



Language and Diversity

This module gives teachers and pupils tools to reflect about language and the language use.

 10-14

 12 x 60 min.

 board/flip chart;

 **Communication** **Dialogue** **Diversity** **Language** **Signs** **Symbols**



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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 skills, dialogical skills

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 : Language

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea “<i>Language</i>” in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Speaking - Language - Communication</i> to each pupil and introduces the subject asking students to think about the questions contained in this exercise.	<p>M1 Leading idea “Language”</p> <p>M2 Exercise “Speaking – language – communication”</p>
Main section (10 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students think individually about the questions and think also for giving reasons for each of them	
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher invites pupils to discuss with classmates the issues that they think are important, referring in particular to the questions of the exercises	

Lesson No 2 : The “The use of language – the language-game”

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (15 min.) PTS TP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea <i>The use of language – language game</i> <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsPrepare pieces of paper and markersPrepare a blank target with two concentric circles and the word “language” in the middle of the inner circleHand out a copy of each exercise to each student <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher introduces subject of <i>The use of language – language game</i> and asks the pupils to reflect upon the concept of language. Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Exploring the concept of language</i> and invites to think as many words they can which they associate with the target concept “language” and to decide to put it in the inner or outer circle	M3 Leading idea “The use of language – the language-game”
Main section (10 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students work individually writing their own list of words which they associate with the target concept “language”	M4 Exercise “Exploring the concept of language”
Discussion (35 min.) A D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher invites pupils to discuss and explore the language game – use of language: they discuss with each other the list of words together and decide where the words belong - in the inner or outer circle. Pupils have to give reasons. Reasons can include examples, counterexamples, definition...	M4 Exercise “Exploring the concept of language”

Lesson No 3 : Language and diversity

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (15 min.) PTS TP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies the leading idea <i>Language and diversity</i> then lists the points of exercise <i>Different languages</i> on the flip chart <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsPrepare a flip chartHand out a copy of each exercise to each student <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The teacher asks students to choose one or more topics to reflect on. After choosing, the teacher divides students into groups and asks them to discuss on the topics arisen by the topics and to make notes about them. Finally, asks students to share each other their own conclusions	<p>M5 Leading idea "Language and diversity"</p> <p>M6 Exercise "Different languages"</p>
Main section (20 min.) D A HW	<p>Step 1 Students work in groups discussing on the topics and making notes about them</p> <p>Step 2 Students think about the exercise <i>Thought experiments</i> and should be encouraged to think also about own thought experiments</p> <p>Step 3 As homework students can make up a new language</p>	<p>M6 Exercise "Different languages"</p> <p>M7 Exercise "Thought experiments"</p> <p>M8 Exercise "Make up a new language"</p>
Discussion (30 min.) A D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students share each other their own thoughts and conclusionsTeacher invites students also to tell words in different languages so that they can listen to the different sounds	<p>M6 Exercise "Different languages"</p> <p>M7 Exercise "Thought experiments"</p>

Lesson No 4 : Understanding

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) TP	Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare a circle of chairs• Hand out a copy of each exercise to each student Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher studies the leading idea <i>Understanding</i> asking pupils to reflect and become more specific in their understanding and use of language	M9 Leading idea "Understanding"
Main section (10 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students work individually reflecting on the concept of "understanding" and the different meanings – it is based on the aim of understanding basic concepts	M10 Exercise "Understanding" M11 Exercise "Thinking about understanding"
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher invites students to discuss how they use the word "understanding" and share with classmates how they express different ways of understanding and express what they mean by saying "understand"	M11 Exercise "Thinking about understanding"

Lesson No 5 : Signs and Symbols

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies the leading idea <i>Signs and symbols</i> and writes the questions of exercise <i>Signs and symbols</i> on the board <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher introduces subject and encourages pupils to list signs and symbols in everyday life	<p>M12 Leading idea "Signs and symbols"</p> <p>M13 Exercise "Signs and symbols"</p>
Main section (15 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students work individually writing their own list and also filling in the form <i>Sign or symbol</i>	<p>M13 Exercise "Signs and symbols"</p> <p>M14 Exercise "Sign or symbol?"</p>
Discussion (30 min.) A D HW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher invites pupils to discuss with classmates and give good reasons for their decisionsPupils explore their environment to find different signs and symbols – they create own symbols	<p>M15 Exercise "Signs"</p>

