) co-funded by the European Commission which aims to develop an in-service training program to develop educators' skills for the implementation of a whole school approach to Social and Emotional Education (SEE) in middle and secondary schools. The project is comprised of seven partners: Department of Information and In-service Teacher Training at Trakia University, Bulgaria; Center of Creative Training Association (CCTA), Bulgaria; Centre for Resilience and Socio-Emotional Health, University of Malta, Malta; World University Service – Osterreichisches Komitee Verein, Austria; Action Synergy SA, Greece; University Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italy and National Centre for Policy and Evaluation in Education (NCPEE), Romania. Following a needs analysis and training of trainers, the partners developed a social and emotional programme for secondary school teachers which is being implemented in a number of schools in four partner countries. During the implementation period the researchers, teachers and students collaboratively developed a number of SEL activities which can be implemented in secondary school classrooms.

▶ **Development of the activities**

In developing the activities included in this programme, a needs analysis was carried out by the project team to establish what social and emotional competences would be most useful and relevant for the students in the respective contexts where the activities were to be implemented. An online questionnaire was completed by about 1000 classroom teachers and over 4700 secondary school students from Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania. This inquiry collected information on the social and emotional competences teachers and students would recommend for their secondary school curriculum. Information was also collected through a number of roundtable discussions with stakeholders in Austria, Italy, Malta and Romania, with about 20 participants from each country. The analysis of the data from students, teachers and stakeholders led to the identification of a set of social and emotional competences which were to be included in the *programme of activities*. The table below shows the list of *fourteen* competencies identified through this research exercise, seven related to *personal and emotional* competences and *seven to social, interpersonal* competences.

Table 1: List of Identified Competences

PERSONAL	SOCIAL
• Identifying and expressing emotions	• Empathy
• Identifying strengths/self-efficacy	• Appreciating diversity
• Growth mindset	• Relationship building
• Self-regulation	• Collaboration
• Dealing with negative emotions	• Conflict resolution
• Flexibility/resilience	• Ethical and responsible behaviour and decisions
• Wellbeing	• Dealing with negative relationships such as bullying

Each competence in turn was subdivided into two related sub-competences as follows:

PERSONAL COMPETENCES

- Identifying and expressing emotions:
  - identify emotions
  - expressing emotions

- Identifying strengths / self-efficacy:
  - identifying strengths
  - developing self-efficacy

- Developing a growth mindset:
  - positive thinking
  - optimism

- Self-regulation:
  - stress management
  - anger management

- Dealing with negative emotions:
  - anxiety
  - depression/suicidal ideation

- Flexibility/resilience:
  - developing resilience
  - enhancing problem solving skills

- Wellbeing:
  - adopting a healthy, sustainable lifestyle;
  - avoiding risk behaviours such as substance use, delinquency

SOCIAL COMPETENCES

- Empathy:
  - developing perspective taking
  - developing empathy

- Appreciating diversity:
  - respect for others
  - embracing diversity

- Building healthy relationships:
  - developing and maintaining healthy relationships
  - dealing with peer pressure

- Collaboration:
  - working as a team
  - social engagement

- Conflict resolution:
  - conflict management
  - conflict negotiation/resolution

- Ethical and responsible behaviour and decisions:
  - prosocial behaviour
  - responsible decision making

- Dealing with negative relationships
  - bullying
  - online safety and cyberbullying

▶ **The Programme of Activities**

Two sets of activities were developed for each of the 14 social and emotional competences, the first activity comprising guidelines on what secondary school subject teachers may do to promote the students' social and emotional competences, and the second a set of lesson plans developed by the implementing teachers together with their students. These are described in more detail below.

1. Teacher Guidelines Activities

These activities provide teachers with practical information on how they may promote specific social and emotional competences in their classroom through embedded teaching and the classroom climate. Each of the 14 activities is based on one of the personal or social competences identified in this project and consists of four components:

- *Rationale:* why it is important to promote and facilitate this competence with secondary school students.
- *Classroom climate*: practical strategies on how the subject teacher can promote the specific competence in his or her classroom through their own attitude, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy. This section also includes case

studies illustrating how the teacher may put into practice or reinforce the two sub competences (e.g. anger management and stress management) within the specific competence (e.g. self-regulation) in his or her practice, such as classroom management, use of collaborative learning, supporting students in difficulty, and resolving a conflict.

- **Infusion:** this section provides specific strategies of how the secondary subject teacher can infuse the specific competence in the teaching of academic subjects, giving examples for different academic subjects such as *languages, mathematics, science, social studies* and *arts*. These are only some examples and the teacher may improvise and add his or her own strategies.

- **Examples of SEE activities**: the activity concludes with a number of SEE activities the teacher may organise in his or her classroom; these activities are focused on training the students to develop the specific competence. The activities are intended for experiential, skills-based and collaborative work making use of such strategies as *role play, small group work, discussions, games* and practical activities.

The 14 activities may be organised in periods of two to three weeks each, with the teacher paying particular attention to the development of the selected competence in his or her subject teaching (infusion with their academic subject) and in the classroom climate (pedagogy, collaborative learning and group work, classroom management, relationships with students, peer relationships), and where needed, and possibly organise an activity related to the specific competence (e.g a strategy how to manage anger). During this period, the teacher needs to pay particular attention to role model this competence himself/herself in their practice, to provide critical learning moments arising from incidents (e.g conflict, bullying incident, stress management), provide opportunities where students can apply the competence in their learning and behaviour in the classroom, and reinforce and reward the students accordingly.

Indicators of positive classroom climate (adapted from Cefai et al, 2021)

Sense of safety: There is a focus on mutual respect, understanding and support, and teachers avoid communication based on fear and anger. Clear procedures are laid down for dealing with incidents of violence and bullying in the classroom.

Positive classroom management: Students are encouraged to take more responsibility for

their behaviour, have a direct input into the rules of the classroom, and have a right of reply in incidents of conflict.

Caring teacher-student relationships: Teachers are committed to knowing the students well, attending to their learning and social and emotional needs, recognising their strengths, providing them with frequent opportunities to express their feelings and concerns, and to dealing with conflict through understanding and respect.

Supportive peer relationships: Students demonstrate care and concern for each other, support each other against bullying and violence, resolve conflicts with each other constructively, and include all peers in their work and play.

Collaboration: There are frequent and regular teacher-student consultations and discussions during learning activities; students work collaboratively in small groups, collaborative assessment including self- and peer-assessment, students appreciate each other's strengths and achievements.

Cultural responsiveness and inclusion: The curriculum is adapted and accessible to all the students, with pedagogy, resources and assessment matching the diversity of students' strengths and needs. Students with individual educational needs and disabilities are actively engaged in the classroom's learning and social activities, and teachers are committed to remove linguistic, cultural, social and all other barriers to learning.

Active student engagement: Students are actively engaged in interactive and meaningful learning activities that address their needs and interests. There is a focus on learning and engagement rather than just academic performance, and assessment is formative, inclusive and collaborative.

Challenge and have high expectations for all students: Teachers have high but realistic expectations for all students, including those with individual educational needs. Students are encouraged to believe in themselves and in their capability to learn and achieve and are supported in identifying and making use of their strengths. Competition, comparisons and rankings are discouraged in learning.

Student voice: There is an explicit commitment to a relational and democratic teaching environment, with students supported in becoming more autonomous in their learning, expressing their opinions and suggestions, being actively involved in constructing meaning in their learning, and participating actively in the assessment of their work.

2. SEE Lesson Plans developed by the Teachers

The trained teachers together with their students created (or selected from various sources) lesson plans [1] suitable for development of the sub-competences in this programme. Each lesson plan includes description of the learning outcomes (what students will learn from this activity), the resources to be used during the implementation, and activities on how to develop a specific competence. Activities employ methods like *role play, games, collaborative group work, drama, drawing/collage, physical movements, discussions* etc. The activities include reflection session at the end where the teacher guides students to help them reflect on their learning and internalise that competence into their behaviour repertoire. The lesson plans are based on experiential learning, with students actively engaged in the learning process through *practical* (hands on, skills based), *collaborative* (working and learning together and from each other) and *motivating* (meaningful, enjoyable) activities, with specific learning goals. The development of social and emotional competences takes place in relational and emotional learning context. Assessment is formative in order to support students in their learning and involve the students themselves in self-assessment and peer assessment (such as giving feedback to each other).

Figure 1. Lundy's Voice Model of Children Participation[2] (adapted by Ireland's National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020)

SPACE	VOICE
How: Provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views	*How: Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children's views*
Have children's views been actively sought? Was there a safe space in which children can express themselves freely? Have steps been taken to ensure that all children take part?	Have children been given the information they need to form a view? Do children know that they do not have lo take part?

[1] The lesson plans are published on the SEEVAL project site in an Open educational resources (OER) platform: https://seeval-project.eu/educational-resources/
[2] Prof. Laura Lundy is an international expert on children's rights and child and youth participation. She is co-director of *Centre for Children's Rights, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work (SSESW)* at Queen's University in Belfast (Northern Ireland).

	Have children been given a range of options as to how the might choose to express themselves?
AUDIENCE	**INFLUENCE**

AUDIENCE

How: Ensure that children's views are communicated to someone with the responsibility to listen

Is there a process for communicating children's views?

Do children know who their views are being communicated to?

Does that person / body have the power to make decisions?

INFLUENCE

How: Ensure that children's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate

Were the children's views considered by those with the power to effect change?

Are there procedures in place that ensure that children's views have been taken seriously?

Have the children and young people been provided with feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?

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Part 2

ACTIVITIES

PERSONAL COMPETENCES

1. ADOLESCENCE – WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

▶ **How can teachers promote awareness of adolescence development through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

One of the important ways teachers can promote awareness of adolescence development is by learning about the specificity of adolescence. Teachers should also provide a structure of clear and respectful rules which act as a frame to allow students to make their own choice and subsequently bear the consequences of their choices. This will keep the focus on the deed and not the doer (separating the two allows students to learn from their mistakes and to choose differently) as opposed to labelling the students (e.g. as the 'smart one', 'lazy one' etc). Teachers have to find a way to encourage students and to promote the development of skills to cooperate and care for others.

For instance, consider a situation where a student is always late to school and is constantly told that he will be marked as absent the next time he will be late. In this case, instead of telling off the student in front of his peers, a much more developmentally appropriate way to approach such a situation is by having clear and respectful rules as well as clear consequences. If the rule is that being late two times leads to being marked as absent for the class, then the teacher does exactly that. The teacher can also ask the student how they can help them plan their time better and discuss possible solutions to this issue. If this does not solve the problem, then the teacher must consider another consequence to that e.g. referring the student to counselling to explore this matter further. Students who do well feel well, and if a student is not doing well, they definitely do not feel well. Therefore we trust the process in a well-developed supportive system which provides different ways of helping students feel better and do better.

▶ **Examples of Activities:**

Group Work. Method: Discussion Role Play (for teachers)

The introduction to the topic, an icebreaker and the cohesion of the group is realised through interactive methods. Joint rules are being developed to be observed during all meetings. The common problems in the interaction of teachers with adolescents are identified. The participants visualise their views on the idea of the modern teenager, the modern effective teacher, the differences in generations, the characteristics of the

surrounding reality. After sharing their ideas, the facilitator presents a summary, outlining the main problem areas and makes a statement about the psychosocial and physiological changes that occur with the stage of adolescence. This focuses the teachers' attention on the key elements of growing up. At the end of the meeting the facilitator divides the teachers into groups and sets the task: "The world through the eyes of my students", inviting them to put themselves in the children's shoes and from that point of view with *visualization, role play* or *verbally* describe the teenager's life and the world around him. The products of group work will derive the need for partnership, emotionally saturated and positive approaches in interaction with adolescents.

Case study: Adolescence

If you go to "Raina Knyaginya" school, you will definitely hear about Ivan. Teachers will tell you that he is impossible. He is smart, but lately his grades have been poor. He does not obey, behaves rudely and arrogantly in class, refuses to participate in the lessons. Not a day goes by without a student complaining that Ivan bullied them/ asked him for money/ humiliated him. The police were called to school twice. Every week the principal talks to him and he spends time in a quiet room, but nothing helps. Up until last year, Ivan was a good student, but he did not have many friends. His classmates didn't pay much attention to him and sometimes made fun of him for wearing braces. The teachers did not praise him often, but neither did they complain about him. Now everyone is wondering, what happened to Ivan for his behaviour to change so much. Ivan is turning 13 tomorrow and his behaviour does not seem to be improving.

Please provide some adequate solutions to this case, keeping in mind what you already know about adolescents from your own pedagogical experience and from the information shared in the activity. (Note: there are no wrong or right ways to handle this case. Each school, classroom will approach it in a different way, sharing the experience with colleagues could provide more ideas).

Here are some examples of questions to guide you through the process:

1. In groups, the teachers discuss the reasons why the problems with Ivan arose, the possibilities for reaction, prevention, correction;

2. In an individual work to write the story of Ivan through his eyes, i.e. to "get into Ivan's shoes" and tell the story on his behalf;

3. Frontal work - discussion with teachers, exchange of experience, ideas, solutions;

4. Feedback - "what I take in the basket" from this training.

▶ **How can teachers infuse awareness of adolescence development in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Regardless of the subject of teaching, knowledge of the age characteristics of students is a basic pedagogical principle. Knowledge of the laws of development and an adequate approach to students is a guarantee not only for their academic success, but also for their full psycho-social development. In the context of socio-emotional learning, this knowledge contributes to the establishment of positive, constructive, trust-based relationships between teachers and students.

Languages:

- Developing the communicative culture of teenagers with an emphasis on the importance of expressing their emotions in their various nuances.
- The teacher can provide them with a set of strategies and techniques for effective communication in specific areas - family, friends, classmates, teachers, adults in general.

History:

- The teacher is free to provide examples from different historical realities, as well as to focus on the positive ones. This age is the age of causes, the intention to change the world and history is the subject that is closest to this specific feature of the age - examples, logical consequences, patterns, strategies, choices, opportunities, decision making, perspectives.

Social Studies/Citizenship:

- In this subject area, social-emotional topics are what gives the teacher complete freedom and opportunity to develop and improve in students through case studies, training, role-playing games, volunteer activities. Responsibilities and rights; the principles of humanism, tolerance and democracy; the mechanisms of functioning of modern society are closely related to socio-emotional learning.

Maths and Science:

- Consideration of the specific features of students in the field of mathematics and science can be enhanced by providing opportunities for students to work in groups, the STEAM approach is extremely appropriate.

Art:

- Art provides ample opportunities for self-expression, which is extremely important at this age. Also, drawing examples, connecting the classics with modernity, the teacher's ability to respond to the interests of students and respect them, to orient themselves in their preferences and to update their teaching - all this would build more trust and respect between him and the students.

Other: (eg ICT, Physical Education,…):

Adolescents need to increase media literacy, physical activity, and self-esteem in various situations in which they have to make a decision. In each discipline there is a space in which the teacher can create opportunities for them to work together, to solve problems / tasks, to create projects / objects / ideas, to create, to express themselves, to learn tolerance, management of conflicts, of adequately expressing one's own emotions and understanding the emotions of others.

- Implement strategies to encourage and give constructive feedback to students. At this age, they are particularly sensitive to the opinions of others and to how they look / present themselves in the eyes of their classmates.
- Building trust. The teacher must know not only the age, but also the personal qualities, character traits, interests and aspirations of his students. To know what motivates them, what disappoints them, what scares or inspires them.
- Scientists call the period of growth "years of storm and stress." How these years will pass for the children, what will remain in the memories, in the character, in their value system - for this the behaviour and the attitude of the teacher are crucial. *Meaning, contribution* and *belonging* are the three points of reference on which lessons and activities can be built in each subject so that students feel full and encouraged, able to acquire and upgrade social and emotional skills. To find meaning and purpose in what they do / learn, to contribute to the process and in the end result, to feel part of a community - so they will have the basis on which to build their inner and conscious motivation, their responsibility and commitment, as well as their skills to interact constructively and fully with others.

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2. IDENTIFYING AND EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

▶ **What is identifying and expression of emotions?**

Emotions are considered determinants of how well we function in our day-to-day life and can be described as how individuals deal with situations they experience affecting their demeanour or health. Therefore, it is important to be aware of our emotions and how they can affect us.

There are six basic emotions which are: *sadness, happiness, fear, anger, surprise, disgust* (Stagnor & Walinda, 2014). Each emotion has *three components*: one subjective, one visceral and one behavioural. This means we can identify emotions through analysing our inner subjective state (pleasant or unpleasant), our visceral reactions (tense or relaxed), our behavioural reactions (action tendency or apathy) (UWA, 2019).

Identifying emotions is the first emotional competence skill which provides useful information for adaptation and well-functioning of the individual. We need to identify correctly not only our own emotions but also the emotions of others in order to live efficiently within communities, both small and large. Identifying emotions refers to the ability to recognize and to label the emotional state each person feels at a time in each context and is based on how we differentiate correctly between different states of energy and pleasure that characterise the specific emotions (Papadogiannis et al., 2009).

One can identify his/her own emotions by analysing the level of energy and the level of pleasure they are experiencing. This can help them name and understand their emotional state. A tool that can be used to help identify emotions is the Mood Metre (Brackett, 2019). The Mood Metre consists of a quadrant (see below) which can be used to evaluate the combination of energy and pleasure a person is feeling in their current emotional state. The Mood Metre comprises of four types of emotional states which are depicted by colours: yellow zone is for happiness, joy, enthusiasm (high levels of both energy and pleasure), red zone is for rage, fear, angry (high level and energy, low level of pleasure), green zone is for tranquillity, calm, contentment (high level of pleasure, low level of energy), and blue zone is for sadness, resignation (low level of both energy and pleasure).

Figure 2: Mood Metre (Brackett, 2019)

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?									
Livid	Panicked	Frustrated	Shocked	Stunned	Energised	Thrilled	Ecstatic	Euphoric	Exhilarated
Enraged	Terrified	Peeved	Worried	Annoyed	Positive	Connected	Joyful	Enthusiastic	Elated
Irate	Frightened	Angry	Nervous	Concerned	Glad	Inspired	Happy	Motivated	Excited
Furious	Anxious	Agitated	Unsure	Excited	Amused	Focused	Cheerful	Proud	Surprised
Disgusted	Sacred	Troubled	Restless	Uneasy	Satisfied	Pleased	Hopeful	Optimistic	Lively
Apprehensive	Ashamed	Guilty	Deflated	Complacent	Easy-going	Safe	Chilled	Respected	Blessed
Sullen	Glum	Disheartened	Discouraged	Bored	Relaxed	Secure	Content	Thankful	Fulfilled
Exhausted	Fatigued	Sad	Miserable	Pessimistic	Thoughtful	Composed	Calm	Grateful	Tranquil
Alienated	Depressed	Disappointed	Tired	Confused	Mellow	Peaceful	Balanced	At Ease	Collected
Despair	Inconsolable	Anguished	Hopeless	Lonely	Listless	Sleepy	Restful	Comfy	Serene

The ability to express emotions is an important skill as it involves being an authentic communicator as well as being authentic with yourself within relationships. Deciding how to express emotions can be challenging because there is the need to be authentic and honest, however the consequence of the emotional expression has to be taken into consideration. Brackett (2019) describes the expressing of emotions as a transaction between human beings. The capacity of expressing emotions sustains a basic need, that of emotional security, correctly expressing emotions one is able to communicate: "Look what I feel and why. Look what I want to happen right now. Look what I need from you right now" (Brackett, 2019). Expressing emotion means that one is able to use the right words and choose the right behaviour to accurately express their own inner emotional state so that the others could connect and understand.

▶ **Why is it important to promote identifying and expressing emotions?**

People's emotions can impact many fields of our day-to-day life, from communication with others to individual performance. Supporting students from an early age to identify and be aware of their own emotions and the emotions of others is the best way to provide the appropriate environment for future adults` emotional stability.

Emotional life could be overwhelming for preadolescents and adolescents who need to belong and to be recognized by their own peers, as a result, they need to be able to relate

well with each other, in order to build efficient peer relationships. This part of their social life is governed by their emotional life which they need to control and integrate. In order to be in control, first they need to have deep understanding and knowledge about their own inner emotional life, and this means they need the capacity to accurately identify and express their emotions.

Identifying emotions implies labelling, using correct emotional vocabulary and also evaluating the level of energy and pleasure each emotion brings up. Expressing emotions means staying authentic while adjusting to the group culture. Both identifying and expressing emotions contribute to the emotional regulation skills which can be promoted in schools as prerequisites for emotional regulation development.

