TUTOR

Teachers' upskilling aiming at a holistic inclusivity in learning

Specialisation Course 1

Strand 2: Theories and Concepts

Contents

Strand 2: Theories and Concepts

Welcome to **Strand 2: Uncovering Invisible Structures in Multicultural Contexts**. This module focuses on elements of implicit bias and how hidden social and cultural systems influence life, education, and society.

How This Strand Will Be Conducted

This is a digital guide of **asynchronous learning** experiences and **self-directed exercises**. You will examine your own biases, learn about implicit and explicit attitudes, understand the challenges of different learning environments, and be able to negotiate these challenges.

How the Training Material Will Be Used

- **Self-Reflection Tools**: Compare your explicit and implicit attitudes.
- **PowerPoint Slides**: Multimedia material to help illustrate the effects of stereotypes and biases.
- **Interactive Discussions**: Virtual councils for sharing lessons and best practices.

The training in this module will enable you to reflect on unconscious biases which can be hidden in your practice.

Unit 1 Pedagogical (Diversity) Tact – Asynchronous Text

Concept the "unplannable"

The concept of pedagogical tact plays a crucial role in balancing the dynamic interactions between teachers and students, especially in a diverse and multicultural environment. It is not about rigid teaching principles, but rather a flexible approach that responds to the needs of the students. The concept emphasizes the importance of understanding the complexity and some uncertainty of pedagogical action. Using a case study and the concept of the 'third space', this training unit explores how teachers can create an environment in which cultural differences are respected, and new forms of identity can emerge, challenging traditional power structures and encouraging creative learning experiences.

To speak about pedagogical tact, we must first clarify its relevance. Originally introduced by Johann Friedrich Herbart in the 19th century, the concept was intended to bridge the gap between theory and practice in teaching and education (Herbart, 1897). Pedagogical tact refers to a specific awareness of problems related to the determinability and indeterminability, certainty and uncertainty, as well as the availability and unavailability of pedagogical actions. It is not seen as a simple solution to educational challenges but rather as a framework for discussing educational issues. In this sense, pedagogical tact seeks to identify the problems associated with certain

practices and institutions and to recognize the dimensions involved, to develop one's own frameworks of thought and action within pedagogical practice (Zirfas & Burghardt, 2019).

One difficulty lies in the fact that tact cannot be easily addressed in a behaviourist, quantifiable, conceptual, or technical language. It cannot be reduced to a set of teaching principles or specific skills. Tact is not so much knowledge implemented in action but rather knowledge as action, and as such, it is always person-bound and situation-dependent. At the same time, it retains an intersubjective character and can be understood through socio- and cultural-ethical concepts (Van Manen, 1995).

In practice, pedagogical and didactic elements often intertwine, and within this connection[1], 'tactful action' can become apparent. In a specific situation, this means that the teacher tries to understand what is going on within the learner, empathizes with the learner's experience, and thus senses the pedagogical significance of the situation, knowing what to do, how to do it, and then actually acts appropriately (Van Manen, 1995). This pedagogical moment of perceiving, thinking, and acting raises the question of how to do justice to the pedagogical counterpart or what form of pedagogical solidarity with the counterpart seems appropriate. This also entails a kind of regulatory mechanism with which pedagogical attitudes, practices, and values are critically examined.

Spivak conceptualises an education "to come," that cultivates a habit of democratic civility and emphasises a responsibility to the Other, focusing on being accountable to them rather than on their behalf or for them (Spivak, 2004, p. 526). From this perspective, pedagogical tact becomes important in situations characterized by moral reasoning, as it involves assigning respect or disdain. Here, tact primarily signals a pedagogically understood crisis that deals with precarious *self and other* assignments (Zirfas & Burghardt, 2019).