Lesson No 6 : Diversity between culture and tradition

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (10 min.) PTS TP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea “<i>Diversity between cultures</i>” in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Culture and traditions</i> to each pupil, then introduces the subject asking students to read the questions contained in the text	<p>M17 Leading idea “Diversity between cultures”</p> <p>M18 Exercise “Culture and traditions”</p>
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher stimulates the discussion among pupils about the questions contained in exercise <i>Culture and traditions</i> inviting them to discuss with classmates the issues that they think are more relevant. Students do not need to answer all of them. The questions 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 the meaning of culture and traditions	

Lesson No 7 : Customs/Traditions/Habits

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (15 min.) PTS TP HW PP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea “<i>Customs/Traditions/Habits</i>” in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student <p>Execution</p> <p>Step 1 Students are asked to interview their grandparents about the kind of things they did when they were their age. They could also ask if it was common for children to do things like this, and what the reasons were for doing them</p> <p>Step 2 During the next class, the teacher asks the whole group to share the information about what activities were traditional when their grandparents were their age and to explain why they did those things</p> <p>Step 3 Then the teacher asks pupils to investigate which of these traditions still exist and which do not. As a group, students must try to find out why some have disappeared, and if they have been replaced by other activities that are now beginning to be considered traditions (or have already become traditions)</p>	M19 Leading idea “Customs/Traditions/Habits”
Main section (15 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Then the teacher asks pupils to investigate which of these traditions still exist and which do not. As a group, students must try to find out why some have disappeared, and if they have been replaced by other activities that are now beginning to be considered traditions (or have already become traditions)	M19 Leading idea “Customs/Traditions/Habits”
Discussion (30 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Once the previous task is finished, the class can discuss the questions contained in activity/inquiry <i>Origin and disappearance of traditions</i> and explain their answers	M20 Activity “Origin and disappearance of traditions”

Lesson No 8 : Should everything be changed?

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea “<i>Customs/Traditions/Habits</i>” in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Should everything be changed?</i> to each pupil, and introduces the subject asking them to read the list of practices that have changed in the last fifty years, enumerated in the text. Then the teacher asks students to state which they think have been changes for the better, and why	<p>M19 Leading idea “Customs/Traditions/Habits”</p> <p>M21 Exercise “Should everything be changed?”</p>
Main section (10 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students work in groups discussing on the topics and making notes about them	
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students mutually share their own conclusions, giving reasons for their outcome	
Homework HW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students are asking to look for examples of improvement and decline by talking to their elders	

Lesson No 9 : Respect and tolerance

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	Previous activity <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies the leading idea <i>Language and diversity</i> then lists the points of exercise <i>Different languages</i> on the flip chart Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Tolerance and respect exercise</i> to each pupil, and introduces the subject asking them to read the sentences listed in the text. Then the teacher divides students in groups and asks them to find out in which of the situations presented in the text the use of the term “tolerance” implies the existence of respect and in which it does not	M22 Leading idea “Respect and tolerance” M23 Exercise “Respect and tolerance”
Main section (15 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students work into groups discussing on the topics and making notes about them	
Discussion (30 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students mutually share their own conclusions, giving reasons for their outcome	

Lesson No 10 : Tolerance

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (15 min.) PTS TP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea "<i>Respect and tolerance</i>" in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Tolerance</i> to each pupil, then introduces subject asking students to read the questions contained in the text	<p>M22 Leading idea "Respect and tolerance"</p> <p>M24 Exercise "Tolerance"</p>
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher stimulates the discussion among students about the questions contained in exercise <i>Tolerance</i> remembering that they do not need to answer all of them. The questions 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 tolerance	

Lesson No 11 : Tolerance or acceptance?