It is important to teach students to identify and correctly express their emotions so they can live a healthy life. This is because studies have indicated that there is a relationship between higher emotional intelligence and improved physical and psychological health (Martins et al., 2010). The ability to correctly identify emotions could help in increasing the emotional awareness that sustains a healthy lifestyle, because the person is interested in finding out what is beyond a specific emotion, what triggers that specific emotion. For example, one child could identify what they are experiencing when they are within a particular group – if these emotions are negative, that information is suggesting that the group is not good for them. As a consequence of this, they need to choose different friends. Identifying and expressing emotions are also skills that could prevent social difficulties and bullying. Identifying emotions empowers students to reflect on their own feelings, so that they would be more aware of their emotional state and know how to act accordingly in order to maintain healthy relationships and protect their own mental health. They will be more in control of their own life and more prone to act in a way that serves their own purposes, having an overall generalised control of their own lives.

When children correctly recognize their own emotions, they are able to develop healthy ways to control and to regulate emotions. The correct expression of emotions also acts as a useful tool when we need to ask for help. Identifying and expressing emotions are skills which support the capacity to develop friendships and healthy relationships. Being aware of their own emotional experiences, children will be able to distinguish between toxic and healthy relationships. These skills can also help children be better friends, better teammates, be more able to cooperate, communicate, and empathise with each other. These skills will enable children to be better citizens in a global world.

▶ **How can teachers promote identifying and expressing emotions through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

In order to support students to identify and express emotions in the educational process, emotions can be approached from three perspectives:

1. Teachers / counsellors/ principals identify their own emotions

2. Teachers / counsellors/ principals identify students` emotions

3. Students identify their own emotions

Teachers can promote identifying and expressing emotions in the classroom through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy through:

● Promoting authenticity and honesty in their own attitude towards themselves, the class and the world at large (this means to label and name their own emotion, to recognize their own emotional state and the implications of that, to express genuinely and culturally adjust their inner emotional state)

● Encouraging the communication of children's emotions and feelings, using the emotional vocabulary, trying to be as specific as possible when emotional states are involved

● Paying attention to the general mood of the class and to the specific mood of each student

● Recognizing and seeing the children with their own emotions, even if these emotions are negative

● Be prepared to talk and to deal with negative emotions of the others

● Creating a secure emotional climate within classroom

● Create space and time for emotional sharing, so students could speak up about their own emotional states

● Beginning each class with taking the emotional temperature of the class and showing interest for the emotional states of the students

● Trying to build the emotional connection with class and establishing trustful relationships with students before teaching any lesson

● Showing a positive attitude and unconditional acceptance for all the students in class

● Showing empathy and understanding of the emotional states of the students

● Treating any emotion as being normal, despite the intensity.

- Building emotional awareness by teaching students that each emotion is important (positive or negative, highly intense or low intense) and acceptable

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Case Study: Emotions

John is a 13 year old boy who lives with his younger brother and mother in a dangerous neighbourhood. Ever since John's father passed away when he was seven, John's mother has had to work long hours in order to be able to provide for the family. John helps his mother by taking care of his younger brother and helping around the house while she is out working all day. Because of this John doesn't have enough time to meet his friends. His mother also doesn't want him to walk around the neighbourhood because they live in a dangerous area.

Nobody at school knows about John's home situation. At school John is rather isolated, he stays alone at the back of the class and doesn't want to communicate with others. Some of his peers make jokes about him and laugh at him. Since he doesn't have a lot of free time at home, he is finding school difficult as he doesn't have time to study, especially maths. A Lot of the time he feels hopeless, confused and alone and he wishes to disappear. Nobody knows what is happening to him.

▶ **How can teachers infuse identifying and expressing emotions in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Languages:

- Analysing the characters from literature, looking for signs of emotional expression and labelling the feelings
- Discussing the benefits of emotional awareness (identifying and expressing correctly the emotions) based on different stories and literature

History:

- Analysing the different historical leaders' lives, taking into account their emotional skills
- Analysing historical events from emotional perspective

Social Studies/Citizenship:

- Designing activities for personal development
- Teaching emotional skills
- Identifying peculiarities of different cultures present in the community

- Analysing a person's emotions who is part of a local minority in the group community

Maths and Science:

- Assisting students in expressing correctly adjusted the emotions of frustration or angry regarding math and science projects/ activity
- Ask about emotional state after the students get the correct results on exercises and scientific problems

Art:

- Analysing known art pieces from emotional state point of view
- Identifying the emotion each student has in front of a specific art piece (painting, sculpture, dance, ballet, music)
- Drawing the music
- Writing a poem expressing emotions derived from listening a musical piece
- Identifying emotions beyond the music or painting
- Expressing emotions through different colours or movements

Physical Education

- Encouraging students to talk about their emotions after each success or failure
- Trying to learn how to breath using abdominal breathing exercises
- Recognizing from emotional expression the joy of victory and the disappointment of loss

Acting and drama – as extracurricular activity or optional subject

- Identifying emotions of a given characters in a play
- Expressing emotions identified at a specific character of a play (in front of an audience)
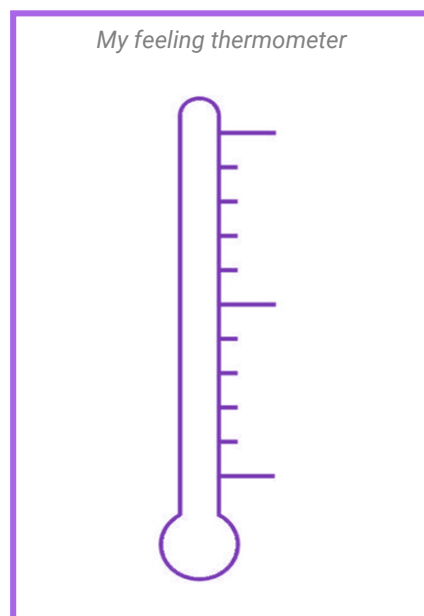
▶ **Activities the teacher may use to promote identifying and expressing emotions in the classroom**

My feeling thermometer

Emotional Thermometer

The teacher discusses the importance of correctly identifying emotions and also their intensity. Using an emotional thermometer could raise the children's awareness related to their emotional state. The teacher can give the following instructions:

Try to recognize your emotion right now.

- What do you feel inside?
- What is your body saying?
- How do you intend to act?

Use the thermometer (from the image, twistyneedle.com) to show the level of intensity of your own emotion.

- Do you feel joyful? Energized? What level? (from 0 to 10 where 0-1 is very low and 9-10 is very high)
- Do you feel sad? What level?
- Do you feel angry? What level?
- Do you feel scared? What level?

The students are encouraged to think about the different emotions they may feel in different situations and to speak about how they recognized them. What were the signs of those emotions? Students can register on his/her thermometer more than one emotional state.

Vocabulary of Emotions

The teacher presents lists of emotions (see box below) so that students could learn about different types of emotional states (some of them describing similar feelings, having different intensities) which comprise emotional constellations.

Figure 3: 3 Ways to Better Understand your Emotions (David, 2016)

A List of Emotions

Go beyond the obvious to identify exactly what you're feeling.

Angry	Sad	Anxious	Hurt	Embarrassed	Happy
Grumpy	Disappointed	Afraid	Jealous	Isolated	Thankful
Frustrated	Mournful	Stressed	Betrayed	Self-conscious	Trusting
Annoyed	Regretful	Vulnerable	Isolated	Lonely	Comfortable
Defensive	Depressed	Confused	Shocked	Inferior	Content
Spiteful	Paralysed	Bewildered	Deprived	Guilty	Excited
Impatient	Pessimistic	Sceptical	Victimised	Ashamed	Relaxed
Disgusted	Tearful	Worried	Aggrieved	Repugnant	Relieved
Offended	Dismayed	Cautious	Tormented	Pathetic	Elated
Irritated	Disillusioned	Nervous	Abandoned	Confused	Confident

The students are encouraged to read each column of emotions and discuss with their peers the moments in their lives when they felt those specific emotions. They are also encouraged to express each emotion using facial expressions, posture and body movements.

As an alternative activity: the students are asked to express one of the emotions through art (painting, songs, poems)

Face Painting Emotions

The students are asked to form pairs. Using colours they paint each other's face trying to express a specific emotion. After that each pair will present their emotions to the whole class. The teacher will coordinate a discussion about each emotion.

● How could you recognize that specific emotion?
● What are the specific signs?

- What that emotion communicates to the persons themselves or to the others?
- What is it useful for?

Role Play Emotions

Every student is given a monologue or a role in a play, selected by the teacher. The students are encouraged to identify emotions expressed by the character in the specific play, read additional texts about the referred character and reflect on the emotions identified. The teacher can discuss with students emotions referred by each character, how would students react in similar contexts in order to understand human emotions and express it in an authentic way.

The play and monologues can be presented to the other students, their parents, teachers etc. The play can also be recorded and then be used in future discussions. After the performance, the teacher can meet with the students and discuss all emotional aspects regarding this activity.

Art and Emotions

Teacher presents on a weekly or monthly basis, a specific painting, along with the life and other work of the same painter. The students are invited to identify the emotions expressed and the signs that lead them to those emotions. Students are asked to create conceptual maps regarding an art work or a painter and the emotions identified and to keep them in a portfolio. The teacher can present painters belonging to the same artistic period and to ask students to compare their work starting from the emotions identified.

My Emotions Journal

After administering an activity, the teacher can invite the students to answer to the following questions:

- What were your emotions during the experiment/ activity?
- Why do you think you experienced those emotions?
- During which activities did you experience the same emotion?

The students write the answers in a journal every time the teacher asks them to do that and they are encouraged to reflect on their previous emotions and complete the answers if necessary. On a monthly basis, for example, the teacher can organise one to one meetings with every student to discuss their emotions, the context, and the changes.

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3. IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS/ SELF-EFFICACY

▶ **What are strengths and self-efficacy?**

When talking about strengths, we think about the skills and abilities one person has which helps to achieve desirable outcomes and succeed in daily actions. *The strength-based approach* emphasises individual strengths (including personal strengths and social and community networks) and see people as resourceful, with a variety of interests, experiences, aspirations, talents, knowledge, competencies, possibilities, visions, hopes and interpersonal connections. The focus is not on the deficits, weaknesses, failures, shortcomings, problems or needs which might be perceived by the person her/ himself or by other persons.

Positive Psychology Theory dictates that focusing on our strengths everyday contributes to 'a good life' i.e. a happy and engaged life. Seligman and Peterson (2004) identified in their *Character Strengths and Virtues handbook* 6 virtues comprising 24 measurable character strength defined as "core personality traits that define your unique identity and make you feel authentic, alive and engaged in life" (https://www.viacharacter.org/).

From the point of view of other theories, like the Social Cognitive Theory, one of the most important competencies for an individual is **self-efficacy**. This refers to a person's perception, belief and confidence in their own abilities to successfully perform specific tasks and to obtain a positive outcome in a specific situation. The concept focuses on the judgments of what individuals can do, whatever real skills they possess (Bandura, 1986). It is not a personality trait, but a characteristic which can be influenced, and which is dependent on situations and tasks.

Self-efficacy is influenced by performance accomplishments (Bandura, 1977). This means that the experience of success in direct practice can enhance self-efficacy, while failure will decrease it, especially when failure takes place early in the learning process. Through vicarious experience i.e. when one witnesses others performing successful activities, they can improve their own self-efficacy by verbal persuasion. This happens when one person with expertise or prestige tries to convince another person that s/he can succeed in a difficult task, by giving instructions, suggestions or advice; by physiological information - the information about their own physiological and emotional situation can contribute to the judgements of their capabilities. For example, anxiety or fatigue can be interpreted as signs of low efficacy in the respective tasks.

Self-efficacy is an important ingredient in the process of personal development, meaning the process of thriving and realising one's potential (Sala, Punie, Garkov & Cabrera, 2020). Together with self-regulation, self-efficacy is a key component of the Entrepreneurship competence, i.e. the capacity to create cultural, social, or economic value (Bacigalupo, Kampylis, Punie & Van den Brande, 2016).

▶ **Why is it important to promote strengths and self-efficacy amongst secondary school students?**

By focusing on their own strengths, resources and achievements, and not so much on weaknesses, deficits, or failures; secondary school students can develop a positive vision about themselves and about what they are capable of, build on their own capacity, instil a sense of their own value, enhance resilience and optimism, and develop a growth mindset. Using a strength-based approach also helps students to develop and keep a strong sense of wellbeing. Once students are aware of the strong positive points, these can be further used in their academic and social life, as well as in the future professional/ career path.

The concept of *self-efficacy* can have a high relevance for the academic context, where we can talk about academic self-efficacy. This refers to the belief that one has the capacity to accomplish academic tasks with different levels of self-efficacy for different subjects - for example one can think about him / herself as being able to perform complex art tasks, but not being able to solve medium difficulty maths problems (Schunk & Ertmer, 2000). It is important for children to understand that by believing in their own capabilities to obtain certain results in different subjects through their own actions, they have more chances to persevere when faced with difficulties and obtain success. This will increase the level of psychological well being and self-esteem. Teachers therefore should instil in children the sense of believing in their own forces, help children to be aware of the fact that, by their own work and effort, they can do things, can make things happen, can obtain their aims, and can overcome obstacles.

Another argument for promoting self-efficacy among secondary school students is related to the fact that self-efficacy is a highly effective predictor of students' motivation, learning and academic performance (Pintrich, 2003). It means that students with a low sense of self-efficacy will possess negative thoughts and think of task's demands as threatening, not as challenging and therefore set low objectives for themselves (Schunk & Ertmer, 2000). When equipped with high self-efficacy, students will act with perseverance, trying harder to succeed, while a low level of self-efficacy will be commonly followed by

disengagement. High self-efficacy can also lead to lower levels of emotional activation while facing a challenge as well as lower levels of career indecisiveness.

▶ **How can teachers promote strengths and self-efficacy through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

Teachers can promote a strength-based approach and self-efficacy in the classroom through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy through:

- Organising diverse activities for children to respond to the question: "Who am I?" in order for them to understand who they are, which are their strengths, understanding how past and present are part of who they are and identifying their dreams for the future. Drawings, paintings, collage techniques, balloons, mind maps can support the self-discovery activities.

- Identifying and discussing their own strengths, as teachers (including dreams and hobbies) and limitations (they can introduce the latter through self-irony and humour). Teachers can use statements referring to him/herself such as: "I can solve/ do…", "I am/ am not able to …", "I know / don't know how to …" and "I can overcome the obstacle…", "I reached my goal…".

- Celebrating effort and perseverance when tasks are accomplished and praising what worked well in the respective task. Recognizing and acknowledging what is already working validates strengths. Self-recognition of these strengths increases self-esteem and in turn, helps students move forward.

- Underlining the progress of each student. Talk only about observable results. Do not give children a false sense of competence (positive feedback when not deserved).

- Offering positive feedback and encouraging children to discover positive aspects in the work done by peers in various domains (not only at cognitive level, but also in painting, music, sports, science, etc.).

- Asking for and using the feedback received from the children regarding the activities carried out together.

- Asking open-ended questions so that children have the opportunity to tell their story, in their own way.

- Finding solutions to setbacks, while staying positive.

- Addressing their own mistakes and presenting how they can fix things: "I'm sorry, I was in such a hurry that I forgot to thank you! And I'm doing it now, thank you, Maria, for…!" Or "Well done! Congrats for your success! If you have a few moments at the end of the activity, I can't wait for you to tell me what it was like to solve that problem / task and how you do it/ to play chess with your colleague and how you won?"

- Consciously observing how their own emotions, attitudes, behaviour, relationships, influence children and discussing with them these aspects.

- Asking the students for help when appropriate.

- Addressing new and unexpected challenges as learning opportunities.

- Using the word "challenge" instead of "problem" because the latter can be perceived by children as something very hard to approach and that will never go away.

- Encouraging children to share their ideas about possible solutions, opportunities that can help challenging situations.

- Stimulating children's autonomy by organising for example, group work and giving every child a role or offering individual differentiating tasks.

- Offering relevant contexts for discussions and reflections after each activity where children can freely address their concerns and reflect on what they have learnt.

- Exposing the results of the work done by children and encouraging them to offer feedback and to reflect on the resources each of them has brought and discovered during the respective activity.

Case study:

Rosie and her parents have recently moved to a new town and Rosie had to change the school. Now she is in a new class and she fears talking in front of her colleagues as she thinks they are very bright and they might laugh at her and think her answers are stupid. Moreover, she notices that they are close friends and she feels miles apart from them. During the painting class, the teacher observed that she is using colours in a very nice way. At the end of the activity, an exhibition was organised with all the paintings done by children. All of them noticed the nice colours used by Rosie and came around her asking how she did that beautiful work. She smiled and explained she had attended some art-

classes in her old school where she learnt how to use colours in paintings. Some children asked her if she could help them to understand her technique and invited her to their home to play together. Rosie felt very validated and felt that she was starting to connect with her colleagues.

▶ **How can teachers infuse strength-based approach and self-efficacy in the teaching of academic subjects?**

It is very important during all curricular or extracurricular activities, that teachers should:

- Focus not only on academic knowledge, but also on children and their self-image and self-esteem, in order to identify those with negative self-esteem and self-convictions associated with failure or lack of value, which can lead towards behaviours such as rejection, opposition, blockage, dependence or lack of initiative;
- Use pedagogical practises which will lead towards the consolidation of a positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, such as: providing process feedback versus product feedback; validation of effort and involvement; comparing each student in the dynamics of personal evolution and progress.

Languages:

- Analyse characters who used different strength and self-confidence (or not) and the consequences of their actions;
- Analyse the way characters offer positive feedbacks (or not) and the effects on those who received it;

History:

- Discuss historical characters and their positive view on themselves as well as their strengths;
- Analyse successful (or not successful) events and the involvement of the different characters;

Social Studies/Citizenship:

- When talking about citizenship and diversity, recognize that persons are unique and each has something good to show and to contribute to the world;
- Ask children to write an essay about what they are good at and what do they want to become in life in order to bring benefits to the world they are living in;

Maths and Science:

- When discussing different new concepts, encourage children to present their own view first, making connections from what they said with the new content;
- Discuss the history of some concepts and theories and how hard it was at the beginning for the scientists/ mathematicians to prove they were right, what strengths they might have needed in order to succeed;
- Talk about mistakes in learning and not succeeding, yet in solving different problems;
- Encourage peer-support and learning from each other;
- Offer positive feedback for progress (keep the idea of small progress);

Art:

- Exhibit the results of the work done;
- Encourage feedback sessions as the "Tour of gallery" where children leave a post-it with a positive appreciation for the work of another colleague;
- Show the children that are capable in "multiple ways" - for example by what they make, write, draw, say, and do;

Physical Education:

- Search in the Internet about the personal life of an athlete to understand the role work and perseverance has upon success;

- Find motivational sentences said by famous sportsmen / sportswomen which show the importance of having a dream and believing in your own strength to achieve it.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote strengths-based approach and self-efficacy in the classroom**

Get to know your strengths

Character Strengths Survey is a free online instrument which students can complete. The administration takes 15 minutes and the results are offered in the form of Character Strengths Profile – 24 Strengths (your signature strengths, your middle strengths, your lesser strengths).

Link to website: https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register

My magic mirror

During this activity, the teacher will give the following instructions:

Please make a simple drawing like this:

1. Draw a nice mirror on paper. It can be a circle or a square, it can have a frame or a handle, it can be big or small, as you like it;
2. Write in the middle your name;
3. Write with different colours a symbol or a motto which best represents you;
4. Then write in different parts of that mirror the answer to the following statements:
    ○ One strength I have which starts with the first letter of my name…
    ○ What I like most doing is…
    ○ What I am good at is…
    ○ What I would like to learn is…
    ○ The place I like most to be is…
    ○ One important calendar date for me is…
    ○ One objective for this school year is…
5. Discuss the mirror with your colleague and write one quality s/he has on his/her mirror.

My sweet success

During this activity, the teacher will give the following instructions:

Think of your last success you had yesterday or the last week. Please do not think about the success as something exceptional like being the first men to step on the Moon, as we all can have everyday successes on personal or school life on a smaller scale, such as writing an excellent essay, reconciling with your best friend, convincing your parents to let you go alone in a seaside trip. Please write a sentence or draw a symbol which best expresses you achieving that specific success. Then answer to the following questions:
    ● What strengths did you employ in those specific actions?
    ● How did you feel about your result?
    ● What did you feel was easy to do?
    ● What did you do to overcome obstacles?
    ● Who/What helped you?
    ● What feedback did you receive? From whom?

My words on success

During this activity, the teacher will give the following instructions:

Think about your previous week at school. Choose one specific challenge you had during the learning process and see which types of sentences from the table below best describe you in direct relation to that specific challenge.

Guidelines for teachers: Read the following table to understand better the portrait of a person with high or low self-efficacy.

Table 2: Self- Efficacy Table

	High self-efficacy	**Low self-efficacy**
I succeeded because:	I am capable and I did everything I could.	I was lucky, that's what happened.
I didn't succeed because	I didn't do enough.	I was not able to do more.