In the classroom setting, an example of Spivak's concept of education "to come" could occur when students are discussing a sensitive topic, such as race, gender, or cultural differences. Rather than the teacher speaking on behalf of marginalized students or making assumptions about their experiences, the teacher would instead create space for those students to share their perspectives if they choose to do so. The teacher's role would be to ensure that the discussion remains respectful and that all students are held accountable for listening and engaging thoughtfully. By doing so, the teacher practices pedagogical tact, balancing authority with empathy and guiding the students through moral reasoning. This approach fosters democratic civility by encouraging students to understand and respect each other's identities, rather than imposing judgments on their behalf.

Heterogeneous classes require increased interaction between teachers and learners, whether in questions related to the content or in dealing with tensions and conflicts.

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[1] Herbart suggests that tact "involuntarily" inserts itself between theory and practice but does not necessarily build a bridge between them.

This new reality can present unexpected challenges for teachers. In an effort to maintain control and cover the material, they may choose to impose strict rules and heavily structure the class. They focus primarily on their own authority and the delivery of content. While this approach may allow the class to proceed without major 'disruptions,' it leaves little room for the needs of the learners. The pedagogical and didactic aspects of teaching, such as individual support and creative learning methods, are then neglected (Van Manen, 1995). For teachers, this often results in a loss of authenticity, leading to a diminished sense of fulfilment and joy in teaching.

Assuming that education is meant to achieve both individualization and socialization equally, the question then arises of how to determine the relationship between these goals, whether there should be a hierarchy or a prioritization of one over the other. Pedagogical tact challenges us to balance the tension between the general and the individual, to compensate for the strong influence of societal norms and structures through an individualized education that provides a counterbalance to socialization and enculturation. However, it must also be critically noted that individuality can hardly be brought forth through education alone.

Engaging with these individuals from a position of pedagogical diversity tact means that the "diversity of a learner" must not be seen as a deficit. This would make tactful engagement impossible. Instead, this "diversity" should be seen as a kind of "being other" when compared to the norm one knows, since this alone allows for the emergence of respect for individuality and individual integrity of the other. Conversely, *"the guidance of children in tactful action should be possible through the unintentional example given by the teacher, through their tactful action in engaging with children"* (Zirfas & Burghardt ,2019).

Case Study

The following interview has been edited for this Case Study.

Gerstbach. Wie wird kulturelle Andersheit und kulturelle Fremdheit im pädagogischen Kontext erlebt? (2011). 79-83.

Interview with an experienced educator who teaches at a vocational secondary school for social professions in Vienna. The main focus is on dietetics and elderly care. More than half of her classes, consisting of about ten students, have a migration background and come from a wide variety of countries.

Cultural differences are noticeable to the educator, and she compares them to "barriers": "Sometimes this barrier is the language." The educator makes a significant effort to empathise with the students and help them overcome these "barriers."

The school's curriculum includes a cooking class. Primarily, Austrian dishes are prepared using ingredients from Austria, but during the semester, students are also encouraged to present and cook typical dishes from their home countries. Afterward, a communal meal is held.

Through the lessons in the kitchen, the educator creates a **"unique" space** where, at the end of the school year, students are asked to cook **their own** dishes. The anecdote presented serves as an example of such a scene:

"We once had a student from Tunisia. In the international cuisine class, students bring their own ingredients and cook their own dishes, and I wondered, 'What is he doing?' He removed the cover (the frame and the support surfaces) from the stove (we have gas stoves) and turned on the stove. For a moment, I thought he was going to set the whole kitchen on fire. But then he placed the pieces of pepper and everything else directly on the flame and said to me, 'Yes, this is how we prepare it at home.' So, he transformed the whole kitchen into an open grill, and I just made sure nothing hazardous happened. And I thought, 'Hmm... okay, this is really quite different.'"

The educator describes the entire situation very clearly and vividly but also admits that the student's cooking method seemed suspicious to her. Nevertheless, she did not intervene in the situation, choosing instead to observe without stepping in.

While "the unfamiliar" can be frightening, the fact that the situation was new for everyone involved, and that a different space was created for it, made it more of a shared exploration.