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea “<i>Respect and tolerance</i>” in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsHand out a copy of each exercise to each student <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher hands out a copy of exercise <i>Talk about yourself</i> to each pupil, and asks them to do the exercise	<p>M22 Leading idea “Respect and tolerance”</p> <p>M25 Exercise “Talk about yourself”</p>
Main section (15 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students work individually on the exercise making notes about their outcome	
Discussion (30 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">After students share their outcomes, the teacher will invite them to reason about the meaning of ‘tolerance’ and ‘acceptance’, reflecting on the difference between the two terms	

Lesson No 12 : Prejudice

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (5 min.) PTS TP	<p>Previous activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher studies previously the leading idea “<i>Pre-judgement/Prejudice</i>” in order to have a guide to stimulate reflection in the students during the discussion raised by the exercise <p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a circle of chairsPrepare a flip chart <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher writes on the flip chart the list of sentences contained in exercise <i>Prejudice and stereotype</i>	<p>M26 Leading idea “Pre-judgement/Prejudice”</p> <p>M27 Exercise “Prejudice and stereotype”</p>
Main section (15 min.) PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher asks pupils to read the list and to decide if every sentence expresses a stereotype or a prejudice, writing down how many pupils say yes and how many say not	
Discussion (40 min.) D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">After the work phase, the teacher stimulates a discussion among students asking them what the difference is, if there is any, between prejudice and stereotype and to try to give a definition for the two terms	

M1 Leading idea “Language”

All languages are sign systems and the term language is used as a synonym for sign system. There are many different sign systems, for example: Mathematical sign systems, musical notations, computer sign systems...

Language can be seen as a system of signs that express ideas. We differentiate between semantics, which tells us the meaning, the pragmatic, which tells us about the use and the syntax, which tells us about rules and form. The human language is a unique and highly elaborate system – a complex system of communication.

We do not choose the languages into which we are born. Some of us acquire several languages naturally, because of the multilingual communities we live in. Migrants often have to learn additional languages because they live in a new country with a different language. Many of us make a deliberate effort to learn additional languages. But not all people have equal access to the languages they need or would like to learn. But what is language? What attitudes do we have towards the different languages? Are some languages more logical or more beautiful than others? What do all languages rely on?

M2 Exercise “Speaking – language – communication”

- What is language?
- What does the word language mean?
- What kinds of languages do you know?
- What forms of languages do you know?
- Are all languages equal?
- Do only people have language?
- What does language consist of?
- If people do not speak the same language, is it possible for them to communicate with each other?
 - If so, how can they communicate with one another if they do not speak the same language?
 - If not, why do you think it is not possible to communicate with one another if you do not speak the same language?
- Can you make yourself understandable without knowing the language in a country where people speak a different language?
- Can a person communicate without speaking the language?
- What kind of connection is there between speaking and language?
- Can you speak to yourselves?
- Why do human beings speak?

M3 Leading idea “The use of language – the language-game”

Language is the basic means of communication for every human being. Language allows us to develop and express our thoughts, our feelings and experiences. Language is the basis for reasoning and developing interpersonal skills and enables us to engage in reflection and communication.

Philosophers are concerned about the use of language and the language-game that is important to communicate meaning and understanding. The role of a philosopher is to help understand the complexities of language. One main focus is on meaning – to promote awareness of the possible meanings of words inside the context of the non –linguistic human activities and to do conceptual analysis through language use. But how do we understand these concepts? What is the nature of language? Does language shape our thoughts? Does language influence our thinking?

Language is closely linked to our thoughts. According to the Russian psychologist Vygotsky, language is the primary vehicle for human thinking and learning. It is through conversation that children progress. But children can use speech not only for social communicative purpose, but also for communicating with themselves – so they can – use language as a problem-solving tool. Vygotsky wrote, “Instead of appealing to the adult, children appeal to themselves; language thus takes on an intrapersonal function in addition to its interpersonal use.”

There’s a strong link between interpersonal communication and identity, so language is closely related to issues of democracy and human rights. Linguistic diversity and democratization of language rights are important topics in intercultural education.