The teacher can resume or mirror in different circumstances *four major sources* which contribute to the development and consolidation of self-efficacy, encouraging students to use them on daily basis:

1. **Previous experience and performance**: "If I succeeded last time, I will succeed now, too!"
2. **Social modelling or indirect experiences**: "If s/he can, I can, too!"
3. **Personal beliefs or verbal persuasion**: "If my mentor / teacher is a professional in this field and s/he is giving instructions, suggestions or advice, I am confident that I can succeed in this difficult task!"
4. **Physiological and emotional factors**: "If I am anxious and tired, I will be inefficient in this task! Or "If I am rested and calm or satisfied with what is happening to me, I will be efficient in this task, I will succeed!"

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4. DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET

▶ **What is the Growth Mindset?**

The idea that the individuals are able to be educated i.e able to change their response behaviour to a certain situation as a consequence of a learning experience is very old. The way how education was seen and especially how individuals thought about their own skills changed greatly. Generally, it is considered that the child is more malleable, than the adult who has a rather fixed mental structure. The functions of various moving organs (heart, lungs, etc.) were properly identified in antiquity, however with the limited ability of the human senses, the brain's role remained unknown and was even considered to be a useless appendix (i.e. by Aristotle).

With today's neuroscience and technology (i.e. Magnetic Resonance Imaging - MRI), allowing for neuronal activity monitoring, the brain was revealed as a very complex, active, connected and dynamic organ, with tremendous and constant neuronal activity, shaping and reshaping its own structure as a consequence of the lived experience. It has a very complex system of specialised neuronal centres, with billions of links between them, that are activated every time the individual is involved in any kind of activity. Recent neuroscience research shows that throughout our lives there are significant changes to the structure of the brain, as it easily transforms itself in any form (Pickersgill & Cunningham-Burley, 2015).

Contrary to the general opinion that talent is innate, the research indicates that all students (and actually all individuals regardless their age) possess the ability to learn and change by restructuring their brains (Walton, 2021).

The concept of the Growth mindset was coined by Carol Dweck, who is known for the book "Mindset: The New Technology of Success" (Dweck, 2007). Carol Dweck explored the implications of the growth mindset for education, defining it as the belief that individuals' intelligence and talents can be improved through effort and practice (Dweck, 2007). The LifeComp EU[3], extends the concept by including, "openness and curiosity to new learning experiences, supported by the belief in one's potential to improve with dedication and work" (Sala, Pune, Garkov, & Cabrera Giraldez, 2020).

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[3] LifeComp: The European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence: https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC120911

The growth mindset refers to a new perspective on how the brain works, called **neuroplasticity,** meaning the process of restructuring the brain by forming new connections and weakening old ones according to the involvement of the individual in specific activities. Thus, an individual can learn anything provided s/he works hard enough, making use of the relevant available resources – social, metacognitive, strategic (Walton, 2021). Those results validated the view that the intelligence is acquired and in certain limits changeable, rather than innate and fixed. If we act, feel and think differently, then the brain will be restructured in order to support the respective tasks. If we make an effort to learn a new way of doing things, it will become easier the more we do it. This is because **the brain is malleable** and can get stronger and smarter if students are involving themselves in **challenging work**. In order to model the brain and master a new skill, a student needs to not only try to do new things, but set higher challenges and try harder.

The belief in the possibility of improving intelligence leads to **a new attitude** about different aspects of learning i.e. a growth mindset. According to Dweck (2007), students feel that mistakes are just opportunities for further growth and inherent parts of the learning process, they feel empowered to reach goals, are willing to embrace challenges and risks as well as possible failure, as temporary setbacks, feeling confident in and persisting in the achieving the goals as well as inspiring themselves from others success.

Positive thinking and a practical, realistic optimism are crucial skills of a growth mindset and sustain personal, academic and career development. Students should thus be facilitated to switch from negative thoughts about their ability to succeed in their life, school and career to a realistic perception of the highest possible result for them, given present or possible future opportunities for study and work. Positive thinking is counted among the strategies that increase positive emotions and improve wellbeing. Tsutsui & Fujiwara identified four different aspects of the positive thinking that can be exploited in the educational process by various practical techniques:

1. self-encouragement thinking – thoughts about being one's own cheerleader;
2. self-assertive thinking – thoughts about doing well for others;
3. self-instructive and control thinking – thoughts guiding performance and
4. self-affirmative thinking involving confident thoughts (Davis, 2021).

▶ **Why is it important to promote a growth mindset amongst secondary school students?**

The students' interpretation about their learning experiences are derived from their beliefs about intelligence, as either 'threatening and indicative of a deficit of ability (fixed mindset),

or exciting and indicative of a potential for development (growth mindset)' (Jacovidis, Anderson, Beach, & Chadwick, 2020). An individual with a growth mindset will therefore, embrace challenges, persevere despite confronting obstacles, will consider effort as necessary to achieve mastery, learn from criticism, and get inspiration from others' success. On the other hand, students with a fixed mindset usually end up in failure, truancy and early school leaving due to their feelings of not being smart enough. The results of neuroscientific research show that all students have the ability to learn and change by restructuring their neuronal connections. People with a fixed mindset typically believe that their level of abilities are innate and that "they have a certain amount [of intelligence] and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb" (Dweck, 2007). On the other hand, people with a growth mindset understand that not knowing something is a temporary state, and consequently "they don't feel ashamed or try to prove they're smarter than they currently are, while students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching, and persistence" (Dweck, 2007).

A growth mindset has a positive contribution to various psychological and educational aspects including: grit, motivation, learning, resilience and academic performance (higher grades in science, mathematics, languages, and grade point average – GPA, fewer behavioural problems). It is also associated with reduced burnout, decrease in psychological problems (depression and anxiety) in teachers. Students with a growth mindset are natural lifelong learners, spend more effort in learning to acquire mastery, see feedback as a source of information and an opportunity to learn.

When it comes to learning, quantity was proven to lead to quality. Thus, students involved consistently in learning many activities, as ordinary as they can be, get invariably higher results, than those focused on a high quality of a small number of learning tasks. By cultivating a growth mindset students understand why they need to try to engage fully in learning opportunities, accept making mistakes and learn from them and see their role in a more effective learning.

▶ **How can teachers promote a growth mindset**

In order to exploit the benefits of the growth mindset, teachers need to get a correct representation of the functioning of the brain. Like a wilderness trail getting wider and easier to travel as more tourists are using it, similarly with the brain, the more frequent processes get strengthened over time and therefore get easier to occur. On the contrary, if some processes are not repeated anymore the old neuronal structures are weakened and

their resources hijacked for the new activities. By starting a new activity, that is difficult at the beginning, by repeated and directed attention towards the desired change, the brain is getting new neuronal connections. Given the new activity is repeated those connections are getting stronger and therefore easier to connect to each other.

Cultivating a growth mindset in students is a very demanding endeavour for a teacher. Classical pedagogy warns about the Pygmalion effect, which refers to teachers getting what they expected. This can be both positive and negative. If a teacher has positive expectations of a student, they will provide them with more learning opportunities, more detailed feedback, provide more encouragement etc. However if teachers hold negative expectations towards a student, their behaviour towards the student will influence the student's performance in a negative way (Chang, 2011).

Strategies teachers can use to promote a growth mindset (Walton, 2021):

- **Include tasks involving struggle and growth**, promote a growth mindset by teaching students about neuroscience evidence, showing that the brain is built to grow and learn, that it is malleable and it improves through effort. By including challenging learning tasks, students will form and strengthen neural connections, which will make them smarter.

- Diagnose and **address the factors** influencing the student's mindset (**parents, peers, self-image, teaching communication**). Present them a **clear explanation about how the brain works** and how it will get stronger and smarter with new learning, the reasons why they need to strive and invest a lot of effort and by including practical activities for developing specific growth mindset skills.

- Model constantly a growth mindset by empowering students to **monitor their inner voice and assess it** against a growth mindset checklist and **remove the negative thoughts**. Students need to turn from a fixed mindset perceptions (ex. "I am not able to accomplish this task"), to thoughts aligned to a growth mindset ("If I keep practicing, I can also master this skill").

- Encourage students to **get inspiration from others** who succeeded in the respective area and to **set medium / long term goals** as well as relate them to short-term goals and **engage with perseverance and hard work** in learning for achieving them. Struggling with the learning tasks is a condition for achieving their aims. Students need help in analysing their learning strategies and adapting them wisely.

- Be aware and avoid common misconceptions in students, teachers, parents and relevant others, specifically regarding the role of talent, IQ or social intelligence in success and **focus on the most important factors (i.e. perseverance/ grit)**.

- By having students focus on long-term goals the teachers need to cooperate and coordinate in a **unitary approach at school level**. Cultivate a learning ethos where students are "approaching study rather as a Marathon, than as a sprint" (Duckworth, 2016). The differences between the high and the low performing students are not explained by those factors, but by the student's ability to follow their goals – perseverance or grit. This includes the passion and perseverance for very long-term goals, having stamina, sticking with your future and working really hard to make that future a reality" (idem). Moreover, Duckworth's research shows not only that talent does not make students gritty, but it is actually unrelated or inversely related to talent. This explains why many times the high performers do not have high IQ scores, while some of the students with high IQ do not raise in class to the expectations. Cultivating a growth mindset in students makes them more likely to persevere when they fail.

- Promote an open attitude to risk taking and a friendly atmosphere where students are not ashamed to make mistakes, but willing to **accept them and new challenging** approaches. Model a new learning ethos where it is very important to try to make new things in order to reach deeper and more effective learning.

- Promote quantity (many learning situations / tasks, trying many new things, and exploiting the ludic learning function) as a key to reaching a better learning quality. This requires to involve students in various and constant learning activities, understanding that the brain gets stronger neuronal networks which lead to higher ability to solve problems. In this sense, the teacher should encourage students to follow their interests and hobbies without being afraid of failing. Research showed that students learn deeper the things that they struggle with, than the things which require easy learning.

- **Praise the process, not the person**. Students often find themselves lost in their learning path or confused about how they could be successful and students' mindsets are influenced by the type of learning feedback provided by teachers. While providing constructive feedback and assessment for learning encourages a growth mindset, a summative assessment makes students focus rather on the performance. **Formative assessments** and constructive feedback with descriptive

elements identifying strengths, challenges, and next steps are critical for learning in order to make students aware of their learning progress, learning gaps as well as of ways to close the gaps. All this feedback can help them focus on their learning and understand how they can improve. Promote active participation, including by asking for self- and peer-learning. Grades need to be complemented by assessment for learning, as they constantly demolish the self-image and trust of the low achievers.

Case study

Mihai is a boy from a family who comes from a disadvantaged area, pressed by poverty, with unemployed parents. He is a student in the eighth grade in a regular rural school, which, unfortunately, is not very connected to development opportunities. He sometimes receives the following messages from home and from some of the teachers:

- In vain you strive with learning, you will not succeed
- Give up working extra, a bright future is not for you
- Look, the neighbour's boy learned and what did he do in life?
- Too many books and learning is not good for anyone, it rather fools you

But, although he often felt alone, he had a dream, he did not give up, he was optimistic about the future, the possibility to do something with his life, and at the same time for his family. Attracted by the beauties of life and knowledge, he enjoyed learning on his own, going to church, and being encouraged by the tutoring teacher. He often repeated to himself: everything will be fine. If I work hard enough, I will succeed like other gritty students, I will always believe in my forces and keep hope, I will change my destiny and get to help my family.

Questions to reflect on Mihai's situation

- Is Mihai optimistic?
- What do you think he finally managed?
- How do you see him in 10, 20 years?

▶ **How can teachers infuse, develop and strengthen a growth mindset in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Languages:

- Re-write the stories and poems from optimistic perspectives, other than the classic ones

- Find the characters who show attitudes derived from a growth mindset (flexibility, adaptability, creativity, confidence in their abilities etc.)
- Use analysis grids to highlight optimistic behaviours
- Complete the sentences with life or learning goals, in which optimism is important for our personal development
- Transform sad or pessimistic stories into funny, comic stories based on sense of humour
- Have the students develop stand-up comedy sketches or public speaking talks on different related topics

History:
- Analyse successful historical personalities, heads of state, famous company managers, brand creators, who had an optimistic approach on the problems they faced
- Create posters with the profiles of exceptional leaders (male and female), include examples of optimism and positive thinking in history
- Draw your life line with significant moments of optimism, for personal history with key words and graphics, the positive events
- Analyse the portraits / life stories of people from different epochs of history: Renaissance, Middle Ages, Communism, Capitalism etc. and discuss how their accomplishments relate to their beliefs on themselves

Social Studies/Citizenship:
- Collect stories and best practices at community level about management style focused on realistic and pragmatic optimism
- Organise debates on pro-optimism or pro-realism
- Discuss families who promote a lifestyle based on optimism
- Write a poem/ story/ essay about optimism in our life
- Propose a quiz for assessing the knowledge and attitudes on optimism and positive thinking
- Solve critical incidents involving persons in difficult contexts (failure, depression, disruptive or undesirable, aggressive or violence behaviours, emotional disorders, low self-esteem, anxiety, etc.)
- Implement an educational program/ project for growth mindset development which can be implemented at class level or as an extracurricular activity

Maths and Science:

- Develop social experiments and research projects to emphasise the importance of optimism in everyday life

- Complete the sentences, equations or theorem of optimism and positive thinking

- Present in front of the class or in front of an audience the concept of optimism, based on: scientific data and results of relevant studies, facts, evolution of ideas

- Investigate the roots of the optimism in your personal life and in your family

- Determinate the factors which indicate that the organisational culture of your class is an optimistic one

- Prepare a metaphorical recipe with the essential ingredients for an optimistic approach of life with the respective mix of chemicals, in an imaginary way, as a real magician

Art:

- Create a collage from different materials to illustrate an optimistic view of a challenging event

- Draw abstract paintings that express feelings related to optimism and positive thinking

- Create an optimistic context for diverse learning activities by listening to specific music, or watching movies together

- Create an album with personal photos (individual, team) which illustrate successful events from students' life

- Use digital tools (book creator, canva, padlet, etc.) to convey different emotions related to optimism and positive thinking approaches

- Prepare a drama (role playing) with characters reflecting positive beliefs about the outcomes of events or experiences

Physical Education:

- Create a list of guidelines for students to follow when they encounter failures

- Present some extracts from the lives of sportsmen/sportswomen who managed to cope with difficult situations, through optimism and positive thinking

- Practice complex physical exercises while quoting the mission or the belief of the favourite athlete who displayed a growth mindset

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote positive thinking in the classroom (Walton, 2021)**

Practising Growth Mindset Self-talk

Exercise with students ways to flip the negative thoughts and fixed mindset appreciations to those indicating a growth mindset: Fixed mindset - "I am not made for understanding this chemistry formulas" changed to growth mindset – "I do not understand most of what the teacher says in this new subject matter, but I am sure that if I start step by step I will get to sense of them and with patience I will master this interesting science". Find other examples at the following link: mindsethealth.com

Positive Lateral Thinking

When a student is overwhelmed with pressure to complete homework and is engulfed in negative thoughts about her/his ability to cope with the school demands, s/he can be guided to identify several positive thoughts about him/er self that will change mood, motivate to try harder, give more control over how s/he feels and generally improve the sense of wellbeing. These can be either thoughts of the past, of the present about things s/he is grateful for, focusing on positive aspects or from the future.

Good Things

Identifying and thinking for a while about three good things each morning is empirically demonstrated to contribute to increased happiness in the short- and longer-term. This compensates for the fact that with time people start to lose appreciation for the good things and develop a filter and complain only about the negative side of reality.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote optimism in the classroom**

Me in Sunshine

Describe shortly your main 10 best characteristics. Include positive 'solar' aspects which define you. At the same time, evoque the most wonderful event in your life that filled you with happiness, optimism and positive thinking.

Both tasks must be presented in front of the class. After that, the students will reflect on the following aspects:

- How do you think positive personal perception can affect optimism?
- Do you believe that an optimistic attitude can be useful for a happy life?
- What was easy in the previous exercises? What was hard?
- How did you feel?
- What are you doing to become more optimistic?

Reflecting on the following statement: *Optimists know that we are stronger together.*

My Research about Optimism

Create a conceptual (mind) map regarding the optimist approach. Work individually, in pairs or in small teams (of 4-5 participants). Take into consideration that an optimist:

- is being hopeful and confident about the future;
- generates positive experiences and favourable outcomes;
- is in an active, not a passive state;
- typically expect good things to happen contingent on their active participation;
- will actively work to generate wellbeing for themselves (and often for their friends and colleagues);
- have positive feelings about her/his chances.

The optimists' newspaper is an online journal to which all participants contribute with positive news, stories, photos, recommendations, movies, music, latest research, etc.

Read and comment: "Optimistic outlook is predictive of positive health outcomes, resilience, and relationship satisfaction. Optimism can be inborn, or it can be learned. Learned optimism was introduced by psychologist Martin Seligman, who is considered the father of the positive psychology movement. According to Seligman (1990), the process of learning to be optimistic is an important way to help people maximise their mental health and live better lives."

Link to website: (https://www.leadershipiq.com/blogs/leadershipiq/optimism)

My Beautiful Dream

Make a drawing about your impossible dream! Write some sentences which express the essence of your dream. All students create an exhibition with their respective dreams! Watch inspirational clips by famous person and answer the following metacognitive questions:

- What did you feel or think during the exercises?
- What you learned about yourself by writing about your dream?
- How the inspirational movies inspired you?

The club of optimists: organise workshops with students, parents, teachers on the following topics:

- Optimism is good for your health;
- Optimism can lead to resilience;

● Optimism is good for maintaining relationships.

Before finishing the activities, rate your level of optimism:

- low optimism;
- moderate optimism;
- high optimism.

Remember! Highly optimistic people are more inspired to give their best effort at learning/ work. Optimism is associated with a wide variety of positive outcomes, including better mental and physical health, motivation, performance, and personal relationships. Optimists do respond better to disappointing situations than pessimists, with more resilience, confidence and less stress (Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010).

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5. SELF-REGULATION (STRESS MANAGEMENT & ANGER MANAGEMENT)

▶ **What is self-regulation?**

Self-regulation refers to skills which enable an individual to control their own behaviours, thoughts and emotions to support their wellbeing and pursuit of long-term goals. Specifically, it encapsulates the management of emotions and behaviours which may be disruptive and lead to negative outcomes. Two examples of this would be stress management and anger management (Cuncic, 2021).

Stress management consists of using specific strategies, techniques or programs (e.g. relaxation training, breathing techniques, anticipation of stress reactions) to deal with stress-inducing situations as well as the state of being stressed (American Psychological Association). Anger management similarly involves recognising triggers which instigate anger and learning methods to remain calm and manage situations in a non-disruptive manner (Gupta, 2021).

Stress and anger management enable an individual to apply everyday practices to mitigate the negative effects of stress and anger to improve mood, motivation and daily functioning. Stress might occur in different aspects of life, such as academic pressures at school or adverse circumstances at home. Everyone experiences some degree of stress which would benefit from positive management, and the more severe the stress experienced the more imperative it is to be managed effectively. Stress may directly impact one's anger management as well (Scott, 2020).

Self-regulation can involve practical interventions which help limit an individual's pressure such as organisational techniques, exercising and journaling to try and manage any intrusive thoughts. It may also relate to self-calming and relaxation techniques to mediate the impact of stress and anger on the mind and body (Cuncic, 2021).

▶ **Why is it important to promote self-regulation skills amongst secondary school students?**

As was previously mentioned, research has shown that major changes in brain architecture take place during adolescence. With regards to self- regulation, during early and mid-adolescence (i.e. 11-15 years), the brain systems that seek rewards and process emotions are more developed compared to the cognitive control systems that are responsible for good decision-making and future planning. As a result, self-regulation skills are

developmentally "out of balance" at this age. It is important that self-regulation skills are promoted during this developmental period as poor decisions made by secondary school students can have long-term negative consequences (Murray & Rosanbalm, 2017).

Feelings of stress and anger that are not adequately managed or addressed, could lead to the experience of mental health issues and subsequent relationships problems. If a student is struggling to cope with these emotions, this could have detrimental impacts on their learning and on relationships with peers, which in turn will exacerbate the issue further. In more extreme circumstances, the impact could have significant long-term implications and can increase the possibility of early school leaving.

The ability to utilise self-calming techniques is important not only for mental health, but also for physical health. Stress has many physiological implications which can contribute to health complications if left unmanaged, such as increased blood pressure, headaches and gastrointestinal issues. It can also cause disruptions with sleep which in itself can contribute to further health complications and impact a student's ability to focus at school (American Psychological Association).

Students who are not taught adaptive coping mechanisms for managing stress and anger may develop maladaptive behaviours as methods of self-soothing and self-medicating. For example, they may engage in risk-taking or violent behaviours and use substances such as drugs and alcohol. This can lead to greater social issues and health complications, and it can be harder to change these unhealthy coping behaviours the longer they persist. Therefore, it is critical to teach young, developing students' positive mechanisms for coping instead.