The educator encourages both the students and herself to discover new things together. She also notes, "The students are often reserved and apologise, or feel they need to justify themselves – often in front of the group. I put a stop to that relatively quickly."

Reciprocal communication is important to the educator, but it must not become overwhelming. She takes her responsibility as a teacher seriously, stepping in to set the framework of interaction – especially when it involves recognising the individuality of each student and intervening against internalised notions of subordination. Furthermore, the educator argues that she **acknowledges and regards** the students as "independent."

Bhabha introduced the idea of **the "third space"** as a key part of his postcolonial theory (Bhabha, 1994). This "third space" is not a physical location, but rather a concept that challenges and expands how we think about culture, identity, and meaning. It represents the mixing and blending of diverse cultures, where new identities and meanings are constantly being created and changed. This idea shows that nothing is fixed or unchanging—everything is shaped by the influence of diverse cultures. The "third space" breaks down traditional ways of thinking, allowing for a more fluid and blended understanding of identity that goes beyond simple categories like "self" and "other."

As a result of the educator's actions in the case study, an international culture is conceived, one that is not based on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of cultural hybridity. The "own space" that the educator opens up for the students is a "third space," which allows for the creation of new forms of identity and cultural expression that are not bound by traditional or dominant narratives. It opens up a space for creative renegotiations and reinterpretations, where existing power relations and discourses can be questioned and transformed. In this sense, the "third space" is a place of possibility, where meanings can not only be produced but also destabilized and reconfigured.

Through tactful acting – in the above case, through observing and waiting – the teacher creates the conditions for establishing a "third space" with the students. It is also important to recognize that pedagogical tact, as previously described, manifests itself in interpersonal actions. The framework the teacher creates by preventing apologies and justifications as mechanisms of subordination is also part of this tactful action.

The educational and didactic act cannot be planned in advance down to the smallest detail. It is necessary to consider and respond to given situations and developments. In a sense, this creates a dynamic in the tactful behaviour of teachers. Dimensions of teachers' actions that should be considered are the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, the sensitivity to the diverse needs and emotional states of students, the skill to facilitate engagement and participation, and the capacity to balance authority with empathy and understanding.

Case Study

Points of reflection

Creating "Unique Spaces": The educator in the case study created a "unique" space where students could explore their cultural identity through cooking. How can teachers create similar spaces in their own classrooms where students feel safe to express their cultural backgrounds and perspectives?

Handling the "Unfamiliar": The educator chose to observe the unfamiliar cooking method rather than intervene. How do you handle situations where students' approaches or cultural practices are different from what you expect? When is it appropriate to intervene, and when is it better to observe and allow for shared exploration?

Supporting Student Confidence: The educator noticed that students often feel the need to apologize or justify themselves. How can teachers actively build confidence in students, particularly those from diverse cultural backgrounds, to ensure they feel valued and empowered to express themselves?

Balancing Authority and Empathy: How do teachers balance maintaining classroom authority with creating a space for open, respectful exploration of cultural differences? What role does pedagogical tact play in fostering this balance?

Recognizing Student Independence: The educator emphasizes recognizing students as independent individuals. How can teachers ensure that they see and treat each student as a unique individual, with their own needs and experiences, while maintaining a sense of community in the classroom?

Encouraging Reciprocal Communication: What practices can be adopted to promote meaningful, reciprocal communication in the classroom? How can teachers encourage both students and themselves to be open to learning from one another?

Handling Internalized Subordination: The educator steps in when students display internalized subordination, such as unnecessary apologies. How can teachers recognize and address internalized attitudes of inferiority in their students, and what strategies can help foster a sense of equality and self-worth?

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Unit 2 Culturally responsive teaching

Introduction:

Culturally sensitive teaching, or culturally responsive teaching (CRT), is an approach that values and integrates students' diverse cultural backgrounds into the learning process. This method goes beyond merely acknowledging diversity; it actively incorporates students' cultural references and experiences into all aspects of education. This approach not only makes learning more relatable and engaging but also fosters an inclusive environment where students feel respected and understood.

