



# Empathy



10-14



12 x 50-60 min.



board/flip chart; copies of exercises; paper; signs;



This module gives teachers and pupils tools for reflection on empathy.



Social Studies/Civic Education

Philosophy

Social Learning

Psychology

Dialogue

Diversity

Cosmopolitan issues

Ethics/values education



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# Introduction

## Background information and didactical perspective

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an approach that was developed by Professor Matthew Lipman, who was influenced by educational psychologists and philosophers such as Vygotsky, Piaget and Dewey as well as by the tradition of Socratic dialogue. P4C builds on higher order thinking (critical, creative and caring thinking), inquiring, reasoning, listening and dialogical skills.

Children are encouraged to create their own philosophical questions. The facilitator supports children in their own thinking, reasoning and inquiring, as well as in building on each other's ideas in a dialogue. In P4C the facilitator fosters student-led discussions on philosophical questions. The role of the facilitator is crucial to ensuring quality dialogue and progress, as well as integration within the curriculum.

It is well documented that P4C has an impact on children's cognitive, personal, social and emotional development. P4C encourages children as well as young adults to think for themselves and develop dialogical skills.

## Learning outcomes

### Competencies

- critical thinking, creative thinking, reflective skills, inquiry, dialogical

### Topics / National curriculum

Empathy, putting oneself in another's place, putting oneself in another's shoes, mirroring the actions and emotions of others, friendship, identity/belonging

## Lesson plan

### Abbreviations:

**A** = Activity

**D** = Discussion

**GW** = Group work

**IW** = Individual work

**HW** = Homework

**PW** = Partnerwork

**PTS** = Previous Teacher's Study

**PO** = Pupils opinions

**PP** = Pupil's presentations

**TP** = Teacher's presentation

## Lesson No 1 : Putting oneself in another's place

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) <b>PTS TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M1</b> (Leading Idea: "Empathy") to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise.</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Prepare a flip chart</li><li>Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher hands out a copy of the exercise <b>M2</b> to each pupil and introduces the subject asking students to think about the questions contained in <b>M2</b>. While the pupils are engaged in the work phase, the teacher writes the questions contained in <b>M2</b> on the flip chart in order to stimulate the following discussion.</li></ul>	<p><b>M1</b> Leading Idea: "Empathy"</p> <p><b>M2</b> Exercise: "Putting oneself in another's place"</p>
Work phase (10 min.) <b>PO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The students think individually about the questions.</li></ul>	
Discussion (40 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher stimulates the discussion among students about the questions contained in <b>M2</b>. The questions should create philosophical dialogue and the teacher should always ask for the reasoning behind students' answer to facilitate critical thinking about the empathy.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 2 : Putting oneself in another's shoes empathy

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) <b>PTS</b> <b>TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Teacher studies previously <b>M1</b> (Leading Idea: "Empathy") and prepares cards on the base of the instructions contained in <b>M3</b>.</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Prepare cards</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher gives a single card for each pupil and asks students to imagine how another person felt on the base of <b>M3</b>.</li></ul>	<p><b>M1</b> Leading Idea: "Empathy"</p> <p><b>M3</b> Exercise "Putting oneself in another's shoes - empathy"</p>
Work phase (15 min.) <b>PO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students work individually writing their own answers.</li></ul>	
Discussion (35 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>After pupils have shared their answers, the teacher invites them to compare the different ideas and imaginations.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 3 : Empathy

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) <b>PTS</b> <b>TP</b>	<b>Previous activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M1</b> (Leading Idea: "Empathy").</li></ul> <b>Preparation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student</li></ul> <b>Execution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher divides the students into small groups. Then, the teacher hands out a copy of the exercise <b>M4</b> and asks students to answer the questions contained in the exercise <b>M4</b>.</li></ul>	<b>M1</b> Leading Idea: "Empathy"  <b>M4</b> Exercise "Empathy"
Work phase (20 min.) <b>PO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Each group discuss their opinions and writes their findings on a sheet.</li></ul>	
Discussion (30 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The groups share each other their findings. After pupils have shared their answers, the teacher invites them to compare the different ideas and imaginations.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 4 : Mirroring the actions and emotions of others