▶ **How can teachers promote self-regulation through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

Self-regulation is just as integral for teachers as it is for students. Employing positive methods of self-regulation and managing stress and anger will help mitigate the challenging aspects of the profession and help to protect educators against burnout and secondary stress and trauma when applicable. Classroom teachers can use self-regulation techniques themselves and model these for their students in some of the following ways:

- Being organised and methodical in their approach to their work and demonstrating how being prepared can make it easier to manage work demands in terms of deadlines, laying out work, etc.
- Facilitating conversations about stress to encourage talking about issues and normalise experiences of stress – utilise appropriate self-disclosure and own coping strategies.
- Start mornings with a grounding or mindfulness exercise to bring oneself in contact with the present moment so as to encourage calm at both an individual and classroom level.
- Encouraging regular self-care both in and outside of school.
- Being responsive and empathetic to displays of stress and anger in students and colleagues.
- Work on organisation techniques with students who are getting behind or presenting as stressed and disorganised.
- Provide time for students to write in their planners and organise their schoolwork.
- Find a mentor or friend to confide in and avoid taking stress and anger into the classroom.
- Don't compare students, or groups of students, to each other and recognise their individual strengths and needs.
- Provide safe spaces to communicate anger in a healthy way.
- Try to incorporate positive points into feedback and reviews.
- Using teaching opportunities in respective subjects to underline stress-and management (see next section).

Case Study 1- Stress Management:

The teacher noticed that Katie seems to be very stressed during the lesson. She is struggling with her work and is not engaging with her friends as she usually would. Her body language and expression shows she is stressed and anxious. The rest of the class also seems quite unsettled with a lot of tense energy. The teacher asks the class to stop their work for five minutes, to sit comfortably and quietly and do a calming breathing exercise together. She asks them to sit in a comfortable position with one hand on their stomach and to take a slow deep breath in, so that their hand is pushed out. They are instructed to hold this for three seconds before slowly breathing out again. They repeat this several times. Afterwards, the teacher asks the class how they feel and why they

think she asked them to do this exercise. She gives a brief explanation of why the breathing exercise can be helpful when one is feeling stressed, and that sometimes the best thing to do when one is struggling with work, is to stop for a few minutes and make the body feel calm and grounded.

Case Study 2- Anger Management:

While supervising break-time, a teacher noticed Mark starting to shout at Joe and then pushing him. The teacher separated the boys and then took Mark aside to talk to him. When she asked him what happened Mark started to shout that Joe had been teasing him all morning and he had had enough. The teacher labelled Mark's emotion telling him that he seemed really angry, pausing for a few seconds to give him time to process what she just said. After a few moments, Mark calmed down and told his teacher that he was angry because Joe was constantly teasing him. The teacher empathised with Mark and said that his feelings of anger were understandable. She then explained that there are more acceptable ways he can deal with his frustration, because violence will only result in negative consequences. Mark and his teacher then discussed better ways he could have handled the situation instead of pushing Joe, such as ignoring and walking away, practising a calming exercise, joining other friends, talking with the teachers, etc.

▶ **How can teachers infuse self-regulation in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Languages:

- Read literature in which characters experience stressful events and facilitate class discussions about how they might effectively deal with their stress and what the outcomes might be.
- Collaboratively create a descriptive emotions wheel which provides vocabulary for different emotions experienced and explores emotions which may be related to stress.
- Identify displays of anger by characters in the literature and facilitate discussions on how the emotion could be managed more effectively

History:

- Explore historical stressful events and ask students to produce diary entries as a person experiencing that event, including a plan of how they might cope with the situation.
- Look at how historical leaders have effectively dealt with high-pressured situations and analyse their strategies.

Social Studies/Citizenship:

- Arrange group discussions about how to recognise signs of stress in ourselves and in others and how we might ask others for help / provide support in such situations.
- Create mood boards to share self-care suggestions with the class.
- Use journaling prompts to ask students to write about how they feel about certain situations and how they might deal with challenging or frustrating situations.
- Use gratitude journaling prompts to encourage a focus on positive aspects of life.
- Educate about social media's lack of reality and brainstorm alternative activities to limit social media time.

Maths and Science:

- Discuss the importance of looking after health, i.e. healthy eating, appropriate amount of sleep, physical exercise, and brainstorm why these health habits are important for overall well being.
- Consider 'stress' in other organisms, e.g. plants, and what helps them become healthier.
- Develop data about levels of stress amongst teenagers and plot on graphs how the levels of stress decrease following certain interventions.

Art:

- Ask students to produce pieces of art which represent different mental states – i.e. excited, stressed, angry, then ask them to discuss the differences between the pieces and what they represent.
- Ask students to choose a piece of music which helps them when they are feeling stressed or angry and share 20 seconds of this with the class – this can be developed to make up a dance / movement to the music, etc.
- Ask students to draw a popular character (eg. the Simpsons) and colour it in according to how they feel physically and mentally and provide a colour key.

Other (eg ICT, Physical Education,...):

- Sports and physical exercise can be effective in reducing stress. Plan fun, energised activities, such as dodgeball, and follow up with a discussion about why this can target stress and anger.
- Use computers to generate illustrations of how they feel when they're stressed and what they do to feel better.
- Play a game of dancing to music and having to freeze when the music stops.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote stress management in the classroom**

Mindfulness Body Scan

Utilise a quiet and comfortable space where the students can sit and engage in a 15/20-minute mindfulness activity. Guide the students to engage in calm, slow breathing. Recognise distractions and gently guide students back to focusing on their breathing and on their bodies.

Gently guide the students through a whole-body scan whilst engaging in deep, slow breathing. Encourage them to reposition to more comfortable positions when necessary and to stretch / move parts of their body when they observe particular tension and stress. At the end of the scan encourage them to slowly open their eyes and ease back into engagement with others, and to drink some water if required.

This activity supports students in becoming aware of tension in their body and recognising the relationship between psychological and physical stress. Encouragement to engage in this activity themselves regularly can help to reduce the impact of stress and promote brain activity and better attention. You may record your instructions with soft background music or make use of an appropriate exercise from Youtube.

Sample of script can be found here: https://www.mindfulschools.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Practice-Script-for-Teens-Body-Scan.pdf

Savouring Exercises

Ask students to reflect on activities they like to do when they're not at school or when they're on holiday. Ask them to write short passages about these activities and why they enjoy them. They can draw pictures or diagrams to accompany their passages. Ask them to feed back their passages to the class to share ideas for relaxing, enjoyable activities. Encourage them to make time for these activities regularly, when appropriate and reflect

on the importance of self-care. Encourage listening skills whilst students are sharing with the class.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use manage anger in the classroom[4]**

Anger Log

Following an episode of anger, ask the student to take a few moments to write down their experience. This practice will help them identify patterns, warning signs, and triggers, while also helping them to organise their thoughts and work through problems. Ask them to think about and answer the following questions in their log:

● What was happening before the anger episode? How were you feeling, what was on your mind? Were you hungry, tired, or stressed?

● Describe the facts of what happened. What triggered your anger? How did you react? Did your reaction change as the event continued to unfold?

● What were your feelings and thoughts during the anger episode? Now that you've calmed down, do you see anything differently compared to when you were in the heat of the moment?

The Anger Thermometer

This activity is similar to the 'Emotional Thermometer' activity mentioned in one of the previous chapters. Although an emotional thermometer is used to measure an array of emotions in order to gauge what students are feeling, this activity focuses specifically on anger. In the activity the teachers draw a large thermometer starting from zero up to 100 and ask the students to do the same. The teacher then instructs (and models) the students to colour the thermometer starting at green, to yellow, orange and red at 100. At each 10-point interval add new affective states related to anger, e.g. 0 = totally relaxed, 10 = feeling tense, 20 = minimal anger, and so on to 100 = highest levels of anger ever experienced. The teacher then instructs the students to follow the steps below:

1. Identify types of event / situations in which you remember having experienced at various points of the thermometer
2. Map out points of green, yellow and red on your typical day at work / school
3. Choose a recent "yellow experience" and think about your related thoughts and behaviours because of this event.

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[4] Activities adapted from www.therapistaid.com

4. Share and discuss as a class potential coping strategies to regulate anger at a 'yellow' to avoid this escalating to a 'red'.

This activity helps encourage self-monitoring, self-regulation and reflection on thoughts, feelings, behaviours and coping strategies related to anger-provoking events. It can also be used as a stress management tool to help students identify their stress symptoms and warning signs and how these change as stress and anxiety escalates.

Website: https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-guide/anger-thermometer-guide

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6. DEALING WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Feelings prepare the body to meet a situation with a specific response.

Alfred Adler

▶ **What are emotions?**

When thinking of emotions, positive and negative emotions come to mind. According to Dr. Paul Rasmussen all emotions are positive (Matei, 2016) as they provide us with energy to take action because of this emotion. Rudolf Dreikurs calls emotions "the steam in the engines" that move us in the direction we need to adjust/adapt.

Instead of looking at emotions as something we would like to have (when it feels good) or when we do not like to have (when the feeling is not-so-good), a much safer, useful and meaningful way would be that emotions are the fuel to our action/lack of actions. Therefore, better understanding of emotions and their purpose and use could lead to coping in a more useful way. The three most critical roles all emotions have are:

1. To provide us the information of "how is life going for me?" (people tend to evaluate their lives depending on their current status of emotions). Each emotion has its own adaptive purpose: sadness – reminds us of loss; anger – discontent that comes up in the face of the entitlement: we want to remove something which is our way to something we feel we are entitled to; depression – we use to retreat;

2. Provide a way of communicating nonverbally our needs and states to others;

3. "Fuel" for our action.

Most of all, the feedback we receive from expressing/communicating our emotions is what we take into consideration. What is the purpose of:

● Anxiety – when we perceive psychological threat to our integrity. (often there is no real and definite threat when anxiety develops)

● Fear - when we see something that is a threat to our physiological integrity, and it leads us to protect ourselves of this definite threat.

● Guilt - when we violate a relationship rule, and as a result of doing so we feel guilt to justify our action, (I am not a "bad" person).

- Embarrassment - when we do something that violates a social rule (saying a bad joke, no one laughs at). Most often, people recover from embarrassment. Often people might develop avoidance from relationships due to the fear and anxiety they have from being embarrassed; (I don't like embarrassment – so I don't go out)

- Shame - you think that there is something about you that other people will have objections to: will think of me as a lesser person and will reject me; we believe that there is something inheritably wrong with us and if people were to find out about it that would make us unacceptable. Keeping shame hidden results in a lot of anxiety.

"All people enter life with some level of inferiority and everyone has something they feel less than and that they struggle with. Sometimes people focus too much on their shame and allow it to limit their engagement with the rest of the world. This is when shame becomes sadness." P. Rasmussen

▶ **Why is it important to promote courage amongst secondary school students?**
(Link to / role for the adolescent development)

Most of the emotions which are seen as negative are quite normal for every person. Feeling less than others is a starting point which leads to either the desire to develop and adapt, or stabilises the inability to do so. Normalising the experience of such emotions is crucial. One of the ways to do so is by mastering the skill of modelling mistakes and recovering from them. In order to do so courage is needed. Without courage, one could not face life's tasks and challenges. We move in life not because of lack of fear but because of courage. People are happy and successful, despite fear, anxiety, guilt, embarrassment or shame, not because they do not experience them. Keeping in mind the great extent to which being accepted and part of the group is important to adolescents it is important to promote courage to be imperfect and the courage to make mistakes.

Everyone is afraid/feels anxious about being embarrassed, not many people get it right from the first time.

▶ **How can teachers promote courage through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

One of the most important parts of teaching students to manage their own emotions is by being a good example of how that is done. It is highly recommended that anyone working with students first looks at their own personal needs and abilities to model behaviour that would like to be "taught" to students. The main goal is to show students that there are no good or bad emotions but there is an appropriate/ inappropriate way of expressing them.

Every student/teacher should feel safe to express their emotions in an acceptable way. That might or might not lead to change in the situation or the circumstances, but it would make them feel heard and understood.

One way to teach students how to express their emotions in an acceptable way in a step by step way would be:

1. First noticing and naming the emotion (I see you are mad about…).
2. Validating the emotion (You have the right to feel mad)- we do not judge the motion- good or bad, it is what it is;
3. Making a suggestion about "how to handle" the emotion (What might be an appropriate way to address the issue and what do you need to make it better by you?).

When working with adolescents it is important to help them move from the "black and white" dichotomy- from being right or wrong, from reacting or not reacting to the possibility of "the middle" and practice using the following statements "I know I have to react to this but I am really mad right now and I will need some time to get back to you". Being able to name, validate and express emotions in an acceptable way is one of the most important skills which paves the way to a more efficient and successful personal and interpersonal communication.

Another way to promote courage is through **the 80/20 ratio** (Schafer, 2019). When people are usually asked what percentage of their day has to go well for it to be considered a "good day", most people would go into the high numbers. Surprisingly, up to 80% of our day might go "wrong" and we will still have the experience of a "good day". On average only 20% of experienced moments are periods of joy in each day and that it turns out is enough to feel like the day is going well; 80% of the time we are dealing with emotions we do not like - anger, shame, embarrassment, fear, depression, this is the norm. That is the normal, that is being a human being – and that should not prevent us from experiencing life. Those emotions we experience 80% of the time are what moves us to adapt/adjust, and to deal with stress.

It also does not help that the 80% of 'wrong things' usually takes place in chunks, e.g. missing out on a fun activity, parents saying "no" to something you have already set your mind to, someone in your class made a bad comment about your new haircut, you found out the boy you like has a girlfriend. The other 20% of joy and happiness more often come

in single bits and pieces- moments. Being aware of the bits and pieces that make a difference in our day allows us to face the challenges and adapt/adjust.

> **Case study:**
>
> Sarah is a 12 year old student who has not felt well for the past week. She hasn't slept well, barely eaten, and is having a hard time breathing. She is usually a very good and responsible student. Sarah does not have many friends but she has at least one good friend.
>
> Sarah's teacher notices that Sarah is not being herself. She expresses her concern and listens attentively to what Sarah tells her. During their conversation, Sarah's teacher learns that Sarah's situation at home is not very good at the moment. Sarah shares that she feels criticised by her parents and as if "she does not exist".
>
> The teacher makes efforts to find out about Sarah's passions and dreams (stepping beyond the symptoms and problems). He then meets with the teachers who teach the subjects Sarah is interested in. Together they make a plan on how to get Sarah more involved so she feels seen, heard, capable and able to contribute in classes. The teacher also makes sure to greet Sarah each day as she arrives and talk (briefly) about a topic of her interest.
>
> Teachers cannot always change the family situation, the external factors in a child's life. But being a protective factor for developing resilience is something each teacher is fully capable of being.

▶ **How can teachers infuse courage to be imperfect and how to deal with negative emotions in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Teachers can infuse courage to be imperfect by modelling "making mistakes" and learning from them. This can be applied in the teaching of different academic subjects. It is also important that the teacher has clear expectations about lessons, grades, behaviour and sticks to it.

Languages:

● Allow students to have activities which are related to their interest and connect them to the language they learn: If a student enjoys music but is not very good at the language, allow them to present information about their favourite music/artists/style. If it is an artist- have they present everything they can find about the artist – about their life, career, achievements; Allow students to work with tutors (peer learning).

Social Studies/Citizenship:

● When introducing topics, put emphasis on the way certain actions can affect people's feelings and coping skills. For example, when learning about voting procedure in a certain country – allowing a discussion about how do people feel about voting and why might some people refuse to vote and others want to but are not able. What are the challenges the systems might have created that make people feel as if their vote doesn't matter? What could be done about it?

Maths and Science:

● Those are difficult subjects for many students and it is important to keep an eye on the general "temperature" of the mood while teaching more abstract matters. Use a "mood thermometer" to check if students are ok, confused, frustrated when presenting a certain theory/idea. By all means, if most students feel frustrated that does not mean you will have to stop teaching the subject but it will provide them a way of being heard and allows you the opportunity to stop reconnecting with the group and try again. Students learn only when they feel safe and capable.

Art and music:

● When presenting a piece of art/ music, allow students to learn about the feelings the author was experiencing when creating the work (some of the greatest art is created during the darkest times, hardships their authors are going through); ask about the impact the work has on student's emotions and what does that mean to them?

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote courage and dealing with emotions in the classroom**

Ways of Showing Respect

Students are asked to write 2-4 ways they show respect (towards their teachers/ peers) before class, during class. and after class. After a few minutes of working individually the students are then divided into small groups, and asked to combine their answers into one list. Each group will then share their list with the whole class and all ideas will be put together. Students can then (or on another occasion) do the same exercise only this time discussing how the teacher can show respect towards the student, before, during and after class.

Note: this activity can also be carried out with teachers as part of an in-service training course on showing respect towards students.

Going Beyond the Problem

One of the important ways to encourage young people to take responsibility of the ability to manage feelings is by learning more about them in a holistic approach and to encourage their strengths:

Ask students to find out 3, 4 or 5 words that describe them biologically, socially, psychologically, spiritually (their values, things that are important for them). Going beyond the presenting problem provides an opportunity for the child to look forward to being able to manage the current situation.

Make Cards or Gifts

Use small paper cards, which include positive self-talk for the student "You are stronger than you think", "Thank you for being such a great singer", etc. Student can carry the cards in their book, back-pocket etc. (sometimes those could be the only positive words they hear in their days).

Find Means to Connect with the Student

Make a point to be seen and to interact (be seen in the hallway, great at the door upon arrival) with the students; talk about things that are important for the student. One way to do this is to talk with teachers of the subject the student is finding challenging, to create a common understanding that the student needs to feel seen, heard, cared for without being put in the spotlight (Wingett, 2021).

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7. RESILIENCE

▶ **What is resilience?**

Resilience refers to a person's capacity to overcome adversity and recover from difficulties experienced whilst continuing to grow and thrive. It is an important part of a person's wellbeing and critical for being able to adapt to challenges in life. Being resilient doesn't refer to an absence of the experience of stress or suffering, but means that an individual has the psychological tools and contextual support to work through challenges and setbacks. Resilience is a dynamic process that changes over time and in different situations, depending on and specific to the context in the person's life (American, Psychological Association). Resilience isn't a trait that's set in stone, it is a quality that should be cultivated—like strength or kindness.

The level of resilience in an individual largely depends on risk and protective factors. Risk factors are stressful life events, such as experience of violence, poverty, sickness, family breakdown, loss, or other factors that could increase the likelihood of the onset of a problem or maintain the problem. Protective factors, on the other hand, help young people to resist or to balance the risks to which they are exposed to. Perseverance, self-efficacy, self- awareness and coherence are some internal protective factors related to resilience. External protective factors include, quality interactions with family, teacher and school support, and good interpersonal relationships (Dias & Cadime, 2017).

Overall, resilience theory focuses on a strengths-based approach to developing preventive interventions because the emphasis is on enhancing promotive and protective factors as opposed to reducing exposure to risk or ameliorating deficits in young people (Zimmerman, 2013).

▶ **Why is it important to promote resilience skills amongst secondary school students?**

Schools have a very important role in the lives of students as they are a major context for cognitive and socio- emotional development. It is important to promote resilience among secondary school students because they experience considerable change and growth which causes various challenges during this transitional period. Students' resilience and factors such as self-concept, flexibility, peer support, support from adults, will impact how they will react to these challenges (e.g. bullying, issues on social media, peer pressure, and academic stress).

The use of positive coping strategies that promote well-being in times of stress, risk and adversity is key to promoting resilience. Coping strategies include a large set of responses and skills to manage external demands seen as challenging or conditions perceived as adverse. Therefore, by teaching students how to make productive and healthy choices, and showing them different methods of coping and encouraging them to use them can have positive outcomes on their health and wellbeing. Resilience also develops within relationships that promote feelings of self-efficacy, security, and hopefulness. This requires classrooms with caring relationships, meaningful tasks, and high expectations for learning, where student responses are seen as important and where students participate in setting goals and managing their learning. When students develop a sense of agency, they become more confident in their ideas, their understanding of challenges and how to address those challenges (The education hub, n.d.)

► **How can teachers promote resilience through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

Resilience is an important attribute in the role of a teacher, as they face various challenges in the profession and may have to support their students in overcoming their own challenges. Classroom teachers can utilise these skills in their own work and can demonstrate these skills in their interactions with students using some of the following examples

- Identify students' strengths and draw upon these whenever relevant during their interactions.

- Encourage students' voice and autonomy by involving them in planning and development of classroom rules.

- Provide a safe and inclusive environment in which students are encouraged to express themselves and be heard.

- Foster positive working relationships in the classroom by using partner and group work.

- Establish positive and caring relationships with students

- Have supportive and collegial relationships with colleagues.

- Set attainable goals with the students, both individually and as a class, and recognise/ reward students when these goals are achieved.