At its core, culturally sensitive teaching recognizes that students' cultural backgrounds influence their learning, communication, and interaction styles. Educators practicing this approach adapt their curriculum, methods, and classroom environment to reflect students' cultures, languages, and traditions. This requires educators to be mindful of their own cultural biases and to continually learn about their students' backgrounds. By seeing themselves reflected in their education, students can experience enhanced academic success and a greater sense of belonging.

For students with migrant backgrounds, culturally sensitive teaching involves creating a welcoming environment that celebrates their cultural diversity. This can be achieved by incorporating diverse perspectives into the curriculum, using materials that reflect students' backgrounds, and connecting lessons to their home cultures. Addressing language barriers through visual aids, bilingual resources, and scaffolded instruction is also crucial. Engaging with families and communities can further support these students, bridging the gap between school and home life. These practices not only improve the learning experience for migrant students but also support their social-emotional well-being (Najarro 2023).

2.1 "Doing is less important than being"

In culturally responsive teaching, a teacher's presence, authenticity, and attitudes play a significant role in shaping their practice and influencing student engagement. Research shows that when teachers exhibit warmth, empathy, and genuine concern for students' well-being, they foster a trusting environment where students feel seen and respected, which is essential for meaningful learning. Being an authentic teacher involves embracing vulnerability and engaging in honest, respectful interactions with students, recognizing the importance of cultural humility (Gay, 2018). Instead of solely focusing on curriculum delivery, teachers should prioritize building relationships and creating a sense of community. These relationships act as a foundation, helping students feel secure enough to engage, ask questions, and participate actively in class.

Characteristics of a positive and open attitude that support culturally responsive teaching include curiosity, flexibility, and an eagerness to learn from students' diverse cultural backgrounds. Educators who approach teaching with cultural awareness, actively listen to students, and demonstrate respect for different perspectives are

more likely to engage students effectively. Maintaining high academic expectations while being adaptable in instructional strategies ensures that the needs of all students are met equitably. In this way, culturally responsive teaching moves beyond simply delivering content; it becomes a dynamic process where "being"—in the sense of showing genuine care and connection—guides how teachers interact with and support their students (Hammond, 2015).

For students with migrant backgrounds, a teacher's positive and authentic presence can be especially powerful. These students often face unique challenges such as language barriers, cultural transitions, and feelings of isolation. Teachers who demonstrate cultural responsiveness by integrating aspects of students' home cultures into the curriculum help validate their identities and bridge the gap between their previous experiences and the new learning environment.

Simple gestures like learning a few phrases in a student's native language or incorporating culturally relevant examples can make students feel welcomed and valued (Hersi, 2019). Additionally, culturally responsive teachers are more likely to create flexible learning environments that accommodate different language proficiencies and learning styles, allowing migrant students to thrive academically and socially. By showing a genuine interest in their cultural background and life experiences, teachers can help migrant students build confidence, fostering a sense of belonging that is crucial for their overall success in the classroom.

2.2 Discussing the importance of attitudes

Reflecting on biases and stereotypes is a critical first step in developing cultural sensitivity and fostering an inclusive classroom. Below is an exploration of how teachers can reflect on and address their own biases and use this reflection to create a more engaging and equitable learning environment.

Explore strategies for developing a more inclusive mindset and cultural sensitivity.