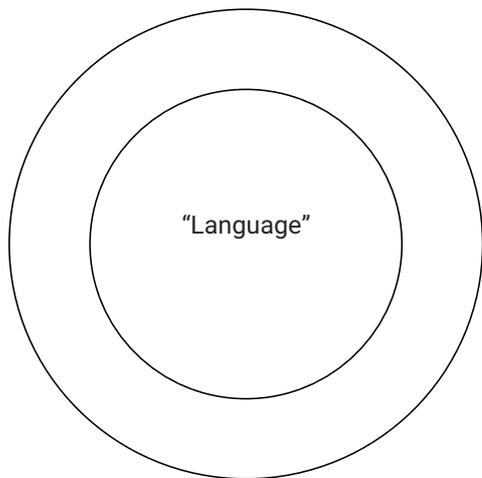
We want to take a closer look at the concept of language game - about the use of language and at the power of language in education for democracy.

We will start this part with an inquiry on “language.” “What is the concept of language?” “What are meanings?” This is an inquiry in the field of philosophy of language.

M4 Exercise “Exploring the concept of language”

Starting the activity "Target"¹

Target is a tool that your students can use, when they are uncertain about the nature of some concept



- Draw two circles on the board and write “language” in the middle of the inner circle.
- Ask the students to think of as many words as they can associate with the target concept “language”.
- Don’t reject any offering and write each word on the board as it comes up.
- Then divide the class into pairs and give each pair a blank sheet with two concentric circles (of course you can ask the children to draw circles for themselves). They should write “language” in the inner circle.
- Now the students should try to go through the list of with words on the board and they must decide where the words belong: Do they belong to the concept of “language” or do they think they definitely do not belong to the concept.
- Now they have to write the words in the inner or outer circle.
- Now the students have to give reasons for why they put the word in the inner or outer circle or put them to the outside.

Discussion

- The discussion should identify and evaluate reasons for retaining the words in that group or moving them in the center, or to the outside. Reasons can include examples, counter-examples and definitions.
- Plenary session to briefly summarize the outcomes in the groups
- Which questions did the different groups focus on and what did the pairs work together? What did the students think about “language”? What interested them in the discussion?
- What was the value of the discussion/ dialogue?
- Did anyone bring good reasons?
- Did anyone ask questions?
- Did anyone bring concrete examples?
- Did they bring counter-examples?

¹ Target is adapted from Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp, *Wondering at the World: Instructional Manual to Accompany Kio and Gus*. Montclair, New Jersey: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children with University Press of America 1986.

M5 Leading idea “Language and diversity”

People who grow up in different countries or different communities often learn different languages as well as different social and linguistic conventions. They are familiar with different rules for acting, for dressing; they have different beliefs and values. They are introduced to different texts for different purposes and go to schools that privilege different kinds of knowledge. These are just some of the differences that produce human diversity. As we all are different, diversity includes everyone.

People are born into an environment and come to know the world differently. However when people move outside their country or community they learn different ways of being in the world. But also through stories or books we can imagine different ways of living. “Going visiting” as the philosopher Hannah Arendt puts it is the way that enables us to make individual and particular acts of judgments.

M6 Exercise “Different languages”

- List all the languages spoken by members of your class.
- List all the languages spoken by your relatives.
- List all the languages spoken by your friends.
- Find out which languages in the world have the most speakers.
- Find out which languages are endangered.

M7 Exercise “Thought experiments”

- What if all human beings spoke the same language?
- What if there were no written languages?
- What if there were no names?

M8 Exercise “Make up a new language”

Ask your students to work in pairs or in groups of four.

- Choose some words and write them on the board.
- Then use made-up words instead of the real words.
- Then try to build sentences with the new words.
- Find out how much you will understand when someone speaks in this made-up language.

M9 Leading idea “Understanding”

We use the word understanding in many different ways. If we have a concept of something it is a way of understanding. For example if you want to understand math, you need to understand its formulas. But to understand them you must learn math like you have to learn a new language, you need to learn new symbols, new words and new grammar. But to understand math is not only to learn and to memorize a procedure or sequence of steps but also to try to understand why certain steps are required in a procedure. Often we understand something when we are able to explain it, when we understand a phenomenon or a process. Another way of understanding has to do with comprehension. For example if you read a text you may grasp what it means, but it can also have more than one meaning and we might comprehend various meanings.