- Present a positive attitude towards change and highlight the positive aspects of life changes and transitions.

- Encourage a positive self-view on challenges the students have previously overcome and their capabilities.

- Nominate different students daily to help with class activities, e.g. handing out sheets, collecting in books.

- Start or end sessions asking students to tell you something they are grateful for on that particular day or week.

- Using teaching opportunities in their respective subjects to underline resilience (see next section).

Case Study 1- Promoting self-efficacy:

Simon is very disheartened after receiving a low grade on an assignment. He tells the teacher that he just isn't able to do this topic and there is no point in him redoing the assignment because he will only fail. The teacher talks to Simon about other topics he has found difficult in the past but managed to improve in. He then asks Simon to give examples of times he has managed to improve in a subject. He encourages Simon to reflect on how he has managed to improve his grades in some difficult topics and what strengths Simon has shown which made this possible. Simon reflects on his positive attributes and strengths and how he may be able to improve enough in this topic to pass the assignment. In a more positive frame of mind, Simon and his teacher together outline a clear study plan together to help Simon understand the topic and retake the assignment. The plan is clear, and the goals are attainable, as a result Simon feels more confident than before. The exchange also helped strengthen the relationship between Simon and his teacher.

Case Study 2 - Problem Solving:

Sarah has not submitted the last three homework assignments for her English class. At the end of the lesson, her teacher asked her to stay back to talk to her. Sarah's teacher told her that she noticed that she had not been submitting her homework and asked her what was causing this problem. Sarah explained that she had to take care of her younger siblings more ever since her mother returned to work. By the time her mother would return

from work, Sarah would be too tired to do her homework. Together Sarah and her teacher discussed ways Sarah could address this problem. At first they discussed a range of solutions, including funny ones. Eventually Sarah and her teacher had about three to four possible solutions. They wrote them down and discussed the potential pros and cons of implementing each solution. Sarah then rated the solutions from 0 (not good) to 10 (very good), before settling on a solution (e.g. get a homework extension so she can work on her homework over the weekend). Once she agreed on a solution, Sarah and her teacher discussed and planned how she could execute the solution. Sarah wrote the plan down and then agreed on a date to discuss whether the solution was working.

▶ **How can teachers infuse resilience and problem solving in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Languages:

- Read literature in which characters have overcome adversity and evaluate the strategies they have used to deal with challenging circumstances.
- Develop a 'positive vocabulary' asking students to find synonyms for positive descriptors or qualities.
- Read a story and ask students to write three strengths about each of the characters, even those less likeable.

History:

- Group projects on communities / groups / religions who have historically experienced adversity and examining how they have progressed since that time.
- Produce posters in pairs on the topic of change and highlight how change can be positive and has benefited people historically.
- Create mood boards or reports about historical 'bullies' and historical 'heroes' and discuss their actions as a class and how the heroes achieved great things.
- If your students are learning about a historical event that did not turn out favourably, have them brainstorm ways that the event could have resulted in a different, more positive outcome.

Social Studies/Citizenship:

- Ask the students to get into partners and present to the class one strength they acknowledge in their partner.
- Create presentations about social issues currently being experienced and what strengths will help these groups to prosper;
- Do a purposeful exercise – ask questions such as 'Who are you?' and 'Who do you help?' 'When do you feel your best?' and encourage reflection on answers.

Maths and Science:

- Using fictional characters and stories, score their resilience and plot the findings on a graph.
- Ask students to share a maths problem they are finding difficult / have got wrong on a test and ask the class to help in solving it and explaining it together.
- Study the physiological impacts of stress on the body and physiological helpful effects of certain coping mechanisms, e.g. mindfulness.

Art:

- Make a collage of photos that represent your strengths, growth and successes.
- Decorate face masks and ask students to paint them in a way that represents being strong and courageous, follow up with a discussion about one area they wish to be stronger, more courageous in.
- In small groups each student draws a colourful squiggle on a piece of paper, then the next student adds to it collaboratively until the paper is full.
- Create a large piece of paper (by sticking paper together) and ask each student to decoratively write on it how they are feeling about themselves / their biggest strength / what they are proud of, etc.

Other (eg ICT, Physical Education,...):

- Do some core strength and balancing activities which require physical resilience;
- Play computer generated games which require concentration and persistence, e.g. memorising pairs, finding the correct route in a maze, etc.
- Team building games which require collaboration, e.g. passing a smile in a circle, using blocks to build a bridge from one side to another whilst standing on them, etc.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote students' strengths and resilience**

The Feelings Round

Provide students with a detailed vocabulary of emotions and descriptors categorised as 'good' or 'bad' and ask them to use this vocabulary to answer various questions, such as 'How are you feeling?', 'How are you feeling physically?', 'Do you feel good or bad emotionally'. Encourage reflection on their responses and whether they are finding the questions hard or easy to answer, and why. If they are feeling bad, ask them what actions they usually take to move them into the good column. Is it possible to take those actions today? Reflection can be done alone if they don't want to speak to the class or the activity can be done in small groups and they can discuss amongst themselves.

Character Strengths

Provide the students with a worksheet of the 24 character strengths (https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths). Describe and explain each character strength and then ask the students to circle all of the strengths that they associate with themselves. Ask them to present one of the strengths and a situation in which that strength is useful. They are also asked to complete this task about a peer.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote problem solving**

The Worry Period

Set aside some minutes in the class to ask students to share things that are worrying them or are on their minds. Use the discussion to make distinctions between solvable and unsolvable worries / productive and unproductive worries and encourage the students to identify the difference between the two. Look out for and point out cognitive distortions in these discussions, such as all-or-nothing statements, catastrophising (things are really bad), or overgeneralization (I am hopeless in everything). Help the students identify these and discuss ways of thinking differently and more productively about the problems. Finally, as a group if appropriate, discuss methods which have proved previously effective to deal with similar issues and discuss times when these worries have occurred before but everything has worked out in the end. Discuss strengths the students have which will support them in getting through their difficulties.

The Problem Solving Box[5]

Prepare and decorate a medium-sized box with a slot in the top. Label the box "The Problem-Solving Box." Invite students to anonymously write down/ type and submit any issue or problem they might be having at home or at school that they can't seem to solve on their own (e.g. constantly fighting with parents/ struggling to finish homework on time, bullying, not having friends, not knowing what to do in the future). Once or twice a week, have a student pick one of the items from the box and read it to the class. Then have everyone work as a group to figure out the ideal way the student can address the issue and hopefully solve it.

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[5] Activiti adapted from https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/5-problem-solving-activities-for-the-classroom/

8. WELLBEING

▶ **What is wellbeing?**

Martin Seligman (2011) defines five main areas of life which bring pure and real happiness to people. People are not happy when they have more, spend more, eat more, look better, possess more. What really makes people happy is: positive emotion, engagement (flow), positive relationships, meaning (purpose), and achievement. One of the ways anyone can achieve such wellbeing is by becoming aware of their personal strengths and utilising them in their everyday life.

▶ **Why is it important to promote wellbeing amongst secondary school students?**

Adolescence is one of the most important and most detrimental stages of defining one's personality. According to Erikson (1968), the main developmental tasks for adolescence includes: solving the identity versus role confusion crisis, constructing their own unique sense of identity, as well as and finding the social environment where they can belong to and create meaningful relationships with other people (Chen et al., 2007). Both, a formed sense of identity and satisfying relationships with other people (Dumas et al., 2009; Walsh et al., 2010) are associated with improved mental health and psychological well-being in adolescents.

Some of the ways to teach and promote wellbeing is providing skills and tools for adolescents to actively take part in their own development. Living in a sustainable and healthy way is not only good for the body, but it ensures the successful transition from one stage of life to the next one, making the best out of it.

▶ **How can teachers promote wellbeing through their own attitudes, behavior, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

Talking about wellbeing is not enough. Teachers and adults in general have to model the behaviour they would like to instil in their students. Some of the ways wellbeing can be promoted is by having enough sleep, staying physically active and developing the healthy attitudes and expectations of life. Research shows that adolescents prefer working later in the day compared to working in the morning (Goldstein et al., 2007). One way wellbeing can be promoted in the classroom can be by adjusting the school curriculum so that students have less demanding classes early in the morning.

Quite often it might look like happiness is a matter of genes. If your parents were happy people, then you are a happy person. Research shows that 50% of genetic predisposition

is responsible for our ability to experience happiness. What about the other 50%?! People often believe that winning the lottery, getting good marks, getting in the top university, looking great, or/and being liked by the popular crowd will bring about happiness. Research in wellbeing shows that such conditions only provide about 10 % of our ability to experience wellbeing (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005).

According to Sonja Lyubomirski (2007) the key is in the 40% that is left- that is all our attitude toward life and what happens to us. Knowing about these cognitive biases that people generally assume for true is quite powerful. So it is not getting that A that would make you a happy person, but having the ability to learn from getting a C – what can I do to do better next time?

Teachers and adults have to work and help with promoting and modelling more sustainable and healthy attitudes toward goals, mistakes, success and competition. Cooperation should come before competition (not instead of).

Case study:

When teaching geography of Bulgaria, Mrs. Dineva faced a major problem. The students (all boys class ages 12-13 in a school with low attendance, high dropout rates, very low academic scores on evaluation exams) seem to be highly unmotivated to learn anything related to the planned lessons. Most of the teachers at the school didn't believe that the students had any qualities that were worth noting. They were not interested in the lives of the students. The same can be said for the students who were not interested in being engaged in the school work or/and the lessons and/or the teachers. Mrs. Dineva was somewhat different to her colleagues. She loved her subject and she was passionate about it. She saw geography in everything she did. As a result, she tried different ways of presenting the material – geographic regions with the specific characteristics of each part of the country. In the end, this methodology of teaching geography made all the difference for the boys. This is because she first took the time to find out what the students were most interested in: some were much into football, others were into music.

Then, instead of teaching them about the different geographic parts of the country she set some specific tasks for each boy related to what they liked. For instance she asked them to find out more about the birthplace of their favourite Bulgarian footballer/singer using their smartphone (google). Were they born in a village, small town, big town or a city? Where is that place located? What can you find out about that place- can you find some pictures? What can you see in those pictures? Is it in the mountains, is it in the valley, are there any

rivers or seas nearby? What kind of trees and plants are in the pictures of that place?

In the next few classes the boys presented the information in informal discussion and as they were presenting the places, the teacher placed pins on the map –showing them where exactly those places were on the map. By the time each boy presented their favourite sport or music persons' birth place, they were able to cover each major area in Bulgaria. As an added benefit they were able to find out more about their classmates' interests.

▶ **How can teachers infuse wellbeing in the teaching of academic subjects?**

This can be done by making sure enough activities are provided related to body, mind and values. Teachers can also have students change seats, work in groups, and change the environment. This can be done in most academic subjects as a way to provide different perspectives and add movement.

Being aware of students' personal strengths is a key to finding means to reach each student. In order to keep authentic levels of motivation in each subject, students have to work on tasks which are both challenging (but not impossible) and interesting (not repetitive/or boring). Teachers must ensure that students have enough skills to take on the tasks and yet it is not too easy for them to get bored. Taking time to train is crucial to maintain the levels of motivation. Training and developing new skills is time consuming but is crucial for the adolescents. According to leading theories (Reeve, 2002) on well-being, in order to experience optimal well-being, the basic psychological needs of relatedness, autonomy and competence must be met. Finding activities which allow students to feel a part of a group, capable and having choice is a good start. Teachers must be aware of the developmental milestones and offer choice and a variety of options, steps which could be graded in the process (not necessarily aim for perfect score but maintain high levels of satisfaction in the process itself).

With regard to the teaching of academic subjects, a strategy all subject teachers can implement is to ask students to read an article/watch a movie/learn about a theory/ on the topic of the lesson (you could also allow students to read in class if that is applicable) prior to the lesson. At the beginning of the lesson, students will be asked to list 3,4 or 5 things that were interesting/important to them. Once all students are ready from their lists, the students are divided into small groups and instructed to take turns in sharing. One person in the group will write down what is shared in order to be able to report their list of

important/interesting things, once they return to the whole group. Each person should be given no more than 2 min to share in the groups. After a few minutes the small groups return to the whole class and report to the rest of the class. Each group must share the lists they have created while the other groups listen. The groups that follow must only share the things from their list that were not shared yet (Wingett, 2020).

The following examples are related to specific subjects:

Languages:

● Ask students to find out about ways people in the specific country (region of the world – depending on the language being studied) stay healthy and do self-care. What are the words they use to provide comfort, support; expressions to ask for help, assistance?

History:

● Chose a history event and ask students to find out the strengths in the main people involved with the event. How are those strengths developed (nature vs nurture), how are they expressed, how are they being used for the overall wellbeing of society?

Social Studies/Citizenship:

● Learning about the benefits from being a part of a group and how to contribute to the wellbeing of others. Make sure you provide enough examples of ways people in your community/country/region take care of those in need and allow students to volunteer and use their own strengths to contribute.

Maths and Science:

● Any example from science which could be used to present the idea about being strong, keeping charged up (not letting yourself run out of energy). For example – the energy charging our mobile phones provides for a certain period of time (there is no such thing as an everlasting phone battery for now). The phone cannot work more than what the energy in the battery allows it to do. When the phone runs out of energy, it needs to be charged. Not only it needs to be charged, but it also will need some time to start working again. This is a great example of the way students may be introduced to the idea of self-care and recharging energy.

Art and music:

● Being able to appreciate art and music allows the student to learn more about creativity and strengths. When presenting a piece of work make sure to include information regarding the wellbeing status of the author/painter/musician.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote wellbeing in the classroom**

Physical activities

Provide at least 25 minutes of active movement (does not have to be a workout or running, walking for 25 minutes is enough).

Mindfulness practises

Have students practice being able to sit in the moment- here and now, concentrating on the breathing, being able to allow the mind to wander freely without worrying about the past or being anxious about the future.

Savouring moments of joy

Taking the time to stop and enjoy a beautiful moment, take a "mental picture of it". Share it with a friend.

▶ **Resources**

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SOCIAL COMPETENCES

9. DEVELOPING EMPATHY

▶ **What is empathy?**

Empathy can be defined as an emotional state that is triggered by another person's emotional situation or state, where one feels what the other person is feeling, or would normally be expected to feel in their situation (Hoffman, 2008). There is a distinction within the structure of empathy between the affective / emotional aspects of empathy and the cognitive aspects of empathy. Affective empathy is often understood as an affective state (e.g. the experience of pain, emotion or reward), caused by sharing the state of another individual through the imagination or observation of their experience (Singer & Lamm, 2009). Cognitive aspects of empathy, on the other hand, refers to theory of mind/perspective taking. When these processes are combined, one is able to understand another person's emotions, desires and beliefs (Firth & Frith, 2006).

▶ **Why is it important to promote empathic skills amongst secondary school students?**

Numerous studies have emphasised the importance of empathy in increasing both interpersonal and mental health outcomes (Chow et al., 2013). Cognitive and affective empathy are related to adolescents' interpersonal functioning, inhibiting aggressive and externalising problem behaviours, and promoting prosocial behaviours (Van der Graaff et al., 2018, Laible et al., 2004).

During the period of adolescence, students will typically experience shifts in their relationship with their parents / caregivers from dependency to autonomy and increasing responsibilities in the family and community. Adolescents will also be exposed to new social situations and explore new social roles and experience their first intimate partnerships (Blakemore & Mills, 2014). It is important to promote empathic skills amongst secondary school students because it might help in developing (unsupervised) extrafamilial peer relationships, maintaining friendships, and building strong communities (Allemand, Steiger, & Fend, 2015).

Empathy is a particularly critical skill in young people's development as it can help to mitigate against some key issues experienced amongst such age groups. It can help students to anticipate and understand the actions of others, and it can help them to be able to build supportive relationships. It can also reduce instances of conflict whilst promoting

teamwork and a sense of belonging within a group. Empathy helps in overcoming a tendency towards egocentric behaviours by considering others' feelings and experiences. Through considering and understanding perspectives which differ from their own, young people can become more inclusive and tolerant of others. Similarly, it can help prevent bullying behaviours and help to foster positive interpersonal, caring relationships. Furthermore, empathic skills can support young people to become more aware of their own emotions to not only recognise them but learn the language to identify and communicate them to others when needed.

Overall empathy supports more positive interactions which benefit individuals, the wider environment and the school as a whole. With an improved attitude towards themselves and others, improved classroom behaviour and better socio-emotional skills, young people may experience improvements in their learning, relationships, behaviour and mental health.

▶ **How can teachers promote perspective taking and empathy through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

Empathy is an important resource for both teachers and students to learn and grow socially, emotionally and cognitively. Classroom teachers can cultivate empathy amongst students by developing and applying empathy themselves in their classroom relationships and practice. The classroom teacher may promote empathy by;

- Modelling empathy by active listening, and showing understanding and positive regard in all interactions with students and adults (colleagues, parents).
- Listening actively to the students and providing them with opportunities to express themselves.
- Discussing and consulting with students on the learning activities in the classroom, such as in class topics and lesson development.
- Organising cooperative group work during classroom activities and encouraging students to actively listen to each other, to seek to understand each other and to work together collaboratively.
- Involving students in developing and implementing classroom behaviour rules.
- Giving students the right to reply in incidents of behaviour problems in the classroom.
- Modelling inclusive behaviour in daily interactions, ensuring the students from all different backgrounds are treated fairly and equally.

- Supporting students in identifying things they have in common rather than differences between them, with a classroom focus on shared values and common interests.
- Providing supportive spaces for students to share differences and disagree respectfully.
- Using teaching opportunities in their respective subjects to underline empathy (see next section).

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Case Study 1

Lara recently moved to Malta with her family from Italy. Although she can speak and understand a little bit of English, she is not as fluent as her peers and still makes a lot of grammatical mistakes. Whenever she tries to talk in class, some of her peers make jokes about her accent or her 'bad English'. Lara would often spend time by herself to avoid having to talk to her peers in English. When her teacher realised what was happening, she decided to teach the class a lesson on perspective taking and informed the students that they were going to see what it was like to be in Lara's shoes for the day. This meant that they had to spend the rest of the lessons speaking only in Italian. After a few minutes, the class teacher then discussed with the class how the students felt when they couldn't express themselves in their first language. Together, they then discussed what could be done to improve the situation and help them feel more comfortable, and what they could do to include Lara more both in and out of the classroom.

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Case Study 2

During a lesson, Miguel refused to participate in a group activity, was rude to the teacher and walked off to sit alone in the corner. The teacher approached Miguel, who thought he was going to be reprimanded and turned further away from the teacher. Instead, the teacher sat down next to Miguel so they were on a similar level and asked if he could explain how he was feeling instead of closing himself off. The teacher was calm, listening, understanding, and non-judgemental. Miguel proceeded to explain that he was frustrated and disclosed that he had an argument with his friends. While Miguel was talking, the teacher listened actively to Miguel and allowed him the space and time to express how he was feeling and why. Once Miguel stopped talking, his teacher said that Miguel's situation with his friends must be quite frustrating and it seems like it made him feel angry and act out in the group activity. She then asked Miguel to consider other more

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appropriate ways he might be able to deal with those feelings in future and they discussed some solutions together.

▶ **How can teachers infuse perspective taking and empathy in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Languages:

- Use literature where the characters express empathy in their social interactions.
- Use 'book talk' format to delve deeper into a story on how the characters expressed their empathic reactions (or lack of it).
- Identify how different passages in books represent different emotions and discuss the importance of words and language used and the impact even small changes can have.
- Use specific prompts for students to frame their writing around, e.g. 'describe how you would feel if….'.
- Explore synonyms to widen emotional vocabulary.

History:

- Refer to examples from history where conflicts were resolved through empathy or turned into war because of lack of empathy.
- Find historical examples of situations created when people acted hastily and discuss how these situations could have been improved.
- Consider approaches to dealing with a historical event (e.g. women's suffrage) and list pros and cons for each approach then develop group presentations from findings.

Social Studies/Citizenship:

- Discuss issues related to prejudice and discrimination, bullying and violence resulting from lack of empathy and how empathy may help combat these negative behaviours.
- Discuss how empathy may promote harmonious relationships, collaboration, solidarity and diversity.
- Look at historical and current coalitions between organisations and countries and how these promote positive outcomes.
- Create posters relating to social action for specific causes or injustices.

- Collaboratively create rules of conduct on how to treat each other.
- Organise 'yes-no-maybe' activities which require students to take different perspectives on the same issue and present work for group feedback to make improvements.

Maths and Science:

- Give examples of and provide students with opportunities to explore how empathy can help to solve problems collaboratively.
- Emphasise the importance of listening skills in gathering information and making observations.
- Collecting and graphing data related to the feelings of students in the class.
- Encourage reading problems carefully and the checking of work.
- Promote care for environment activities such as growing plants, embellishing the classroom and school environment.