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.)  <b>PTS</b> <b>TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M1</b> (Leading Idea: "Empathy").</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher hands out a copy of the exercise <b>M5</b> to each pupil asking them to read the introduction of the exercise.</li></ul>	<p><b>M1</b> Leading Idea: "Empathy"</p> <p><b>M5</b> Activity: "Mirroring the actions and emotions of others"</p>
Work phase (15 min.)  <b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students work in pairs to experience the roles of the leader and the mirror according to the instructions contained in <b>M5</b>.</li></ul>	
Discussion (30 min.)  <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher invites students to share with classmates their own thoughts and emotions in simulating the roles of leader and mirror.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 5 : Talking

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.)  <b>PTS</b> <b>TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M6</b> (the Leading Idea: “Talking”).</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Prepare a flip chart</li><li>Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher divides the class in small groups and hands out a copy of the exercise Talking (<b>M7</b>) to each group asking them to read the questions contained in the exercise.</li></ul>	<p><b>M6</b> Leading Idea: “Talking”</p> <p><b>M7</b> Exercise: “Talking”</p>
Work phase (15 min.)  <b>GW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Every group works in order to explain their answers and giving good reasons for their opinions.</li></ul>	
Discussion (30 min.)  <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher invites the groups to share each other their findings. Then, the teacher writes on the flipchart key words that emerged from the pupil’s reflections to facilitate the discussion.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 6 : What does it mean to be a person?

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) <b>PTS</b> <b>TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M8</b> (the Leading Idea: "What does it mean to be a person?").</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher divides the class in small groups and hands out a copy of the exercise "What is a person?" (<b>M9</b>) to each group asking them to read the introduction of the exercise.</li></ul>	<p><b>M8</b> Leading idea: "What does it mean to be a person?"</p> <p><b>M9</b> Exercise: "What is a person?"</p>
Work phase (15 min.) <b>GW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Every group works in order to explain their answers and giving good reasons for their opinions.</li></ul>	
Discussion (30 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher invites the groups to share each other their findings. Then, the teacher writes on the flipchart key words that emerged from the pupil's reflections to facilitate the discussion.</li></ul>	



## Lesson No 7 : Treating a person like a person

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) <b>PTS TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Teacher studies previously <b>M8</b> (the Leading Idea: "What does it mean to be a person?").</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher hands out a copy of the exercise "Treating a person like a person" (<b>M10</b>) to the pupils asking them to read the introduction of the exercise.</li></ul>	<p><b>M8</b> Leading idea: "What does it mean to be a person?"</p> <p><b>M10</b> Exercise: "Treating a person like a person"</p>
Work phase (15 min.) <b>GW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students work individually giving a reason for their answers.</li></ul>	
Discussion (30 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher stimulates a discussion among pupils about the findings of their reflection. S/he invites the students to discuss with classmates the issues they think are more relevant. It should create a philosophical dialogue and the teacher should always ask for the reasoning behind students' answers (not allowing "yes" or "no" answers) to facilitate a critical thinking about treating a person like a person.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 8 : Friendship

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) <b>PTS</b> <b>TP</b>	<b>Previous activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M11</b> (the Leading Idea: "Friendship/Comradeship").</li></ul> <b>Preparation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Prepare a flip chart</li></ul> <b>Execution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher writes on the flip chart the questions contained in <b>M12</b>.</li></ul>	<b>M11</b> Leading Idea: "Friendship/Comradeship"  <b>M12</b> Exercise: "Friends"
Work phase (10 min.) <b>PO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher read the questions contained in the exercise and asks students to reflect on them.</li></ul>	
Discussion (30 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher stimulates the discussion among students about the questions contained in <b>M12</b>. The questions should create philosophical dialogue and the teacher should always ask for the reasoning behind students' answer to facilitate critical thinking.</li></ul>	
Homework <b>HW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The students are asked to look for the possible meanings of friendship by talking with their parents and relatives.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 9 : What is friendship?