Reflecting on one's own biases:

1. What stereotypes might I as a teacher have?
   o Every person, including educators, can carry unconscious biases and stereotypes, often formed through societal influences, personal experiences, and media portrayals. For teachers, these biases might manifest as assumptions about students' academic ability, behaviour, or motivation based on their cultural background, language, socioeconomic status, or family dynamics. For example, a teacher might assume that a student from a low-income household lacks parental support or that a student with an accent struggles with language comprehension. Acknowledging the existence of these stereotypes is essential, as unexamined biases can lead to inequitable teaching practices and lower expectations, impacting student outcomes (Hammond, 2015).
2. Where do they come from and how can I overcome them?
   o Stereotypes are often deeply ingrained and shaped by cultural narratives, past experiences, and dominant social perspectives. They can be perpetuated

through media, community attitudes, and even through education systems that may inadvertently favour certain cultural norms over others. To overcome these biases, teachers must engage in continuous self-reflection and education. Strategies like keeping a reflective journal, seeking peer feedback, and participating in professional development focused on equity and anti-bias education are effective tools (Gay, 2018). Additionally, adopting a growth mindset—where teachers actively challenge their assumptions and learn from their students—can help in dismantling stereotypes. Developing an understanding of students' lived experiences and engaging in open dialogue are powerful ways to replace preconceived notions with a more nuanced view of each student as an individual (Milner, 2020).

3. How can I help my students see themselves and their communities as belonging in schools, leading to more engagement and success?

    o Creating a sense of belonging for students involves validating their identities and experiences within the school environment. This starts by integrating culturally relevant materials and perspectives into the curriculum for students to see themselves reflected in what they learn. Teachers can also encourage students to share their cultural backgrounds and incorporate these experiences into class discussions and projects. Promoting an inclusive classroom culture that celebrates diversity helps students feel valued and connected, which fosters higher engagement and motivation. Moreover, building strong relationships with students and showing a genuine interest in their lives both inside and outside of school can significantly boost their sense of belonging and academic confidence (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Encouraging students to see their community assets—thus cultural knowledge, languages, and traditions—as valuable resources in their learning journey helps build a positive self-concept and greater investment in their education.

2.3 Attitudinal qualities

Core qualities that teachers should develop:

- Sense of mission
    - o A teacher's sense of mission involves a deep commitment to both academic excellence and the holistic development of students. This sense of mission is driven by the belief that education can effect significant social change. Teachers with a keen sense of mission go beyond delivering content; they work to create an environment where students feel genuinely valued. Authentic engagement with students' cultural backgrounds is a critical aspect of this mission. By showing sincere interest in students' experiences and avoiding superficial interactions, teachers can build trust and foster a more meaningful educational experience.
- Solidarity with, and empathy for, students

- Teachers must cultivate solidarity and empathy to support the students they teach. Solidarity means standing alongside students, understanding their challenges, and advocating for their needs. Empathy involves actively listening to and valuing students' perspectives. Recognizing and respecting students' cultural backgrounds is crucial for fostering an inclusive classroom environment. Teachers should avoid reducing cultural experiences to stereotypes or clichés. Genuine engagement and empathy help build stronger, more trusting relationships, creating a classroom atmosphere where students feel safe and respected.

- Courage to challenge mainstream knowledge
  - Effective teachers must question and criticise mainstream knowledge and educational practices. This quality is essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. By integrating diverse perspectives and questioning conventional narratives, teachers can create a curriculum that better reflects students' cultural backgrounds and experiences. This willingness to challenge dominant knowledge frameworks supports a more balanced and just educational experience for all students.

- Improvisation
  - Improvisation refers to the ability to adapt and respond flexibly to the evolving needs of students and the classroom environment. Effective teachers are those who can adjust their teaching strategies based on real-time feedback and changing classroom dynamics. This flexibility is especially important for implementing culturally relevant pedagogy, as it allows teachers to tailor their approaches to align with students' cultural contexts and needs. Improvisation helps teachers address the complexities of diverse classrooms effectively.

- Passion for social justice
  - A passion for social justice drives teachers to address inequalities and advocate for systemic change within the educational system. This quality is crucial for promoting fairness and equity in the classroom. Teachers who are passionate about social justice work to challenge biases and ensure that every student's voice is heard and respected. This passion involves integrating culturally relevant pedagogy and actively listening to students to meet their educational needs fairly and inclusively.

Reflection: Emphasise the role of genuine interest and respect for students' cultural backgrounds in building trust without falling into an "exoticism trap" and using clichés as a canvas to interact with others. Can culturally relevant pedagogy and active listening be part of such an approach?