Art:

- Respond to pieces of art and discuss how they make them feel.
- Draw where people feel emotions using different colours to represent different feelings.
- 'Read' picture books and discuss the emotions they represent.
- Develop a 'feelings vocabulary' by sharing situations which make you feel 'happy', 'frustrated', and so on and review the list created and then relate these to world events, historical events, films, songs, etc.
- Create 'responsibility collages' with images related to acting responsibly.

Others (e.g. ICT, Physical Education,…)

- Check-in with students about how they are feeling emotionally and physically. Are they feeling physically energised but mentally stressed?
- During PE lessons (e.g. after a football match), have students discuss different things the other time might be thinking (e.g. the winning team vs. the losing team).

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote perspective taking in the classroom**

What do you see?[6]

Show the below image to the students and ask them to think about what they can see

Figure 4: What do you see image

If a student says they see a young woman, ask them to point it out. Do the same with a student who sees an old woman. Ask the students to then share how they feel about the students who saw the same thing as they did, and about the students who saw something different. Then ask them if there was ever a time when they saw something one way and another person saw it differently. Ask the students who replied yes how they felt about the person who saw things differently to them. Proceed to explain that it is possible for two people to look at the same picture and see two different things without either of them being wrong. Then discuss with the class how different perspectives can affect a conflict/ argument between people. Ask the students to consider how two people can proceed to figure out a resolution to a conflict if they both believe they are right about what they see.

The Ideal Friend

Ask the students to write down what are the key qualities of a good friend. Then ask them to reflect on the following questions:

- Which of these qualities do they show with their own friends?
- What do their friends appreciate in them?
- What other qualities do they think their friends may like to see more in them?

Ask the students to then discuss their replies in small groups and then as a big group.

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[6] Adapted from
https://creducation.net/resources/perception_checking/What_Do_You_See_Activity_OCDRCM.pdf

► **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote empathy in the classroom**

The Diversity Wheel

Present the Diversity Wheel (see figure below) from Johns Hopkins Medical Center to the students – this includes the following types of diversities: age, gender identity or expression, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, mental and physical ability, race and ethnicity, education, political beliefs, family, organizational role, language and communication skills, income, religion, appearance, and work experience.

Figure 5: Diversity Wheel[7]

Ask the students to individually identify their comfort zone of difference and the reasons for their choices and share with their peers in small groups. Then ask students to identify

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[7] Image taken from; Advancing the conversation: Next steps for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) health sciences librarianship - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Diversity-Wheel-as-used-at-Johns-Hopkins-University-12_fig1_320178286 [accessed 14 Feb, 2022]

the areas of difference they do not feel comfortable with, avoid and explain why they may feel unsure, confused, or uncomfortable. Ask them to share their replies in small groups and later discuss in a big group on how lack of empathy may lead to prejudice and discrimination against those who are perceived as being different from us, and how on the other hand empathy can help us to bridge these differences and promote understanding and harmonious relationships.

Little Miss Sunshine

Show this brief Youtube clip from the movie Little Miss Sunshine to the students (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJT_pAYaWB8). Ask the students to describe the way the little girl behaved and why it was so powerful. The students reflect and identify ways on how they could understand each other's feelings and respond empathically (e.g when we are sad, down, frustrated, disappointed, angry, stressed,…)

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10. APPRECIATING DIVERSITY

▶ **What is Diversity**

Most simply put diversity means a difference, a variety, encompassing ethnicity, ability/disability, gender, culture etc (Save the Children UK, 2005). Diversity refers to differing elements, facets, or qualities, or the state of being different. Diversity is appreciated when a person is accepted and respected independent of characteristics such as: age, sex, ethnical background, nationality, language, social and education background, sexual identity, region/place of living, confession, political views.

▶ **Why is it important to promote the appreciation of diversity amongst secondary school students?**

The relevance of the concept of diversity for education is that it helps to better understand commonalities and differences and how their interplay makes up the unique identity of every child and adult. Moreover, it raises awareness on the privileges or the potential for discriminating certain individuals experience due to their belonging and affiliation to diverse groups. Diversity is not static but dynamically changing flow, interplay among the various dimensions or layers.

The diversity-sensitive education focuses on teaching about differences and otherness. It engages systematically with exploration, reflection and evaluation of expectations and attributions towards oneself and the others, related to belonging to a certain group (Winkelmann, 2014). Beyond that it tackles stereotypical thinking, the so-called **pigeon-hole thinking**, which often leads to prejudices and discrimination.

Prejudices are not just judgments, but judgments made 'a priori', prior to an experience, prior to an encounter with the complex diversity. Prejudices are based on creation of a difference and are deeply rooted in dominating societal think-patterns. Prejudices also have multiple functions, and we often benefit from them at others' expenses.

Stereotypical thinking (pigeon-hole thinking) are not prejudices against individual persons, but rather against groups of persons, who are "put in the one-dimensional box", only on the ground of one of their group affiliations/dimensions of diversity.

Attributions demonstrate how power-driven prejudices are and what their role in production of power imbalance between individuals from different groups is. Consequently one group of people prescribes to another one how it 'has to be'.

Promoting diversity or diversity-sensitive education approaches at school suggests valuing and responding to the differences between and within groups, and taking a unified approach to tackling the causes and outcome of discrimination. Therefore, diversity competence education goes hand in hand with awareness raising towards and prevention of discrimination (Save the Children UK, 2005).

▶ **How can teachers promote diversity through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

A teacher needs to actively promote the appreciation of diversity through the classroom, especially since classrooms today are multicultural. More specifically, a teacher should:

- Ensure a safe space in which the students can engage with their own ideas and needs related to the themes related with exclusion and discrimination;

- Promote the understanding of the relation between own behaviour in the group and the group's response

- Develop and/or strengthen self-awareness and group awareness;

- Sensitise to problem situations in the social relations in the class and to encourage the students to open and respectful discussions;

- Empower the students to express views, wishes, complaints and needs to change the social relations/climate in class.

- Use alternative methods of teaching that will allow students that are not able to participate because of linguistic or other difficulties to be involved and enrich the classroom environment.

- Foster the interaction between all the members of the classroom

Case Study:

When teaching Greek language in a multicultural classroom in the centre of Athens, Maria had 3 students coming from Afghanistan that do not speak Greek well. They usually do not participate in the class activities, they are talking only between them and are segregated from the other students. Maria, in order to face this situation changes her way of teaching, introduces more participatory methods and uses theatre techniques. Through the theatre techniques, students need to interact with each other in a way that involves also their bodies and not only language. Also, she assures the whole classroom that there is no right/ wrong answer and what is important is to be able to express their

feelings about the situation in a literature text that is part of the curriculum. Students need to interpret the characters in the text and provide their own scenarios on how the story would continue not only using words but also using movement and still images. Following the implementation of these techniques, Maria sees that the collaboration between the students in the classroom increases and now the students from Afghanistan have the motivation to participate more in classroom activities as they feel more integrated in the group. Additionally, this exercise has fostered the cooperation and communication between these students and the students from the mainstream community who have started talking to each other for the first time. After a number of application of these techniques, the participation of these students in the whole classroom activities has been significantly increased.

▶ **How can teachers infuse diversity in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Language

- Include storytelling techniques in teaching language and include characters that are diverse from the mainstream population.

- Use images and ask students coming from other countries to describe what they see in their language.

- Use theatre games and alternative interactive activities that could foster the participation of students that have difficulties in the language.

History/ Geography

- Ask students from other countries to explain in the classroom about their country of origin;

- Use theatre in order to allow the interaction between all the students in the classroom and the participation of students with fewer linguistic skills.

▶ **Examples of activities that the teacher may use to promote diversity in the classroom**

Diversity: Sensitisation towards commonalities and differences (All those who.....)

The aim of the activity is to warm-up and sensitise to the topic of diversity, as well as to raise awareness about commonality and differences.

The activity goes as follows:

The participants sit in a circle. Tell the group that in a while you are going to read aloud one statement and all those for whom this is "true" will stand up, look around the circle and then sit down. All those who do not "identify themselves"with the statement will remain sitting. Start reading the statements one after the other. Do not make any comments and/or explanations between the sentences:

- I was born and grew up in……….
- I don't have any disabilities.
- I do well in school.
- People in school/in my job struggle to say/ write my name properly.
- I have friends in school.
- I have two or more siblings.
- I am a single child.
- My family is Christian.
- I am white.
- I have a friend whose skin colour is different from mine.
- I have a bisexual/homosexual friend.
- I am good at sports.
- I can rely on my family to always have enough money.
- My parents attended university.
- I can read in more than two languages.

Ask the students the following questions.

- How did it feel to take part in this activity?
- What does it make you think of? What ideas do you have now in mind?
- Did you experience something new about the others in the group? And about yourself?

Crumpled Onion (Recognising the multifacetedness of own identity)

The aim of this activity is for students:

- To get to know each other better in the group, to identify group belonging and identity;
- To recognise diversity of group and individual persons;
- To gain awareness of the multiple roles each individual fulfils.

At first, each participant will be given a set of six coloured A5 sheets of paper (one in each colour). The teacher will then read out an instruction and ask everybody to write their answer anonymously (no name written on the paper) one the first coloured paper (e.g. the green one). After that students will be told to crumple the paper. The second question is then read, everybody writes the answer on the second coloured paper (yellow) and crumples the paper around the first one. This is done with all of the questions, resulting in the papers being crumpled to form a multilayered ball, like an onion at the end.

The questions for the coloured paper should be asked in the following sequence:

- Write down one of your outward appearance features (for instance: wear sneakers, have long hair etc.)
- Write down one of your hobbies (eg, sports, books, music, videos, meeting friends etc.)
- Write down something typical of you (gesture, language, appearance, style for instance, joyfully laughing)
- Write down something others like about you
- Write down something you like about yourself
- Write down something important to you in my life (for instance values, love, leisure time, family etc.)

The balls are then thrown and mixed in the middle of the circle. Everybody takes a new ball from the middle. The first participant starts 'peeling' the onion layer after layer reading the answers on the coloured papers, and tries to guess who the ball belongs to. The other participants can help with assumptions. When the person is identified, he/she starts to guess the next person and so on till everybody is being identified.

An alternative step would be to have students each pick up a ball and walk around the room. When two students come face to face, they can ask each other whether the first answer belongs to them. Students will continue with this process until they find who the owner of their ball is before they sit together in the circle.

Once students have identified the owners of the balls, the group will reflect as a group on the following questions**:**

- Was it easy to guess who the owner of the ball was?
- What clue helped you to identify the person?
- Were you surprised by any of the answers?
- Did you learn new things about each other?
- Why do you think this activity is important?

Lemons (Sensitisation towards prejudices and pigeonholing)

The aim of this activity is to:

- To reflect and exchange on personal experience with prejudices and pigeonholing
- To promote critical attentiveness towards stereotypes, pigeonholing and discrimination
- To discuss action steps how to prevent/hinder pigeonholing.

Participants sit in a circle and show them a lemon and ask them to describe it. Let the group brainstorm for a while, taking note of ideas and associations on the flip chart/white-board. Then ask the participants to pair with somebody they know least in the group and to sit together. Give each pair a lemon, which they can look at, examine, and study for a while.

After a couple of minutes collect all the lemons and mix them together in a large bowl, putting it in the middle of the circle. Each pair has now to find their own lemon; one after another the pairs come to the middle and try to identify their lemon. Once the students have identified their lemon, ask them to reflect on the following questions:

- How could you find "your own" lemon?
- What surprised you hereby?
- What do you think when referring to the lemon?

Explain to the students that the first part of the activity had to do with generalisation and pigeonholing – naturally we put all lemons in the same box, as they all seem the same to us. Ask students "What does this have to do with our everyday life?"

Then introduce the topic of stereotypes, attributions and valuing of features and characteristics of certain persons and groups. Based on these we often build prejudices about the person/group, which have nothing to do with their characteristics. Such processes happen daily and we are all involved in them: "putting not only lemons but people as well in boxes".

Then split the participants randomly in groups of three to four. With the help of the discussion questions below each group exchanges on personal experience and cases of pigeonholing. Emphasise on the trust needed to share such experiences and on the confidentiality to be respected. The small groups should not report on the shared individual stories and cases to the rest of the class.

Emphasise as well that the purpose is not to discuss what "right and wrong" behaviour is, but rather to talk and reflect together on the mechanisms that trigger prejudices. The point is to sharpen attentiveness and understanding of how pigeonholing sets a trap for our own perception of diversity, as pigeonholing reduces and simplifies diversity. The questions to discuss as a small-group are:

- When did you last feel pigeonholed/as if "put into a box"? How would you label this "box" (gender, race etc.)?
- How did you feel about it? How did you react?
- When did you last pigeonhole somebody else? Why did you do that? What made you react like that?

Once participants have finished their discussion, invite the participants to provide feedback on the activity: How was it to share and to listen about stories of pigeonholing? Ask the group to share some of the boxes' labels without telling personal details and stories. Then collect the different labels and prejudices on a flip-chart. Close up the discussion emphasising on the feelings associated with being pigeonholed/pigeonholing others and on what steps can be undertaken to hinder pigeonholing. The teacher can conclude the activity by writing down the diverse action steps suggested by the group.

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11. BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

▶ **What is a healthy relationship?**

According to the CASEL framework (2020), relationship skills refer to "the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups, communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed."

▶ **Why is it important to promote the building of healthy relationships?**

The building of healthy relationships at all levels is fundamental for the healthy development of the students and in order to have a respectful, satisfactory and balanced relationship with their teachers, their classmates, their intimate partners, their friends etc.

Not healthy relationships can lead to frustration, psychological problems, stress, low concentration, low academic performance etc.

It is important to teach the building of health relationships at school because many students have difficulties understanding the boundaries between a healthy relationship and an abusive relationship, especially in social environments where students lack experience of health relationships.

▶ **How can teachers promote healthy relationships through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

A teacher needs to actively promote the building of healthy relationships. More specifically, a teacher should:

- Help students to understand the difference between a healthy and an unhealthy relationship
- Facilitate students identify their boundaries and what makes them feel uncomfortable
- Facilitate students to understand and express how they think they should be treated in the framework of a relationship
- Facilitate students to feel empathy and to start seeing things from other perspectives and points of view
- Help students to identify different types of conflicts and see the conflict as something to be managed rather than avoided

- Allow students to identify the mistakes they have made in a relationship and learn from them
- Support students to communicate effectively using the principles of nonviolent communication
- Support students to manage effectively their relationships both in the physical and the digital world

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Case Study

When teaching Greek language in a high school in Athens, Eleni observed that there is a tension in the relations between the different students in the classroom and students who are rude and offensive to their classmates. In order to support them she decides to teach them the main principles of nonviolent communication: observation, feelings, needs, and requests. Through a series of activities, she supports them to express their feelings and try to formulate sentences that would make their needs, feelings and requests evident but without the use of offensive language. While the students were interested, after one session Eleni was not able to see a real difference. For this reason, she established a time once a week where she continued to talk about this issue and organise activities. By the end of the year she was able to observe that the situation in the class significantly improved.

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▶ **How can teachers infuse healthy relationships in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Language
- Use literature texts or newspaper articles that describe healthy/ non-healthy relationships and comment on them
- Starting from a literature text, use forum theatre techniques in order to identify different possible responses to a specific pattern of relationships
- Talk about conflict resolution strategies

ICT
- Talk about digital literacy, principles of nonviolent communication in the digital world, rights in the internet

History
- Examine examples of healthy/ non-healthy relationships from historical figures

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote healthy relationships in the classroom**

Boundary Identification

The aim of this activity is:

- To identify one's individual boundaries, to perceive and respect the others' boundaries
- To involve individually with and examine feelings of proximity, distance and bodily contact.

The teacher begins by randomly splitting the participants into pairs. Participants in each pair are told to stand facing each other, but as far as possible from one another (at minimum 10 metres distance). There should be one row of participants at one end of the room while the other half of the participants are in a line at the opposite end of the room.

The participants on one side are told to remain standing on the spot. The participants in the other line are told to **slowly** walk towards their partner across the room until their partner gives them a Stop-Signal. Participants are told that maintaining eye contact with the partner should help to notice any changes as they walk towards their partner. The standing participants then have the task to detect how close they would like to let their partner come to them. When a standing participant feels that the partner has already approached close enough then she/he should say "Stop!". The partner stops and remains standing, until all other walking participants have stopped.

The walking partners then must go back to their starting positions for the second round. They will start again to approach their partners slowly. This time the standing partners will not say "Stop", but will give a sign raising their hand, when they feel that the approaching person has come close enough to them.

The third round is the most challenging one and requires a lot of attentiveness and calmness in the group. The walking participants should this time - without any sign – discern by themselves when they have to stop, when they have approached their partner close enough. Following that the three rounds are repeated with changed roles, the standing participants now approach their partners, who have to give signs saying "Stop", raising a hand, or finally giving no sign.

Non-Violent Communication[8]

The aim of this activity is to build healthier relationships by expressing emotions and communicating in a non-violent way. First the teacher must explain the 4 phases of non-violent communication

1. **observation**: description without judgement, evaluation, interpretation
2. **emotions**: expression of positive or negative emotions
3. **needs**: expression of the need associated with the specific feeling
4. **requests:** expression of what we need from others

Then the teacher must support students to identify and express emotions and needs by asking the following questions, let them identify the possible answers and suggest more answers if they do not identify the answers.

Table 3: Possible answers to 'How do I feel when my needs are fulfilled?'

Light	Hopeful	Warmth	Emotional
Optimistic	Astonished	Tranquil	Fantastic
Safe	Grateful	Satisfied	Indifferent
Confident	Enthusiastic	Protected	Fulfilled
Happy	Strong	Proud	Content

Table 4: Possible answers to 'How do I feel when my needs are NOT met?'

Upset	Disgusted	Annoyed	Regretful	Stuck
Indifferent	Discouraged	Guilty	Confusion	Bitter
Perplexed	Confused	Irritated	Scared	Shocked
Worry	Hesitant	Angry	Frustrated	Disappointed

Table 5: Possible answers to 'What are my main needs?'

Physical needs	In relation to ourselves & ourselves	In relation to others & others	In relation to society as a whole
Clean Air	Creativity	Support	Compliance with the laws

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[8] Activity developed in the framework of the DIVERSE Greek teacher training

Physical needs	In relation to ourselves & ourselves	In relation to others & others	In relation to society as a whole
Exercise	Fun	Respect	Egalitarianism
Food	Self- knowledge	Collaboration	Peace
Safety	Spirituality	To belong somewhere	Equal opportunities for development
Rest	Self-evolution	Love	Discipline
Water	Self-esteem	Empathy	Social cohesion
Expression of sexuality	Autonomy	Trust	Actions to address racist and sexist practices

Once students have answered the questions, the teacher will then ask the students to rewrite the phrases below using the principles of nonviolent communication:

1. You're always busy.
2. Well done for you!
3. I feel that Anna is unsuitable for this job.
4. I am entitled to more days off.
5. He's aggressive every time I talk to him.
6. My mother complains for no reason.
7. The grown-ups do not understand our priorities.

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12. COLLABORATION

▶ **What is Collaboration?**

Collaboration is a concept frequently adopted in SEL and lifelong competency frameworks. Starting from a broad definition, it is the act of working with another person or group of people to create or produce something (Oxford University Press, 2021). Broad definitions, however, give space to the understanding of collaboration as a procedural ability that does not necessarily imply proactive participation. For this reason, the expression 'collaboration' has been also adopted in the past to define relationships that are not among the goals defined in recent SEL models. One of such expressions, for example, used in the context of wars, has a negative meaning: 'being a collaborator' means that a person is helping the enemy during a war when they have taken control of your country. Another difficult expression to grasp is 'collaborator of justice', which can be perceived by many as a synonym of 'traitor', since it implies that a criminal has come forward to testify against his own group, for personal compensation.

Such disambiguation is needed in order to guide the communication choices in discourses about collaboration at schools that are placed in areas with high risk of criminality or ghetto related behaviour of the community. Therefore, some teachers prefer to use expressions that are undoubtedly positive in the classroom, such as: working together, working in groups/ teams.

In the field of SEL, it is useful to compare definitions and 'positions' of collaboration in the frameworks. CASEL, for example, places collaboration in a set of 'relationship skills' (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2021). In Lifecomp, collaboration has its own status of main competence in the social area, together with empathy and communication. A closer look at the definitions allows us to map a conceptual territory that does not contain conflicts in their choices, bearing in mind that Lifecomp is a framework of 'teachable competencies' (Sala et al., 2020).

Lifecomp defines the **social area** as follows: "Being socially competent means cultivating an attitude of collaboration, respecting human diversity, overcoming prejudice, and compromising while participating in society" (Lifecomp, p. 40). The collaboration branch statement is: "Engagement in group activity and teamwork acknowledging and respecting others", adding a new dimension to the broad definition above mentioned: "acknowledging and respecting others" (Lifecomp, p.9), with a clear choice to position collaboration as an attitude.