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) <b>PTS</b> <b>TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M11</b> (the Leading Idea: "Friendship/Comradeship"). Then the teacher studies the instructions of the activity <b>M11</b>. The teacher prepares signs. A sign is placed in each corner of the room. Each bears a different word on the base of the instructions contained in activity <b>M11</b>.</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Prepare signs</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher read the instructions contained in the activity <b>M13</b> to students.</li></ul>	<p><b>M11</b> Leading Idea: "Friendship/Comradeship"</p> <p><b>M13</b> Exercise "What is friendship?"</p>
Work phase (30 min.) <b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Each pupil places themselves under the sign they consider most appropriate.</li></ul>	
Discussion (20 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher invites pupils to share in groups their own opinion about what means friendship.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 10 : Analogies on friendship

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) <b>PTS</b> <b>TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M11</b> (the Leading Idea: "Friendship/Comradeship"). The teacher divides the pupils into small groups.</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher hands out a copy of <b>M14</b> to each group asking them to read the instructions contained in the exercise.</li></ul>	<p><b>M11</b> Leading Idea: "Friendship/Comradeship"</p> <p><b>M14</b> Exercise: "Analogies on friendship"</p>
Work phase (20 min.) <b>GW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The students work into groups to decide which are good and which are bad analogies contained in the <b>M14</b>. Then the small groups are asked to build their own analogies.</li></ul>	
Discussion (20 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The small groups share and discuss about their own analogies.</li></ul>	
Homework <b>HW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The students are asked to look for the possible meanings of friendship by talking with their parents and relatives.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 11 : Putting oneself in the place of the Other and working on empathy

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) <b>PTS TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M15</b> (the Leading Idea: "Putting yourself in the other's place and empathy"). The teacher studies the instructions contained in <b>M16</b>.</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Prepare empty cards</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher divides students in groups of 2 (couples), one in front of the other and explains the instructions contained in <b>M16</b> to start the activity.</li></ul>	<p><b>M15</b> Leading Idea "Putting yourself in the other's place and empathy"</p> <p><b>M16</b> Exercise "Putting oneself in the place of the Other and working on empathy"</p>
Work phase (10 min.) <b>PW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The students work in pairs. One of the two will act like a mirror, doing what the other is doing without touching. They have to look at each other at all times and maintain eye contact. The one who guides can move from one place to another in the room. After two minutes we change, and the one who guides will now be the mirror.</li></ul>	
Work phase (10 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When they finish, they all talk about what we imagine the other person was feeling while he or she was acting as the mirror.</li></ul>	
Work phase (10 min.) <b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Each person will write a situation they have experienced or seen on a card (empty cards are given by the teacher). The teacher shuffles the cards and begins reading them one by one.</li></ul>	
Work phase (15 min.) <b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>After each card, the group tries to describe what the person involved in the situation is thinking or feeling, explaining their reasoning. The group think about whether they have experienced something similar.</li></ul>	
Homework <b>HW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The students are asked to look for the possible meanings of what means putting yourself in the other's place by talking with their parents and relatives.</li></ul>	

## Lesson No 12 : Prejudice - getting to know the Other

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) <b>PTS</b> <b>TP</b>	<p><b>Previous activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher studies previously <b>M17</b> (the Leading Idea: "Prejudice - getting to know the Other").</li></ul> <p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare a circle of chairs</li><li>Prepare a flip chart</li></ul> <p><b>Execution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher writes the questions contained in the activity <b>M18</b> on the board and invites students to raise their hands to take the word in turn.</li></ul>	<p><b>M17</b> Leading Idea: "Prejudice - getting to know the Other"</p> <p><b>M18</b> Exercise "Generalizations that lead us to prejudice. Are they useful?"</p>
Discussion (20 min.) <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The students share and discuss about their own answers trying to identify similarities and differences in their opinions.</li></ul>	
Work phase (20 min.) <b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher divides students in small groups to work together to create a slogan to promote the empathy and deconstruct the prejudices.</li></ul>	
Homework <b>HW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The teacher invites small groups to meet at home and create a billboard with the slogans created during the activity.</li></ul>	

# M1 Leading Idea: “Empathy”

Empathy is a complex concept. It is an important ability that involves:

- understanding of the situation,
- communicating this understanding,
- acting on that understanding in a helpful way.