Some ideas: Culturally relevant pedagogy and active listening are key components of the core qualities discussed. Effective teaching involves engaging deeply with

students' cultural backgrounds and avoiding stereotypes or clichés. Culturally relevant pedagogy helps tailor instruction to reflect and respect students' experiences, enhancing their engagement and learning outcomes. Active listening allows teachers to understand and respond to students' unique perspectives and needs. Together, these approaches ensure that teaching practices are respectful, responsive, and supportive of every student's cultural identity.

By embodying these core qualities and integrating culturally relevant pedagogy with active listening, teachers can create an educational environment that values and supports each student's background and promotes a more just and effective learning experience.

2.4 Levels of inclusion conditions in a peer group and associated intervention needs

Levels of inclusion conditions in a peer group and associated intervention needs:

1. Maintaining everyday school life in which all people involved feel comfortable and included
   o **Description:** Creating an inclusive and supportive environment where every member of the school community—students, teachers, and staff—feels respected and valued. This involves celebrating diversity and ensuring that every individual feels they belong.
     - Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: Train teachers to recognize and value students' diverse cultural backgrounds and understand how these experiences impact learning.
     - Inclusive Curriculum Design: Embed culturally relevant materials and perspectives into lessons to reflect the backgrounds of migrant students.
     - Classroom Environment: Create a welcoming space with multicultural decorations and displays of students' cultural achievements.
     - Community Building: Promote a sense of belonging by celebrating cultural identities and encouraging students to share their traditions.
2. Dealing appropriately with demanding situations and conflicts
   o Description: Addressing and resolving conflicts and challenging situations in a way that maintains a positive and inclusive classroom environment.
     - Conflict Resolution Training: Equip teachers with culturally sensitive strategies to handle conflicts and understand different communication styles.
     - Restorative Practices: Use restorative justice to repair relationships and address conflicts, focusing on understanding and resolving root causes.

- Open Dialogue: Foster a safe space for respectful communication where students can express concerns and discuss misunderstandings.
- Cultural Mediation: Employ cultural mediators to facilitate conflict resolution, ensuring all perspectives are considered.

3. Intervening in serious conditions that hinder inclusion
   o Description: Addressing significant barriers to inclusion that impact students' ability to participate fully in school life.
      - Individualized Support Plans: Create tailored plans addressing cultural backgrounds and specific needs for students facing severe inclusion challenges.
      - Anti-Discrimination Policies: Implement and enforce inclusive anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies, ensuring they are communicated and applied consistently.
      - Systemic Review and Adjustment: Regularly assess and adjust school policies and practices to eliminate systemic barriers and ensure equity.
      - Student Advocacy: Set up systems for students to report and address concerns about exclusion or discrimination promptly.

4. Seeking out and involving experts
   o Description: Engaging external expertise to enhance inclusion practices and support for students with migrant backgrounds.
      - Expert Consultation: Work with specialists in multicultural education and language development to enhance inclusion practices.
      - Partnerships with Community Organizations: Collaborate with local groups and advocacy agencies for additional resources and support.
      - Professional Development Workshops: Host training sessions with external experts to equip teachers with advanced strategies for culturally responsive teaching.
      - Ongoing Evaluation and Feedback: Place importance on instruction and the relationship between assessment and student learning during evaluations. For example, raise the need for examination of classroom practices to understand how such practices might affect for instance migrant students' opportunities for learning. Stress should be placed on using the formative and summative assessment of evaluation as formative assessment enhances learning through feedback. Additionally, use expert evaluations and feedback to continuously improve inclusion practices and school policies.

Culturally responsive teaching needs the framework of culturally relevant pedagogy:

- Student learning — Focus on enhancing students' intellectual growth by prioritizing their cognitive development and problem-solving skills. This includes fostering critical thinking, encouraging curiosity, and providing opportunities for students to tackle complex problems. The goal is to help students not only in the acquisition of knowledge but its application to various contexts.