Some educational approaches distinguish *cooperation* from *collaboration*. The expression cooperation is used mainly when a member of a group can solve their assigned segment of the shared task individually. In collaboration, instead, some level of negotiation should take place in the process of defining priorities and reaching shared visions or shared goals.

▶ **Why is it important to promote collaboration skills amongst secondary school students?**

CASEL's set Relationship Skills mentions collaboration but does not offer a specific definition as a construct. The set is described as: "The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups." The list of capacities that follows the definition includes, among others: practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving; resolving conflicts constructively, and showing leadership in groups.

Seeking or offering support and help when needed, most of which are described in literature as **soft skills** and highly valued as techniques of efficient production of results in workplaces.

Conversely, Lifecomp expresses an effort to situate collaboration at a prosocial level, far beyond the employability or personal relationship skill levels. The descriptors are, therefore, strongly embedded with European citizenship values, such as: equality, dignity, cultural awareness, fairness. This approach does not exclude the workplace contexts and the personal aims but stresses the need of these skills for "living and thriving together in democratic societies" (Sala et al., 2020).

The subset of competencies under the umbrella of *collaboration* in Lifecomp is a powerful tool to understand why schools need to include collaboration in their curriculums and build a collaborative climate:

- Internalising European shared values is a lifelong process that models a positive attitude towards collaboration, even when people don't know each other at a personal level, and have different backgrounds.
- The sense of shared accomplishment can help build caring relationships.
- Learning to work and study with a shared goal, in a group, can prevent "fear of failure, hopelessness and meaninglessness".
- The prosocial approach to learning in teams or groups allows people to focus at the same time on their own goals and the needs of others, preventing choices of action

that seem to offer immediate advantages to individuals but produce long-term negative impact at a group or community level.

● Acquiring the intention to contribute to a "common good" is a multidimensional process that requires the motivation to "strive for mutual benefits".

● Learning to collaborate in problem solving scenarios at school offers the opportunity to exercise the comparison of different points of view; building trust among participants of a group or a community; negotiation and conciliation that prevent long lasting conflicts and disputes.

● Learning the need of structuring teamwork fairly and constructively contributes to the development of the capacity to share one's own ideas, even when they are apparently divergent from the trending ideas, which is an essential ability in innovation processes.

▶ **How can teachers promote collaboration through their own attitudes, behavior, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

In the context of SEE (social and emotional education), building a collaborative environment is a more complex goal than teaching and learning how to work in teams.

The first goal requires a **nurturing classroom and school climate**, where social values and personal values can coexist, and are respectfully expressed and discussed with positive purpose, but within the limit of a social agreement about acceptable codes of conduct and styles of communication. Teaching practises that promote and reward individual efforts, therefore, should not stimulate a winners/losers representation of the students. Errors and misunderstandings should be considered as opportunities to reflect and improve, instead of failure to reach success.

A caring environment provides opportunities to the students to willingly help each other when needed and promotes the awareness of evaluation as an opportunity for discovering new strategies to overcome perceived difficulties. In this scenario, the teacher facilitates the willingness to contribute to a goal that is both personal and shared – the success of each one of the students as individuals, applying practises based upon values that connect the social tissue of the school community.

In other words, the interactions in the classroom have more possibility to grow as a collaborative environment if students feel **psychologically safe**, they are not at risk of feeling neglected by teachers and peers. Students should feel free to express opinions and ask for clarification without any fear of being undermined or associated with negative representations such as stereotypes.

The second goal focuses on **learning how to work and learn in teams**. This has given birth to many teaching and learning methodologies since the seventies that are widely adopted nowadays. The underlying ideas shared by most of the authors is that human beings are social beings potentially prone to cooperate with others in complex situations where the goals cannot be reached by an individual alone. Collaborative problem-solving is thus proposed as an efficient path to make critical decisions, as well as to reach production goals in shorter time frames.

Why are there so many methodologies and models for collaboration, cooperation and team building in the classroom and in the workplace? Because 'working together' does not mean necessarily that each one has embraced a personal goal that overlaps with the shared goal. In most of the cases, in the 'real world', teamwork implies differences in the contributions of the participants, by role or by specialisation of competencies and tasks. Participants of a team rely on each other's actions to reach the teams' goal; their relationship is characterised by positive interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

The contrast between the goals of 'collaborating for learning better' and 'learning to work in teams' cannot be ignored when choosing a model of group work for the learning activities. Learning how to work in teams, for example, should not suppress the opportunity for individuals to reach all the learning goals, while collaborating for learning better is feasible only if it is not excessively time consuming.

▶ **How can teachers infuse collaboration in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Very well-known methods for structuring teamwork and cooperative learning can be applied almost indistinctively to every subject. The following list of methods is adapted from the review published by Johnson & Johnson in Educational Researcher (2009), including some popular additional items, but it is not intended to be comprehensive:

Table 6: Examples of exercises teachers can use to infuse collaboration

Teams Games - Tournament	DeVries & Edwards	https://www1.udel.edu/dssep/teaching_strategies/tgt_coop.htm
Student Teams Achievement Divisions	Slavin	https://lms.pdesas.org/content/courses/General_PD/ESLAOL/media/1D_reading_02.pdf
Group investigation	Sharan & Sharan	https://files.ascd.org/staticfiles/ascd/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198912_sharan.pdf
Academic	D. W Johnson &	https://web.augsburg.edu/~erickson/edc490/downloads/Critica

controversy (Structured controversy)	R. Johnson	l_Thinking_through_Structured_Controversy.pdf
Jigsaw	Aronson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes, & Snapp	https://www.jigsaw.org/#overview
Team Assisted Individualization	Slavin, Leavey, & Madden	https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED232852.pdf
Complex instruction	Cohen	https://complexinstruction.stanford.edu/about/Equity-in-Cooperative-Learning-Classrooms
The structural approach	Kagan	https://files.ascd.org/staticfiles/ascd/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198912_kagan.pdf
Computer-supported collaborative concept mapping	Scardamalia & Bereiter	https://thelearningexchange.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CSILE_KF-2.pdf
Think-Pair-Share	Frank Lyman	http://commons.hostos.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2015/07/Think-Pair-Share.pdf

Internet collaboration tools can be adopted as learning environments that allow extending collaboration time beyond the limits of a lesson: discussion forums, collaborative writing tools, revision tools, mind mapping platforms, peer teaching and peer review platforms.

It is important to choose activity models that can be managed by the teacher during the process of collaboration. Coaching complex processes of collaboration, for example, that is project-based, requires that the teacher has clear instructions regarding the "rules" and the chosen model of collaboration; defining a specific criterion for selecting group participants, timely facilitation, moderation of conflict resolution, discussion of possible strategies, defining milestones and goals for formative feedbacks. There are 2 rules of thumbs in evaluating collaborative learning activities that cannot be missed:

1) Assessment of learning has to consider the personal contributions to the collaborative process or product. Evaluating only the results is not enough and can be perceived by participants as unfair. If the process is not observable, tools for self-reporting could be used instead.

2) Peer evaluation practises need a well-structured matrix with descriptors. Teachers must remain responsible for final marks. A good peer evaluation option is a 2-step

model where the teacher evaluates the "peer evaluation" and the object of evaluation, looking for evidence of coherence with the formal criteria stated in the matrix.

The choice of methods to adopt in group work should as far as possible bring together SEL competency development and epistemic knowledge building approaches. The following examples are useful to understand the epistemic approach:

Sciences
- Rich epistemic approaches to learning sciences are frequently based in inquiry learning, which is known to foster research competencies development. Group Investigation, as proposed by Sharan & Sharan is a solution frequently adopted in Sciences due to the explicit goal of promoting learning processes that are close to the idea of "research communities".

Maths
- Setting up group work in maths often has goals connected with problem solving competencies or conceptualization. Recent trends in problem solving recognize benefits in adopting teamwork in "competitive game" scenarios, where the problems to be solved require collaboration due to time frames designed in the games. Kahoots in small teams mode have been successfully adopted in class and distance learning for this purpose. Conceptualization, instead, requires processes that allow to deepen the understanding of an idea, an axiom, a concept or a structure and could successfully adopt collaborative knowledge maps environments.

Humanities
- Subjects such as history, civics education and literature provide opportunities for group or class discussions based upon comparison of different points of view, argumentation, interpretation. Class debates and yes-no-maybe activities are frequently adopted as well as think-pair-share methods. Jigsaw cooperative learning is also recommended when the teacher feels safe enough to reduce frontal lesson time and share the responsibility of communicating content with all students that will be designated as experts in some aspects of the contents in their study groups.

Physical education

- Physical education traditionally adopts team building among its desired learning outcomes. However, if these activities are not well briefed and debriefed, from the point of view of team collaboration, it could be perceived by students as extremely competitive and performance-based, contributing to decreased self-confidence when the student is not among the "stars" of the group. It remains a rich area for team building, if the activities adopted are well balanced to include all the students with some meaningful role in the teams.

Case Study

A middle school has to deal with a brand-new problem, recently it became the only middle school in the neighbourhood and the students enrolled in the first year will be coming from three primary schools with different cultures: a public school, a catholic school and a Reggio Emilia school. Since the other middle school was recently closed, some of its students will be enrolled as second, third years. Curriculum continuity became a challenge, but teachers were mainly worried about the "clash of the cultures", that could delay the social inclusion of the newcomers or, even worse, let the students choose to remain in groups limited to previous acquaintances only.

After the situation was discussed with the teachers, the school decided to promote a shift from the highly individual competitive approach that was previously adopted, which was considered to motivate students to study harder, into a mixed-model, adding "quick" collaborative models, such as think-pair-share, that would allow students to know and value each other working together; and gamification-oriented group activities such as Group-mode Kahoots followed by debriefings and explication of how each group has decided to choose an answer.

Teachers were invited to create groups during the first semester adopting only one criterion: randomization. This rule was not fully welcomed by the teachers at the beginning because some methods work better with homogeneous groups by level of proficiency and others work better with heterogeneous groups. After analysing various methods for collaboration, they were convinced that for complex collaborative goals, the Jigsaw method could substitute role-based cooperative research, and probably allowed teachers to apply other criteria to form the expert groups, while maintaining the randomization criteria to form home/jigsaw groups.

Some of the teachers remained resistant to the new ideas because they felt that there was not enough time in the program to implement group activities, and the workload needed to plan it was excessive for them.

The impact of the mixed-mode model was described as positive by almost all teachers that adopted it. Since a need to fine-tune these practises was also perceived, the school has organised a CPD series of workshops with experts in the selected collaborative methodologies.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote collaboration in the classroom**

Working as a team: Think-pair-share

Think-pair-share is a popular collaborative discussion method that promotes peer and individual accountability. The three steps provide sequence, time and goals for individual reflection, discussion with a peer and sharing of the results with the classroom. The goal is to engage all the students in dialogical situations to broaden their points of view about the prompts presented by the teacher. The activity is carried out as follows:

1. **Think** – The teacher provides a higher-level question about a text or a topic and each student has 1-3 minutes to think about what they already knew about it or their perspective.
2. **Pair** – Students work in pairs and discuss their ideas or answers to the prompt initially given by the teacher (5 minutes). They should be stimulated to go beyond just sharing their own thoughts and ask questions of their partner to understand their perspectives.
3. **Share** – Each pair chooses who will present their thoughts to the whole classroom. The teacher moderates the discussion.

A smartcard with the steps of Think-Pair-Share in detail can be found on the following website: http://commons.hostos.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2015/07/Think-Pair-Share.pdf

Jigsaw

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning technique which aims to create positive interdependence as a value in the classroom and improve attitudes toward school and peers. Students are engaged contemporarily in two groups: expert groups and jigsaw groups.

1. In "expert groups" the participants study the topic and sources assigned by the teacher. Each group has different sources assigned.

2. Jigsaw groups are heterogeneous; each participant contributes with his own area of "expertise" developed in their expert groups. Each participant is invested with the task of helping the others learn the topics, reporting what they have learned in the expert groups, and is responsible with solving remaining doubts about that topic.

Eliot Aronsons' Jigsaw Classroom Website: https://www.jigsaw.org/#overview

Social engagement (through extracurricular activities)

Being given the opportunity to choose where and when to interact with others that have similar interests could be a stronger motivation for engagement compared to school events or special projects. This is especially true for children that are introspective or find themselves quickly overwhelmed in crowded spaces or suffer from self-esteem problems.

Schools can provide spaces where the rules and resources are co-managed with the students, and students can define their own goals and activities or connect with peers to help them with reaching a personal goal or developing shared areas of interest. Frequent examples of spaces dedicated to extracurricular activities are: special-interest clubs such as Book Clubs, School Radio and magazine, Robotics; academic teams such as maths, chess, debate teams.

STEM Makerspaces have gained attention recently and are mainly exploratory, not oriented to competition or "affiliation". It provides kids with a variety of tools and materials that stimulate scientific creativity. Extracurricular activities are not assessed but should be documented on an extracurricular activity sheet.

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13. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

▶ **What is Conflict Resolution?**

Conflicts may be described as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles (Cambridge Dictionary). We encounter conflicts every day and in all areas of life. They cannot be avoided. But if they are worked on constructively, their creative potential unfolds. Conflict resolutions in the form of agreed adaptations and (behaviour) changes in coexistence enable effective progress that integrates all actors. This applies not only to relationships between individuals, but also at the societal level. Without conflicts, the necessary catalyst for change processes would be missing, i.e., there would be no further development. Conflicts are therefore not necessarily harmful, but simply a natural phenomenon that inevitably arises when different goals, interests, needs, and ideas collide. In this sense, conflict research is not devoted to the question of how conflicts can be avoided, but how they can be systematically and constructively analysed, diagnosed, processed, and resolved (Based on Sonnleitner & Gschweitl, 2021).

▶ **Why is it important to promote conflict resolution amongst secondary school students?**

The promotion of conflict resolution in schools is important because it can create a climate of finding solutions where the "willingness to help" is reinforced through peer support. Constructive dialogue is practised in the class council and applied in everyday life while ego-statements are practised confidently. Teachers will no longer be seen as the only contact points in case of conflicts.

Through the anchored feedback culture, everyone receives sufficient recognition. Conflicts are perceived as something that can be clarified and they are addressed before violence escalates.

Through conflict resolution, conflicts will be accepted as part of everyday school life and not put aside. Students' creativity for conflict resolution leads to useful ideas for everyday school life. **Conflict handling** is introduced at an early stage of conflict, even outside of the classroom. However, in the case of major conflicts, the school social work team will also be directly involved.

The promotion of conflict resolution amongst students can also result in an increased awareness that conflicts with parents should not be regulated in passing. There will also

be an increased responsibility for the school community and discussion culture. Reactions to emotional attacks from parents will also be more considerate (Kiser Küchler, 2017).

▶ **How can teachers promote conflict resolution through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

In everyday school life, teaching staff must act in a counselling capacity at various levels, for example in parental work, with other teachers and school children (Drechsel et al., 2020; Gartmeier, 2019). Counselling competence is especially important in situations where social emotional learning (e.g. teaching conflict management skills) is required.

The focus will be on the classroom with all its conflicts, where teachers should convey security, show professional competence, and signal empathy to impart social emotional learning to the students (Schnebel, 2017; Grewe, 2015; Palzkill, Müller & Schute, 2015). Social emotional learning is a process in which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and competencies to understand and manage emotions, set, and achieve positive goals, feel, and show empathy for others, build, and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions. So, there are lots of aspects, which teachers must observe. The five areas of: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making are fundamental to social emotional learning (Casel, 2017).

All areas are important to diagnose and solve conflicts. Conflicts often have negative connotations, yet they hold great potential. A constructive approach to conflicts leads to further developments in the classroom. To achieve this progress, however, a systematic approach to the topic is necessary (Sonnleitner & Gschweitl, 2021). Lessons, in which social emotional learning takes place, are suitable to teach pupils different ways how to analyse, diagnose, manage, and solve conflicts systematically and constructively (Sonnleitner, 2021).

Case study[9]:

Visiting a festival while preparing for the final Examination – Viewpoint of Martin

Martin's son Peter is currently in his final year of school. As a student, Peter has to study a lot, especially with Maths, a subject he finds quite challenging. Martin had hired a tutor to help Peter study. One day, Martin found out that Peter wanted to go to a festival with his friends. Peter said that everything (trip and overnight stay) is planned. He intends to pay for the festival pass with his own savings. For Martin, however, this thought is out of question. The reason for this is that the final examination is soon, and he paid for the tutor for several hours of lessons. These hours would also overlap with the days of the festival. In addition, Martin thought that Peter should not be so irresponsible with the savings and go to a three-day "drinking party" so close to his exam. However, Peter made the decision to go to the festival anyway.

Since Martin no longer knows what to do and no quiet conversation can take place anymore, Martin tries to resolve the dispute in a conflict mediation based on a tip from a friend. Conflict mediation involves a neutral third party (a mediator), trained in problem solving skills and communication skills who will work with the people in conflict to come up with mutually agreeable solutions to their issues.

Visiting a festival while preparing for the final examination – Viewpoint of Peter

Peter really wanted to go to a festival with his friends. The timing was just right, as the weather was perfect (no rain and it was warm) and because the most important schoolwork and tests had already been done. Even though Peter still had one final examination to sit for, Peter was not concerned as he believed he would do well in the exam since he already had spent a few hours working with the tutor. He wanted to finance the trip himself and everything was already planned.

When Peter asked his father for permission, he immediately said "No" with no room for arguing. Peter did not want to accept this and decided to simply pack his things anyway and leave with his friends. Peter did not want to be restricted in his independence in this way, especially since at 18 years of age he would be old enough to decide about such things for himself.

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[9] Developed by Sonnleitner, K.

► **How can teachers infuse conflict resolution in the teaching of academic subjects?**

The second capacity, emotional facilitation of thinking, refers to the use of emotion to aid thinking and action. Teachers, by inducing an emotional state in their students, increase creative and innovative thinking, for example, by introducing music in the classroom to create a favourable emotional state in the development of creative activities, such as writing poetry or performing artistic activities. In its turn, emotional understanding involves cognitive processing of emotion, referring to the capacity for distinguishing emotions, as well as understanding complex feelings. The teacher must develop empathic behaviour with the students to perceive, recognize, and become aware of the students' feelings and express this understanding to them. This provides a closer connection to the relationship of affection necessary for the quality of teaching and learning. Developing these empathic skills in students also means teaching them that we do not all feel the same in similar situations and toward the same people, that individuality guides our lives, and that each person experiences different needs, fears, desires, and hates (Valente & Lourenco, 2020).

Languages:

● Discuss a paragraph from a book where conflict is described. Analyse with the classroom the conflict, its origins, who is involved, what is it about, in which escalation phase it already is, how it could be resolved.

History:

● Discuss a conflict from history that was successfully resolved. First explain the conflict situation and discuss it in the classroom. In the end explain how the conflict was resolved in real life.

Arts:

● Use a painting depicting a conflicting situation. Analyse which colours were used to make the moment of conflict more dramatic. Can tension be perceived from the painting? Tell the story of the painting – why the artist painted it, what it represents, i.e. Pablo Picasso's Guernica.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote conflict resolution in the classroom**

Pushy Pairs[10]

Objectives:

- To see what happens when we are in conflict with someone.
- To understand that each of us is trying to 'push' their message home.

In pairs, get students to stand facing each other and ask them to put their arms straight out in front of them to shoulder level and touch palms with the other person. Ask students to push as hard as they can against each other to get them to stand in a way that is safe.

Once they have pushed and felt what it was like – keep them pushing and then tell them suddenly to stop pushing and feel how much of a relief it is. Ask students to discuss the following questions:

1. How did you feel during this exercise?
2. How did you feel when being pushed/having pushed?
3. How was it when the pressure suddenly stopped?

How do you see a conflict?[11]

Objectives:

- To understand our perception of conflict
- To consider a different perspective on conflict
- To learn techniques to better handle conflict
- To build trust

Have participants pair up. Provide each person with a copy of the handout (see below). Allow 10 to 15 minutes for partners to interview each other. Then go over the discussion questions (see below). As a variation you can have team members switch partners every three questions to increase the level of trust within the group. At the end ask students to discuss the following questions:

1. Were your partner's perspectives different from your perspective?

2. What were some things you learned by considering another's perspective?

3. Is conflict good or bad?

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[10] Activity adapted from https://blog.trainerswarehouse.com/negotiation-and-conflict-resolution-activities
[11] Based on Scannell, M. (2010)

Handout for participants:

<div style="border: 2px solid purple; padding: 1em;">

How do you see a conflict?

1. How do you define conflict?
2. What is your typical response to conflict?
3. What is your greatest strength when dealing with conflict?
4. If you could change one thing about the way you handle conflict, what would it be? Why?
5. What is the most important outcome of conflict?
6. What are some reasons you choose to avoid conflict?
7. What can you do to promote a healthy attitude toward conflict within the classroom?