Empathy is an essential skill to connect with people around you and to recognize the emotions that another person is experiencing.

Emotions are important to the quality and the meaning of our experience. Many philosophers like Plato, Descartes, Hobbes, and Hume developed theories about emotions. Also in recent years, emotions have become more and more the focus of philosophical concern. The American philosopher Martha Nussbaum emphasizes, in her work on the importance of emotions in moral philosophy, the central role of storytelling in expanding our empathy. Empathy is a necessary part of a just society, Nussbaum claims.

Sometimes we are able to put ourselves in another’s place. It could be an act of silent communication – a shared understanding or we imagine feeling how a certain person. For example, if we read a story or a book, if we see a film – the identification with the victim, the animal, the hero or with any other person or creature in the story, book or film puts us in the place of the Other. So, we are able to take another’s perspective. It can be an interesting experience to see things differently. We learn to imagine what other people or creatures might feel in response to certain events - this can help us to cultivate humanity.

How would you feel, if...?

## M2 Exercise: “Putting oneself in another’s place”

What would happen and how would you feel, if...

1. ... you were a child with no parents?
2. ... your skin had another colour?
3. ... you were a dog?
4. ... you were your teacher?
5. ... you were a grandfather?
6. ... you were a child having nothing to eat?
7. ... you were a child coming from a different country?



## M3 Exercise “Putting oneself in another’s shoes - empathy”

Prepare cards. On one side of the notecard write something that someone did to a person. It can be something good or bad, done by a child, a parent, a teacher, a friend, a stranger, it doesn't matter. For example: “My friend told my secret to everyone in class”. “My cousin gave me the book she likes best.”, “My teacher yelled at me in front of the entire class.”, “I did not get picked for the basketball team.” On the other side of the card, ask the children to write down how it made them feel. For example: “I felt betrayed.”, “I felt happy.”

Each child will get a single card. You can encourage your students to imagine how another person felt. Together we compare the different ideas and imaginations.

## M4 Exercise “Empathy”

1. You have probably heard the proverb “Don’t criticize a man until you have walked a mile in his shoes.” What does this mean?
2. In what ways can you “walk” in someone else’s shoes?
3. What does empathy mean to you?
4. Can you show empathy? If yes, how?
5. What is the difference between empathy and sympathy?

## M5 Activity: “Mirroring the actions and emotions of others”

In this exercise you will put yourself in the shoes of another person – so you’ll be acting out her/his situations and assessing his/her feelings.

1. Find a partner.
2. One of you must be “leader” and one must be the “mirror”.
3. The “leader” starts with different movements and the “mirror” will imitate as if the “leader” is looking directly in the mirror.
4. Reverse the roles and repeat the exercise.

## M6 Leading Idea: “Talking”

One of the abilities needed to activate the processes of empathy in a relationship is the capability to communicate with the others. It means being able to express oneself correctly and clearly and, at the same time, to be willing to understand what others have to say to us. To explore one of the basic requirements that make up the empathy construct, it is important to reflect both on what it means to talk, and on the ability to express oneself.

Children should learn to express themselves well. However, sometimes they become very shy when they notice that their talking is not always welcome at home or at school. At the same time, it is very important for them learning to listen to the other talking, bearing in mind that respect is the foundation of a good communication.

In the process of developing a philosophical community of inquiry it is important to create an intellectually safe environment. That means that all participants are comfortable expressing themselves without fear of reprisal or personal attack. Everybody should be invited to speak and, of course, no one should be forced to speak.