If you say you understand your dog, you might be able to know what he wants when he barks (wants to go outside or get inside) or wags his tail (wants to be petted). When you say you understand a person, it may mean many different things: It could mean you understand the person although s/he speaks another language, for example through body language; it could happen that the person speaks your language and you refer to an unfamiliar phrase s/he has used, so it means to understand the phrase. There is another meaning if you understand has used, so it means to understand the phrase. There is another meaning if you understand a person's action, because you are trying to put yourself in the other person's place. It is often important to have background information in order to understand a situation. This way, one can have the whole picture. Sometimes it is necessary to have crosscultural competence to understand people from different countries. This is especially important if you want to understand relationships.

M10 Exercise “Understanding”

- Can you understand a person without putting yourself in the other’s persons place?
- If people do not speak the same language, how can they understand each other?
- If you could not speak someone’s language, how could you try to make yourself understandable?
- What kind of things could you do without understanding?
- Can a person know something without understanding it?
- What is the difference between understanding an animal and a person?
- Can you understand where the light goes when it is dark?
- Can you perceive something without understanding it?
- What is the difference between understanding a game and understanding a cat?
- Do you understand electricity? What does that mean?

M11 Exercise “Thinking about understanding”

- How have you used the word “understanding”?
- Think about your own experiences and how they express different ways of understanding.
- Think – what do you mean, when you say you “understand”
 - A story
 - A person
 - A painting
 - A joke
 - A rule
 - A proverb
 - A cat

M12 Leading idea “Signs and symbols”

There is a wide range of possible or intended meanings of signs and symbols. Students are encouraged to investigate examples of signs and symbols and deepen their understanding of the different meanings. You can also encourage them to think about a variety of signs and symbols and the meaning for those who use them. They can list signs and symbols in everyday life, for example traffic signs or peace symbols...

Encourage them to talk about the different meanings to deepen their understanding for some common concepts.

M13 Exercise “Signs and symbols”

- What kind of signs do you know?
- What kind of symbols do you know?
- What is the meaning of signs?
- What is the meaning of symbols?
- What is the difference between sign and symbol?

M14 Exercise “Sign or symbol?”

	Sign	Symbol	?
			
			
			
			
			
			

M15 Exercise “Signs”

Take your students on a walk through the school building or neighborhood with clipboards, digital cameras, or small drawing notebooks. Students can draw or photograph any signs they see. Back in the classroom, have the students share their drawings or photos and categorize them into different groups, such as signs that warn, signs that give directions, signs that tell people to stop, etc.

Different countries use different signs. Have the kids research signs from different countries on the Internet or at the library. Guidebooks for other countries usually include a list of signs as well as their meanings. They can copy or draw different signs and share what they have discovered. Maybe some of the kids create new signs, to communicate information; maybe some of the kids find places where signs are missing for example in the school building... They can create signs using different colors, different shapes, different materials...

Lead a discussion with the whole class about school signs and symbols.

M16 Exercise “Symbols”

A symbol is something that’s stands for, or represents something else. For example a white flag or a dove represents peace; the Olympic rings symbol represents the five different areas of the world involved in the Olympic Games.

- In this exercise kids can analyze symbols to consider their importance. When is something a symbol? What kind of national symbols of different countries do they know?
- Pick a symbol and make an artwork
- Create a new symbol and tell what it stands for

M17 Leading idea “Diversity between cultures”

We live in a world where cultural borders have become apparently more fleeting. The fast means of transport, the internet, the speed of movement of goods, and the political and economic pressures that push millions of people to leave their countries and move to safer countries have caused a change of social reality. It is a change that not only concerns the fact that you can get products and information easily, or that you can eat a pizza margherita anywhere, but also implies a relationship with people born in other countries of the world. These people bring different traditions and cultures, which, without a reflexive approach, seem to be incommensurable. Adolescents, like children, perhaps succeed more than adults in opening up to different cultures, thanks to the curiosity that pushes them towards whatever is new and different.