</div>

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14. ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOURS AND DECISIONS

▶ **What is ethical and responsible Decision-Making?**

Responsible Decision Making is a core competency in the CASEL Framework (CASEL, 2021), where it is defined as: "The ability to make constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others." CASEL has also referred to Responsible Decision Making as: "The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions across diverse situations.", including the capacities to "consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being." (CASEL, 2020).

Responsible Decision Making is frequently present in other SEL frameworks and curricula (Harvard graduate school of education EASEL lab, 2021), but the definitions and main focus could be shaped slightly differently. Singapore Framework for 21 Century Competences and Student Outcomes, for example, uses the concept of "moral considerations", instead of "ethical standards", as reference to analyse the implications and consequences of decisions.

In LifeComp - the European framework for personal, social and learning to learn key competences - the concept of Decision Making is pervasive and acquires the meaning of 'making sound decisions', which does not necessarily refer to ethical values. The approach to Responsible Decision Making, in LifeComp, can be described as centred in the evaluation of the possible effects of intentional actions. It is explicitly named in competency areas of the framework such as: "Awareness and expression of personal emotions, thoughts, values, and behaviour"; "Flexibility - the ability to manage transitions and uncertainty, and to face challenges"; "Understanding potential risks for wellbeing, and using reliable information and services for health and social protection"; "Responsiveness to another person's emotions and experiences, being conscious that group belonging influences one's attitude"; "Intention to contribute to the common good and awareness that others may have different cultural affiliations, backgrounds, beliefs, values, opinions or personal circumstances"; "Fair sharing of tasks, resources and responsibility within a group taking into account its specific aim; eliciting the expression of different views and adopting a systemic approach" (Sala, Punie, Garkov, & Cabrera, 2020). Ethical behaviour, instead, is referred to in LifeComp in connection with scenarios such as: the use of social media, and

"listening to one's inner voice" while developing ideas and solving problems. This is a clear choice against a normative approach about the definition of what is a 'good behaviour', allowing space for the development of an inner sense of what is good and what is wrong, which is frequently described, in popular expressions as 'having a conscience'.

▶ **Why is it important to promote Decision-Making skills amongst secondary school students?**

In the context of SEL competency development, the adoption of a Whole School Approach will require a progressive effort of the school in the direction of:

- ● learning to make decisions that are not biassed by quick emotional responses or herd mentality;
- ● learning to make choices not only considering the consequences for oneself, but also to others and to the community;
- ● building a caring community that supports students and adults to cope with and overcome the consequences of 'bad' choices and decisions;
- ● promoting staff's competency development and a network of partners able to support difficult personal decisions connected with real-life problems.

Throughout adolescence, the body and the brain are continuously growing and changing. At the same time, adolescents are expected to fulfil new expectations and responsibilities, but their energy is consumed intensively by their efforts in trying to adapt to an ever-changing sense of self and to the uncertainty involved in building new relationships.

If we consider that adolescence is defined as the period between puberty and adulthood, and that development can be different for each person, it becomes clear that strategies for teaching and facilitating Ethical and Responsible Decision Making need to be coherent with a range of levels of maturity, which will probably need to be addressed in the same classroom.

However, in order to choose activities or design learning paths, it is possible to refer to descriptive schemes or phases of development, commonly distributed in 3 different ranges of age: Early Adolescence (approximately 10-14 years of age), Middle Adolescence (approximately 15-16 years of age), Late Adolescence (approximately 17-21 years of age). Some of the broad categories of feelings and behaviours of middle and high school adolescents frequently present in the various theories about adolescence are worth mentioning, because they have an impact on the expected maturity level that can be defined in learning outcomes for Responsible Decision Making.

Table 7: Periods of Adolescent (adapted from the analysis model proposed by Sedra Spano (2004))

	Early Adolescence	Middle Adolescence	Late Adolescence
Movement Toward Independence	emerging identity shaped over time by internal and external influences; moodiness; more likely to express feelings by action than by words (for males); close friendships gain importance; identification of their own faults; peer group influence on personal interests and clothing styles.	self-involvement, alternating between unrealistically high expectations and worries about failure; complaints that parents interfere with independence; feelings of strangeness about one's self and body; lowered opinion of and withdrawal from parents; strong emphasis on the new peer group; examination of inner experiences.	firmer identity; ability to delay gratification; ability to think through ideas; more developed sense of humour; interests become more stable; ability to make independent decisions; ability to compromise; pride in one's work; self-reliance; greater concern for others.
Future Interests and Cognitive Development	increasing career interests; mostly interested in present and near future; greater ability to work.	intellectual interests gain importance; some sexual and aggressive energies directed into creative and career interests; anxiety can emerge related to school and academic performance.	more defined work habits; higher level of concern for the future; thoughts about one's role in life.
Ethics and Self-Direction	rule and limit testing; occasional experimentation with cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol; capacity for abstract thought.	development of ideals and selection of role models; more consistent evidence of conscience; greater goal setting capacity; interest in moral reasoning.	capable of useful insight; focus on personal dignity and self-esteem; ability to set goals and follow through; acceptance of social institutions and cultural traditions; self-

	Early Adolescence	Middle Adolescence	Late Adolescence
			regulation of self-esteem.

Considering the CASEL framework, it is possible to use its sub-categories of competencies as a starting point to design more specific learning outcomes. CASEL suggests the following (broad) descriptors in connection with Responsible Decision Making[12]:

- Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness;
- Identifying solutions for personal and social problems;
- Learning to make a reasoned judgement after analysing information, data, facts;
- Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions;
- Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful both inside & outside of school;
- Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being;
- Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts.

▶ **How can teachers promote decision-making through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom management, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

Discussing Bias and Decision Making Theories

- Knowing that decision making processes can be biassed by emotions and other factors helps to develop self-regulation and value a more reflective process. Studying theories and examples of Bias, from a cognitive point of view, can be really interesting for teens, and helps them to recognize and avoid decision traps.
- Discussions about non-intended harm or non-intended bad consequences of actions should aim at differentiation between responsibility and intentionality, stressing the value of informed decisions.

Adopting Tools and Methods of Decision Making to analyse Situations and Data

- Training teens to analyse situations using tools and methods that are used in politics and workplaces, will help them to develop the capacity to participate productively in shared decision making, and to comprehend the effects of emotional-based campaigns of information (or disinformation).

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[12] Taken from https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/se/tseldecisionmaking.asp

● Methods such as brainstorming, SWOT analysis, decision trees are frequently adopted, as well as guided analysis of data.

Teaching the Mechanisms of Herd Mentality

● Scientific demonstrations of the subtle mechanisms of herd mentality and how being part of a group influences the behaviour both in positive and negative ways, even if it is not a consequence of peer pressure, encourages teens to recognize the situations where individual decisions are necessary.

● Social trends and social contagion are constructs that can easily be illustrated through cases or recognized in the day-by-day life situations and analysis of social media positivity/negativity moods spreading.

● Feeling legitimated to make evidently poor choices because people around us are mostly behaving like that, is almost instinctive for young people. Stimulating critical thinking about recent news or historical facts where the 'diffusion of responsibility' phenomena lets masses of people behave by violating their own values and beliefs, is a good starting point to promote self-reflection about the relevance of letting our inner conscience inform our choices.

Discussing Ethical Dilemmas

There are two well-known different approaches to teaching Ethical Decision Making. The first approach focuses on **identifying conflicting values** that can inform choices. The second approach aims at **familiarisation with ethics** as a set of coded rules or shared principles that should inform professional choices, even when personal values are guiding towards a different direction.

Either way, a dilemma is a state of a decision where all options from a course of action are unsatisfactory to the person.

● Ethical dilemmas based upon choices of values imply an internal process of weighting which value will prevail in the decision. Community of inquiry methods proved to be effective and propose, for example, analytical debates about right choices versus other right choices, with progressive identification of personal values that could inform the choices, such as: loyalty, compassion, integrity, fairness.

● Ethical dilemmas that refer to codes and principles, imply the evaluation of whether an ethical principle can be compromised, under what conditions and to what extent. Yes−No−Maybe activities are ideal for this activity, especially in late adolescence.

- Simulating points of view of different stakeholders is also effective when dealing with recurrent themes present in the news such as: invasions of foreign countries to protect democracy; saving a life at any cost; protecting children by means of removing them from families; large-scale migration.

Tough Decisions

'Tough decisions' is the expression associated with learning activities or decision support initiatives which focus on guiding choices that have a clear potential to impact the rest of their lives, for example: choosing a career, deciding to leave sports teams, denouncing abuse, 'coming out'.

Decisions are tough when there is clear evidence that all available options imply some level of uncertainty about the long-term outcomes and a strong sense of certainty that after the decision is taken, there is no room for going back.

Activities about tough decisions frequently take place within:

- circle discussions about autobiographical past choices perceived as unbearable at the moment;

- drama and simulation of coping strategies;

- structured brainstorming or decision grids about desirable future scenarios and how they can be built.

Risk Taking

Activities related to risk taking address behavioral attraction and curiosity about well-known risks that are frequently undervalued by teens, such as trying drugs, alcohol, unprotected sex, driving at high velocity, shop lifting. These kinds of activities are frequently accompanied by campaigns of prevention of poor choices in adolescence designed by experts. Working exclusively with content presentation, where bad and good are already defined, is not enough and could even accentuate their curiosity about risky situations.

Case Study

A High School intended to introduce Service Learning as a methodology to promote civic engagement values among the students. Teachers were worried that it could be perceived by students and families as 'mandatory volunteerism', or even mandatory 'social service'

because the school is in an area where many young people and their families are at risk of having problems with justice. The school wanted to build a positive vision of Service Learning before introducing this kind of activity and chose to adopt a participatory design approach that starts with listening to the students' voices about: 'What are the needs of our neighbourhood that could be addressed with the efforts of the community?'. After selecting the most frequent suggestions, the school launched the possibility, for each classroom, to choose one of the resulting needs, adopting structured grids to guide them in evaluating the impact of the available choices. They learned to adopt structured criteria to establish priorities, before deciding as groups. Many classes found it difficult to choose only one goal and to discard the others. The second round of 'consultations' was therefore focused on introducing the question of 'How can we contribute, as school teams, to improve those scenarios?'. Teachers moderated the discussions using SWOT charts in the classroom. The school shared the results of the analysis in a meeting with the parents, to engage them in the discussion and allow them to express their worries about Service Learning and the actions selected by the students. The school produced a 'shared vision' document as a starting point for the introduction of the new methodology and Service Learning was welcomed by the majority of the stakeholders.

▶ **How can teachers infuse Ethical and Responsible Decision-Making in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Although it is evident that many of the key goals of teaching Responsible Decision Making can be incorporated nowadays in Europe in Civic Education programs, informed decision methods and the discussion of ethical dilemmas can be placed transversally, in many disciplines and extra-curricular activities such as sports and stages.

History and Media Education

- History and media education are optimal terrains for activities related to herd mentality while humanities and literature offer good opportunities to discuss situations where tough decisions and excessive risk taking are present.

Maths

- Maths and especially statistics can contribute with decision methods where relevance of evidence can be calculated.

Science, Philosophy and Psychology

- Biology, philosophy and psychology concepts are, of course, necessary to explain the complex process of Decision Making but are not always present in the curriculum as subjects. However, it is essential to create space for these topics, maybe creating interdisciplinary projects or dedicated programs.

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to promote Ethical and Responsible Decision-Making in the classroom**

Here are some examples of resources that can be freely adopted, available in trusted websites.

Explaining the key concepts of Decision-Making processes
Decision Education Foundation created series of videos that explain the key concepts of Decision-Making processes, with structured activity sheets mostly oriented to reinforce concepts presented in the video and verify comprehension: Decision Chain; Decision Traps; Frame; Values; Alternatives; Information; Reasoning with weight and rate tables; Decision Tree; Commitment to follow through; Decision Process.

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Website link:(https://www.decisioneducation.org/decision-focus-videos).

Decision Making model for grades 6-8 designed by the Colorado Educational Initiative
It is a 5-step model: Identify Decision; Brainstorm Options; Identify Possible Outcomes; Make Decision; Reflect On Decision. For each step, teaching progression, activities and examples of Decision-Making situations are provided. Examples of worksheets are provided as well.

http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Grade-MS-Decision-Making.pdf

Decision Making model for grades 9-12 designed by RMC Health
It is part of a collection of contents and learning goals defined as a learning path throughout all school levels. Although the situations addressed as examples and keys for discussions are mainly connected with health curriculum (safety, risk and awareness), the schemes, strategies and learning goals can easily be adopted with other sets of situations.

The 5-step framework for grades 9-12 enables analysis of complex situations: Pause and Think; Use a Prioritization Strategy; Make a Decision; Follow Through; Reflect. For each step there are clear definitions of sub skills that are age-aware, suggested activities mapped to the learning goals, vocabulary activities, group and personal activities, and teaching tips.

https://www.rmc.org/what-we-do/training-expertise-to-create-healthy-schools/health-education/decision-making/

Courtesy activities for grades 7–12 about Herd mentality and Tough decisions, from Choices the health and social-emotional learning magazine
Starting from essential questions such as: "Are you following the herd?" and "How can I make a tough decision?", the activities are developed with the use of close reading questions, critical-thinking questions, simplified Decision-Making grids, and simulations of real word social experiments (like launching a positive trend in social media or starting and observing the spreading of a silly trend at school).

Terms of reproduction are limited: https://www.scholastic.com/terms.htm

https://choices.scholastic.com/pages/content-hubs/decision-making.html

My goodness - a simulator of right versus right choices
My goodness is one of the online platforms created by MIT for gathering human perspectives on ethical/moral decisions. It is a simulator about how people choose the beneficiaries of charity. (good/good dilemma)

https://www.my-goodness.net/

The daily dilemma archive – published in goodcharacter.com
It is a collection of discussion starters based on real-life examples of ethical and moral dilemmas. Each discussion is composed of a situation described as a story, notes for the facilitator, and discussion questions.

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15. DEALING WITH NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

▶ **What is Bullying?**

One of the most common definitions of bullying is the one put forward by Prof. Dr. Dan Olweus, a research professor of psychology in Norway, who is considered to be the pioneer on the topic of bullying. According to Prof. Olweus:

"A student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students… It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words or in other ways." (Olweus, 1993)

Bullying is one of the most subtle forms of aggressive behaviour and violence. Nevertheless, not every act of violence is bullying. According to the WHO's survey on health behaviour in school-aged children bullying occurs when a student is:

"teased repeatedly in a way he or she does not like… But it is not bullying when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight. It is also not bullying when a student is teased in a friendly and playful way". (Currie C et al., 2012)

The most characteristic feature of bullying is the asymmetric and imbalanced power relationship among those who bully and those who are bullied. Furthermore, it is not an occasional or one-off occurrence, but a pattern of behaviour repeated over time against the same person with a noted power differential. Through diverse bullying acts the stronger student(s) systematically, purposefully and ruthlessly aim to hurt, damage, or intimidate the weaker one.

Bullying is not simply teasing. Victims of bullying, cannot defend themselves on their own and will often require outside intervention to stop the bullying (Gugel, 2014).Bullying is often classified into three basic types:

- **physica**l: hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, restraining another student by physical contact;
- **verbal**: threatening, teasing, insulting, taunting, blackmailing, calling names, spreading lies and rumours;
- **emotional/psychological:** intentionally excluding someone from a group or activity, manipulating, bringing into ridicule.

▶ **Why is it important to raise awareness of the negative relationships such as bullying among secondary school students?**

Bullying or cyberbullying is common amongst secondary school students and can have detrimental effects in the social and emotional development of the students.

However, erroneous beliefs and misconceptions about violence, bullying and victimisation are common and some of them wide-spread. These misconceptions often hinder the attentive, sensitive and neutral judgement of the adults and professionals in situations of bullying. This hinders them to perceive signs of bullying and intervene timely and adequately. A whole range of myths (e.g., "Bullying isn't serious. It's just a matter of kids being kids") are being supported in order to downplay the reality of bullying in schools (Highmark Foundation, 2015). It is therefore useful that teachers and pedagogical staff constantly reflect on their own perception and biases in order to improve accurate professional judgements.

The aim of addressing the topic of bullying among students will be to bring to light and create awareness not only about power imbalances among students that trigger bullying and violence, but to explore and illustrate the links between bullying, gender stereotypes, pigeon-hole thinking and discriminatory attitudes.

▶ **How can teachers promote awareness of negative relationships such as bullying through their own attitudes, behaviour, relationships, classroom managements, and pedagogy in the classroom?**

A teacher can promote awareness in the following ways:

- Ensure a safe space in which the students can engage with their own ideas and needs related to bullying;
- Promote empathy between the students and make them understand how it feels to be involved in a bullying situation as a perpetrator, victim or bystander
- Raise awareness on appropriate responses on bullying situations, especially related with bystanders
- Empower the students to express views, wishes, complaints and needs to change the social relations/climate in class.
- Promote the understanding of mechanisms and reasons that can be behind a bullying situation
- Contribute to the creation of a classroom climate that is not conducive to bullying.

> **Case Study**
>
> There is a bullying incident in the school and two students in the class have been involved as bystanders. One of them refers to this incident in the class. Giorgos, the maths teacher modifies the lesson plan he has already prepared in order to allow the class to discuss the incident. He motivates the students to discuss this incident and express their views. Then, he creates a fictional situation where the real incident was represented with fictional characters and invites different students of the class to interpret different roles in very short scenes. Through these scenes, he involves all the classroom to reflect on how they would react if they would be in the position of the two students and what are the reasons that could have been behind such behaviour. Through this discussion and reflection, the class is empowered to deal more effectively with similar situations that could happen in the future and Giorgos has achieved much more that he would have if he would have followed his lesson plan normally.

▶ **How can teachers infuse awareness on bullying in the teaching of academic subjects?**

Language

- Provide examples of bullying behaviour from literature or news
- Include discussions about bullying in the curriculum framework when teaching topics related to respect, human relations, school environment etc

ICT

- Explain basic issues related with cyberbullying and internet safety
- Organise discussions regarding the DOs and DON'T's in online communication

▶ **Examples of activities the teacher may use to raise awareness on bullying in the classroom[13]**

Activity 1: The bullying triangle/rectangle

The aim of this activity is to create a safe space for experience-based learning and exercise of empathy through taking different roles in a bullying situation. It also aims to sensitise the group to the topic of bullying and to prepare for a bullying prevention and intervention input/session.

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[13] Activities developed in the framework of the project EUBULLY (2016) co-funded by DG Justice

Step 1

Start by introducing briefly the main parties involved in a bullying situation, which is usually a group situation. It is very important to emphasise that the roles are determined by certain behaviours and not by personality qualities:

- Bullies – active, initiate and take the leading role, attacking the victim and bringing others (followers) about to help them.
- Victims – can be anybody, they are innocent in the situation they are involved in, and they are unable to defend themselves and cope with the situation.
- Followers – the bully's assistants and they support the bully. They do not take initiative and become active bullies, but cheer on the bullies.
- Bystanders – the observers, who do not encourage the bullying, but neither take a position.

As a group, the participants discuss the different roles and provide examples of the typical behaviours, reactions, attitudes and positions. Write all ideas about the particular role on a separate flip-chart sheet.

Step 2

Divide the group into four small groups, each engaging with one of the roles in the bullying situation. You can divide the groups randomly or according to the participant's personal preferences. Beware to avoid "sensitive" role choices.

Step 3

For 10 minutes each small group decides on a common gesture, body expression, that they feel is most representative for the role they have chosen and prepare to show it through a group "still image". While the groups are working, mark the bullying rectangle on the floor in the middle of the room with crepe tape, sticking the sheets with the four roles on each side of the rectangle.

Step 4

Invite all groups to come together. One after another they take their position on the bullying rectangle's side and by command freeze in their group's still image. The rest of the participants observe the still image and discuss the following questions:

- How does this image look like? What does it express? What might have happened?
- What does it say? How does it feel?

● How does this image affect you? What do you think of? What do you feel?

After collecting ideas on the questions, the first still image group will "de-freeze" and proceed with the next group.

Step 5

After all still images are exhibited, discuss the power relations and balance in the bulling rectangle and try out different change and solution options. Then, invite the students to go back to their small groups to discuss (for about 10 minutes) how the power imbalance could be resolved. What new gestures, expression, body image can they create to bring across the message of new power distribution in the bullying rectangle?

When all groups are ready from their discussion, have the groups gather again and take their positions at the respective rectangle side. Each group takes turns to show their changed still image, while the other observe and share impressions.

Alternatively, you can invite one participant from one of the groups who has a different idea to intervene, "modelling" the still image of the presenting group. After this intervention ask the frozen image characters how they feel now, whether something has changed for better for them in the bullying situation. After all body images were re-modelled, de-role all participants and proceed with reflective discussion.

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