## M7 Exercise: “Talking”

1. When do you like to talk about your thoughts and ideas?
2. When don't you like to talk about your thoughts and ideas?
3. Does it help you to talk if others listen to you carefully?
4. Are there things you think about but cannot express?
5. Do you think it is important for you to express your thoughts? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. Do you think it is important for everybody to express her/his thoughts? If so, why? If not, why not?
7. Do you think it is important for you to be listened by the others?
8. Do you think it is important for the others to be listened by you?

## M8 Leading idea: “What does it mean to be a person?”

In order to be able to put oneself in another’s shoes and feel empathy, it is necessary to conceive the other as a person, who has feelings, certain visions of the world, certain ways of acting. If we don’t perceive the other as a person, we risk to objectify and dehumanize her/him. In this case, it is impossible to activate the process of empathy.

In the story “Alice in Wonderland” Alice tells the queen to treat the baby as a person. Alice feels responsible to protect the baby and wants the queen to treat the baby with respect. Many questions arise: What does a person have those other creatures or things do not have? What makes a person a person?

## M9 Exercise: “What is a person?”

Tell whether the following are persons or not. Please give a reason for your answer.

1. Mickey Mouse
2. A picture of a boy
3. Superwoman
4. Little red riding hood
5. Bart Simpson
6. A doll
7. A newly born baby
8. A dog with the name Fred

## M10 Exercise: “Treating a person like a person”

Can you decide if in the following examples a person is treated like a person? Please give a reason for your answer.

1. You giggle about a girl, while she is standing very close to you.
2. Your teacher helps you with an exercise.
3. A girl promises that her friend will dance with your lonesome brother.
4. A boy takes a picture of you and posts it on the internet.
5. A person writes to you and lies about his age - he is fifty and tells you he is sixteen.
6. You accept an invitation of a student, but you do not like him, so you are not going there.
7. A woman is told not to sit down until the men sit.
8. You join a new class and the teacher calls you by another name.
9. Someone takes away your books without asking.



## M11 Leading Idea: “Friendship/Comradeship”

Empathy is defined as that ability to recognize and understand the feelings, thoughts and emotional situations of another person, the ability to identify with the others and understand their points of view, concerns and moods in general. Probably the most fitting synonym is “identification”. The human being develops the empathy by growing as it is useful for the survival and cooperation of our species. It generates social attachment and keeps people together. In fact, to create relationships of trust and friendship it is essential to understand the thoughts of the others. In this sense, empathy becomes an essential prerequisite to be able to build friendship relationships. At the same time, it is through friendly relationships that one person develops her/his empathic skills, and the ability to put her/himself in the other’s shoes, sharing emotions, thoughts and experiences. In this sense acting friendship is one of the first steps in which children face empathy in an unconscious way.

Reflecting with students on the meaning of friendship could constitute for the teacher a starting point to guide children on developing the capabilities to understand the diversity of the others, which can help to recognize one of the foundational aspects of empathy.

Humans are, by nature, social beings. Although this does not imply that every individual feels the same need to socialize, we all need to exist socially, and only others can give us that type of existence. Even being ignored or facing a certain intentional indifference (closer to isolation and discrimination) is a form of social existence because it requires that we first recognize the person whom we then ignore. There are many other ways of existing socially both in a positive and in a negative way (it is not unusual to find behavioural patterns under the motto “Better to exist negatively than not to exist at all”). One of the most powerful ways of having a positive social existence is having friends who help us to achieve that positive social significance. It is not usually difficult to agree with the people around us about the necessity of having friends, and we will also agree on some of the main characteristics a person must possess in order to be considered a friend (trust, support, understanding, dedication, a shared sense of humour, etc.).

Bearing all this in mind in relation to issues of inclusion/exclusion and cosmopolitanism, it is interesting to study when these characteristics are realized, what form they take, to what extent are we choosing our friends, and the extent to which a specific context can influence the type of friendships we make. For example, the type of friends we will have been not the same if we live in a small town as they will be if we live in a big city. Rather, friendships depend on the situational context; diversity in the type of friends could even be higher in the small town than in a city (since in a small town we have to choose our friends from who is available, and the social need of having friends is stronger than the need to find those who are “similar.” However, at the same time, diversity is usually greater in cities).