When different cultures are present in the same event—for example in a school- this is actually a great treasure. It could work as a stimulus in order to favour an exchange of opinions, questioning, doubts, wishes among children who share the same space where several lives intertwine their experiences. The sharing of experiences in a reflective way could open a window on a new space where the loyalty to the known bridges the openness to the new.

For this reason it is very important for children to be encouraged in reflecting on the human distinctiveness and diversity through empathy and imagination.

M18 Exercise “Culture and traditions”

Stimulate the discussion among students about the following questions but remember that they do not need to answer all of them. The questions should create a philosophical dialogue and the teacher should always ask for the reasoning behind students' answers (not allowing “yes” or “no” answers) in order to facilitate a critical thinking about the meaning of culture and traditions.

- Does my name have a meaning in my culture?
- Does my name have a meaning within my family's traditions?
- Is every person's name meaningful?
- If I have my grandfather's or grandmother's name, does that mean that I am continuing a family tradition?
- Every year, on the first of January, my family and I celebrate the New Year, but my Chinese friend does not. Why?
- Why does Rahma's mother always wear a headscarf?
- When Gennaro's grandmother goes to the church she wears a headscarf. Does she do it for the same reasons as Rahma's mother?
- Andrea's family is very Catholic and they never eat meat on Fridays. If Andrea eats a hamburger on Friday, does he violate a rule or a tradition?
- Flora's family is vegetarian and they never eat meat. If Flora eats a hamburger does she violate a rule or a tradition?
- If my Indian friend moves his head from left to right when he nods, instead of up and down, can I understand what he wants to say?

M19 Leading idea “Customs/Traditions/Habits”

In all societies, in human groups which have a reasonably long and shared history, there are traditions and practices that are carried out by the vast majority of people (maybe even all the people) in that group. These traditions stand the test of time and become part of the culture. They even become part of what defines the group or society; what we could call the identity of that culture. They are therefore very relevant to both the human group and to each one of its members. When they appear, they are accepted because they contribute to the way society is organized. Once they are established, they live on, even when their contribution to the group is no longer clear.

Traditions are important in countries or nations because, thanks to them, it is possible to provide citizens with a stronger sense of belonging to the country. That is why some people think it is vital to respect and preserve those traditions, since losing them would mean losing a part of themselves, and their world would become strange to them. These people lack the necessary flexibility to modify those traditions or even abandon them when they are no longer beneficial.

It is sometimes possible to know when they started, but on other occasions the origins of traditions are unknown and go back to ancient times.

M20 Activity “Origin and disappearance of traditions”

Students are asked to interview their grandparents about the kind of things they did when they were their age. They could also ask if it was common for children to do things like this, and what the reasons were for doing them.

During the next class, the whole group shares the information about what activities were traditional when their grandparents were their age and they explain why they did those things.

They then investigate which of these traditions still exist and which do not. As a group, students must try to find out why some have disappeared, and if they have been replaced by other activities that are now beginning to be considered traditions (or have already become traditions).

Once that task is finished, the class can discuss the following questions and explain their answers.

- Did you find any of your grandparents’ traditions absurd?
- Were any other traditions sensible and reasonable?
- Is it a good thing that those traditions have disappeared?
- Has society and the people that make up society gained anything with the disappearance of those traditions?
- Are there traditions nowadays that are equivalent to the ones that have disappeared?
- Are they worse, better, or impossible to compare?

M21 Exercise “Should everything be changed?”