Does the number and quality of friends we have depend on the size of our school or town? Are friends and friendships all similar or different? Is diversity or homogeneity in friends more beneficial? How long does it take to make friends with someone? (Can friendships occur instantly, or do they develop over time)? What role does our attitude play in making friends? How do we decide whether someone has the potential to be our friend?

## M12 Exercise: “Friends”

1. How many friends can a person have?
2. Are all friendships equal?
3. Do you have a best friend?
4. Is it good or bad to have a best friend?
5. Can we have more than one best friend?
6. Can we have just several real friends instead of a best friend?
7. Can people hardly ever talk and still be friends?
8. Is it possible to be friends and never meet?
9. Can we be someone’s friend without really knowing him/her?
10. Are there people who are always arguing with their friends?
11. Is it possible for two very different people to be friends?
12. Is it possible for someone to have no friends?
13. Do you trust your friends more than anybody else? (brothers/sisters/parents/ teachers/your dog)
14. Did you choose all your friends or did your friends choose you, or both? If both, can you give an example of when you choose and when you are chosen?
15. How can you form a friendship?

## M13 Exercise “What is friendship?”

A sign is placed in each corner of the room. Each bears a different word (friends, partner/comrade, sidekick/mate, schoolmates/acquaintances). The following sentences are read aloud, and the students place themselves under the sign they consider most appropriate.

1. I have a problem at home and I need to tell someone.
2. S/he wants me to do something I am not comfortable with, but if I don't accept, s/he might reject me.
3. We work well together.
4. I don't know if they have any brothers or sisters.
5. We meet on the park bench every afternoon.
6. I never see him/her alone, always in contexts with more people.
7. I feel comfortable in his/her presence.
8. When s/he speaks, I don't dare to speak.
9. We always hang out in a group, and we can't leave the group because they would not like it.
10. When we see each other in summer we spent every minute together, but then, during the rest of the year we never meet or speak.

# M14 Exercise: “Analogies on friendship”

By comparing two similar relationships, one which we know well and one we don't, analogical reasoning allows us to infer suppositions about the one we don't know. It therefore allows us to make headway in our research and discover unknown relationships based on our knowledge of known relationships. Analogical reasoning is thus vital in the theory of inductive reasoning, in artistic creation, in the creation of figurative expressions in poetry and prose and, in fact, in any innovation (creation) that combines similarity and difference. In order to work on analogical reasoning, we propose the following exercise. In the first part, students have to decide which are good and which are bad analogies. In the second part students are asked to build their own analogies.

	Very good	Good	Acceptable	Bad
The wrist is to the hand as the neck is to the head.	X			
The egg is to the hen as the seed is to the plant.				
A sharp knife is to a butcher as a sharp pencil is to a painter.				
The wind is to a comet as the mast is to a sail.				
The liquidizer is to electricity as the car is to petrol.				
Night is to day as winter is to summer.				
Puppies are to dogs as children are to parents.				

1. The eyes are to the face as .... Example: lighthouse to the ships
2. Getting angry is to friendship as....
3. Spending time with a friend is to friendship as....
4. Trust is to friendship as....
5. A plant needs water as a friend needs....
6. Having different friends is to a person as having....
7. A person with no friends is to happiness as....

## M15 Leading Idea “Putting yourself in the other’s place and empathy”

Putting oneself in the other’s place, being capable of looking at reality from different perspectives, and developing one’s empathy are probably the best ways to not only get to know what others believe and value, but also to feel, understand, appreciate, and value others’ beliefs. Having good empathy undoubtedly improves your understanding of other people’s reality and problems and allows you to better appreciate both their behaviour and its causes. “To sense one’s and others’ feelings we must pay attention to non-verbal language: looks, gestures, postures...”.