Is change always desirable? Does change always mean going from something worse to something better? In the following list of practices that have changed in the last fifty years, state which you think have been changes for the better, and why:

- People now get around by car instead of on horseback or carriage.
- People used to eat more home-made food. Nowadays, people eat more precooked food.
- Humanity now has medicine to cure many illnesses.
- In the past, clothes were home-made and any patchwork was done at home. Nowadays we buy clothes at shops and make repairs at specialized repair shops.
- Fifty years ago, it was quite usual to find several generations of the same family living under the same roof. Nowadays, it is not as common.
- Fifty years ago there was no legislation on Human Rights. Now, there is.
- A hundred years ago, very few girls went to high school and hardly any went to university.
- Fifty years ago, divorce was illegal in some countries of Europe. Nowadays, in the same countries the number of divorces is higher than the number of marriages.
- Some years ago, corporal punishment at school was legal. Nowadays, corporal punishment is not permitted.

Look for examples of improvement and decline by talking to your elders.

M22 Leading idea “Respect and tolerance”

As we know, in 1995 a Declaration of Principles of Tolerance was adopted by UNESCO’s member states http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13175&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html. However, the term “tolerance” has several meanings and can be applied to both people (tolerance to pain, or tolerance towards the other’s way of thinking and acting) and to other living beings (some plants’ tolerance to lack of sunlight). On the other hand, the term “respect” refers solely to human attitude and cannot be used when referring to other living beings, objects, or things. Human beings may or may not respect other living beings and things (e.g. cats, furniture, laws, or climate conditions). However, the opposite does not happen unless we are talking metaphorically. For example, if, when talking about an extreme cold wave, we say “the low temperatures don’t respect anybody” (expressing that temperatures are exceptionally low), or if we say that a certain law does not respect Human Rights (expressing the idea that that law is no good), or if we say that two dogs respect each other when they are facing each other just before a fight (we are actually referring to a certain degree of fear), then we are talking metaphorically.

The concept of tolerance that we are interested in is the one applied when taking the Other’s way of thinking and acting into consideration and accepting it. However, in this definition we –once again– discover two ways of understanding tolerance which have a different relation to the term “respect”.

If, by ‘tolerating’ the Other, we understand it as meaning ‘resigned’, ‘patient’, ‘benevolent’ or even ‘suffering’ the other’s actions or thoughts, then this tolerance does not imply respect. Such tolerance could be mistaken for indifference, which is a disrespectful way of treating the Other (since we do not recognize him as a valid interlocutor, or as an active member of the community). If, by contrast, we understand ‘tolerance’ as meaning that we are openly interested in the Other’s thoughts and actions, then tolerance could be translated as active acceptance of the Other (where there is always respect and there is no place for indifference). While in the first case, tolerance towards the Other does not require contact or listening, in the second case both elements are vital in a voluntary relation with the Other.

In referring to cosmopolitan and diverse environments, we often observe that people who are different are tolerated in the way we first defined “toleration” (i.e., difference from the other is tolerated). This means that their presence is tolerated from a distance, and this makes the other a permanent stranger. From this position, it is impossible to understand the Other’s different vision of the world, or to comprehend the Other’s convictions that motivate the way she expresses herself and the way she acts. This type of tolerance is based on avoiding contact with the Other, while simply putting up with the Other’s presence. This conception of tolerance does not imply any effort in trying to understand difference, and may be profoundly disrespectful if silent rejection and non-recognition of differences are disguised as acceptance and tolerance. In contrast to this, we have the second conception, which requires concern for, interest in, and recognition of the other. While the first definition is exclusionary through ignorance, the second is inclusive, thanks to recognition.

M23 Exercise “Respect and tolerance”

In which of the following situations does the use of the term “tolerance” imply respect and in which does it not? Explain the reasons for your answers.

- Maria tolerates high temperatures: she never feels hot.
- José and Juan have different points of view but they are capable of discussing things calmly and listening to one another.
- My friend Carlos cannot tolerate the fact that I hand-write my school reports, although our teacher does not mind whether we type or hand-write them.
- Rosario can hardly tolerate Zulma and never speaks to her.
- The classmate I share a desk with needs complete silence when working, while I tend to quietly hum tunes when I concentrate without noticing that I’m doing it. This annoys my friend, so we have talked. I make an effort not to hum and he tolerates me humming from time to time.
- My father does not tolerate the messiness of my room.
- Charo cannot tolerate the smell of boiled spinach when her mother is cooking.
- We all know Juana does not tolerate anybody sitting at her chair during breaks in class. Today, she pushed Rocio to the floor because she sat at her chair knowing how much it annoys Juana.
- The teacher does not tolerate anybody being late to class.
- Paco has no choice but to tolerate his neighbors playing very loud music when he wants to listen to the news on TV. However, whenever he sees his neighbors, he thinks that if he ignores them, they will understand that he is annoyed.
- Although my mother does not like having pets, she tolerates me having a rabbit at home.
- Although my mother is not religious, she tolerates my grandfather (who is religious) saying a prayer before dinner whenever he comes to visit.
- My mother does not tolerate me tearing bread with my hands because she says that is what knives are for.

M24 Exercise “Tolerance”

Stimulate the discussion among students about the following questions but remember that they do not need to answer all of them. The questions 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 tolerance.

- What things should people tolerate?
- What things should people not tolerate?
- Does being tolerant towards someone mean accepting everything she does or thinks?
- Are there things you do which people should not tolerate?
- Can you think of things that you do not like but which you must tolerate?
- Does being respectful mean we have to agree with everything somebody says?
- Is it possible to be respectful and contradict someone at the same time?
- Can we be tolerant and think differently than another person?
- Must we be tolerant with intolerant people?
- Can we learn to be tolerant?
- Can you respect someone while you ignore him/her? Can we tolerate someone while ignoring him/her?
- Is it necessary to know why someone thinks differently in order to tolerate that difference? And in order to respect the difference?
- When we say that we are tolerant, does that mean that we always respect the Other's different way of thinking or thinking?
- What does tolerating someone mean? What does respecting someone mean?
- What is tolerance?

M25 Exercise “Talk about yourself”

- A. Report an episode when you didn't feel tolerated. Say what feelings and thoughts you had about yourself and the people involved in the situation.
- B. Report an episode when you felt tolerated but not accepted and respected. Say what feelings and thoughts you had about yourself and the people involved in the situation. Then, say what the difference is, if any, between being tolerated and being accepted. Provide some examples if you find it helpful.

M26 Leading idea “Pre-judgement/Prejudice”

A pre-judgment is a pre-conceived evaluation that has been submitted to no test. We reason on the basis of pre-judgments when, for instance, the behavior of a person is generalized to relate to an entire class of people of which s/he is a member, or when many people state something that is deemed to be necessarily true because it was affirmed by a large number of people. Examples of pre-judgments include myths, legends, hearsay and, in general, any statement that is not supported by a test of its truth. Nevertheless, it doesn't mean that a pre-judgment necessarily produces negative judgments, or that it results from negative judgments. Sometimes judgments result from hypotheses that cannot be proved because of a lack of appropriate means. Therefore, prejudices, since they are in fact pre-judgments, lead us to circumstances in which they are either affirmed or refuted.

M27 Exercise “Prejudice and stereotype”

What is the difference, if any, between a stereotype and a prejudice? Read the following sentences and decide if they express a stereotype or a prejudice. Then try to give a definition of stereotype and prejudice.

- Mariella was bitten by a dog when she was a child. Now she thinks that all dogs bite human beings, and whenever she sees a dog she is scared.
- Inga told her teacher that there is no Christmas without snow.
- Alberto’s mother is convinced that close to the main train station is an area where most bag-snatchers live. So, when she went there the other day, she did not bring her bag and put everything in her pockets.
- Genny does not want his mum to take him to school because he knows “woman driving, perils thriving.”
- Abdu has to move to Europe with his family, but he is scared because he knows that Europeans hate Muslims.
- Piersilvio can’t wait to go to Naples on holiday because he knows he will always eat pizza and babà, sing all day long, learn to play the mandolin, and enjoy the sunny weather everyday.
- John doesn’t want to go to live in Scotland because he fear he’ll become mean like all the Scottish are.
- Gianna would like to move to Germany after her studies because she knows that the Germans are the most hardworking people in Europe and that Germany is the least corrupt country.
- Jack has never been to Mexico and he does not want to go there because, according to him, it is a dirty and uncivilized country.