As Carl Rogers states, empathy is the capacity to feel and think as if one were the other, without actually being the other. In order to do that, we must develop some specific skills and abilities, such as listening, interpreting, managing feelings, taking different perspectives into consideration, etc. From the cosmopolitan approach we want to work on, the capacity to put oneself in another’s place, as well as to develop empathy, are basic skills or abilities that allow us to reach beyond the local sphere, and to be open to other realities or ways of life that we may encounter by looking at reality from a global perspective.

# M16 Exercise “Putting oneself in the place of the Other and working on empathy”

*Given times in this exercise are estimates for a group of 20. Teachers should adapt the time to their class size.*

**Duration:** 10 min.

1. Participants organize in groups of 2 (couples), one in front of the other. One of the two will act like a mirror, doing what the other is doing without touching. They have to look at each other at all times and maintain eye contact. The one who guides can move from one place to another in the room. After two minutes we change, and the one who guides will now be the mirror.
2. Large group: When we finish, we all talk about what we imagine the other person was feeling while he or she was acting as the mirror. Is the feeling shared by others? Did we feel the same?

**Duration:** 20 min.

1. Now each person will write a situation they have experienced or seen on a card (empty cards are given by the facilitator). They don't write their names on the cards.
2. The facilitator shuffles the cards and begins reading them one by one.
3. After each card, the group tries to describe what the person involved in the situation is thinking or feeling, explaining their reasoning. We think about whether we have experienced something similar.
4. Once we finish with the description, the person who wrote the card can say if s/he felt that way.
5. In case the group has difficulty coming up with situations, you can give some simple examples: At some stage, someone criticized you for something you hadn't done; I had a date with some friends, and they didn't show up; I pass an exam after having studied hard...

## M17 Leading Idea: “Prejudice - getting to know the Other”

When we form groups or teams at school, the logical thing would be to use the candidates’ skills or abilities that we think are relevant for that given activity as criteria. However, we often use certain general characteristics that we think define the candidates based on their belonging to a certain group, class, or stratum. That is what we could call prejudice. A prejudice is a pre-judgement, usually not positive, according to ways of thinking already set in place, or according to generalizations, without giving it further thought and without really knowing about what we are judging. We have a tendency towards prejudice because it allows us to apply generalizations or categories that can quickly help us simplify and organize the world we live in. In a globalized world, where there is a lot of information to process; prejudices may help us think faster and more easily. Prejudices are there, and it is almost impossible not to have them. The problem arises when our prejudices become inflexible, definite judgments, and if we consistently use prejudice as a rule or criteria to assess or judge any situation (it is in this moment when we give the pre-judgement the pejorative meaning of prejudice). From our cosmopolitan approach, the problem with prejudice is that it ends up justifying discrimination towards certain people for the sole reason that they belong to a certain group, without taking into consideration their individual characteristics.

## M18 Exercise “Generalizations that lead us to prejudice. Are they useful?”

1. How do you organize your music, books or clothes? Do you establish categories? Based on what?
2. If you go to a bookshop and find a book in the adventure section, is it possible to have a general idea of the plot without reading it? Why?
3. Do all the books in the adventure section have certain characteristics in common? Which?
4. Could we generalize and say that all adventure novels are the same or merely similar?
5. If someone tells you that they have read an adventure novel, does that help you know what kind of book it was? Why?
6. If you like adventure novels and you find a book in the adventure section, does that mean you have to necessarily like it? If you don't like it, does that mean it is not an adventure novel?
7. If you like adventure novels, does that mean that you don't like any novel in particular?
8. Would it be useful to generalize about books when referring to them? Why? Would that be a judgment or prejudice?
9. Are all members of a certain group or category the same, or do they simply share some characteristics?
10. Would generalizing about people when referring to them be useful? Why?
11. What would happen if we never generalized? Would organizing in your daily life be easier or more difficult?
12. Would it be more or less comfortable?
13. Does generalizing help you simplify the experiences you go through? Can that lead to over-simplifying?
14. If so, what is the risk or the problem?
15. Can there be helpful generalizations and harmful ones? How can we differentiate them?
16. When generalization is harmful, can it generate prejudice?