- Cultural competence — Build an environment where students can embrace and celebrate their culture of origin while gaining fluency in additional cultures. This involves integrating cultural learning into the curriculum, encouraging students to explore and appreciate diverse cultural perspectives, and promoting interactions that enhance cross-cultural understanding.

- Critical consciousness — Educate students to recognize, analyse, and address real-world problems, particularly those involving social and systemic inequities facing marginalized groups. This means teaching students to question societal norms, understand power dynamics, and engage in actions aimed at creating social justice and equity. By developing critical consciousness, students are empowered to become informed and active participants in addressing societal issues.

2.5 Pedagogical knowing and acting

Define pedagogical knowing as the deep understanding of educational theories, methods, and the cultural contexts of students and the importance of cultural knowledge in informing pedagogical decisions and practices.

Importance of Cultural Knowledge: Cultural knowledge is vital in shaping pedagogical decisions and practices. By being aware of students' cultural contexts, educators can tailor their instruction to be more relevant and engaging, ensuring that all students have equitable opportunities to succeed. Understanding the cultural backgrounds of students helps teachers address diverse needs, validate students' identities, and create an inclusive classroom environment.

Explore strategies for integrating cultural knowledge into lesson planning and classroom activities.

- Include multiple perspectives in your instruction, make sure the images displayed in classrooms represent a wide range of diversity
  - **Diverse Representations:** Ensure that the instructional materials, such as textbooks, multimedia resources, and classroom displays, reflect diverse cultural perspectives and backgrounds. This includes incorporating stories, historical accounts, and examples from various cultures.
  - **Inclusive Images and Media:** Display images and media in the classroom to represent diverse races, ethnicities, and gender identities. This visual representation helps students see themselves and others in

the content being studied, fostering a sense of belonging and relevance.

- Contextualise issues within race, class, ethnicity, and gender
    - **Integrate Critical Contexts:** When discussing historical events, literature, or current issues, provide context that considers how race, class, ethnicity, and gender impact experiences and perspectives. This approach helps students understand the complexities of societal issues and promotes critical thinking.
    - **Analyse Social Constructs:** Facilitate discussions that explore how social constructs and identities shape individuals' experiences and societal structures. Assist students to analyse these constructs critically and understand their implications in different contexts.

- Help students achieve academic success while still validating their identities
    - **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy:** Plan lessons that relates with students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. Design lesson plans that connect academic content with students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. This approach makes learning more meaningful and helps students see the value of their cultural knowledge in the academic context.
    - **Affirmation of Identity:** Recognize and celebrate students' cultural identities through classroom activities, projects, and discussions. Provide positive reinforcement and feedback that acknowledges students' cultural contributions and perspectives.

- Understand different communication styles and modify classroom interactions accordingly
    - **Recognize Diverse Communication Norms:** Be aware of various cultural communication styles and norms, including verbal and non-verbal cues. Adapt your teaching strategies and interactions to accommodate these differences, ensuring effective and respectful communication.
    - **Responsive Interaction: Classroom interactions should be adjusted to include different communication styles.** For example, some cultures may emphasize indirect communication, while others may be more direct. Understanding these styles helps in building better relationships and reducing misunderstandings.

- Connect students' prior knowledge and cultural experiences with new knowledge
    - **Build on Existing Knowledge:** Use students' prior knowledge and cultural experiences as a foundation for introducing new concepts. Link new information to what students already know from their cultural backgrounds, making the learning process more relevant and accessible.
    - **Culturally Relevant Examples:** Incorporate examples and case studies that relate to students' cultural experiences. This approach helps

students apply new knowledge in a context they understand and find meaningful.

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Unit 3 Case study

3.1 Case Study: "When diversity as a resource is not enough"
Reading for the Teacher Trainer – Background and thoughts for the introduction and moderation of a reflecting discussion in plenum

In this section, we have a look at a Case study that deals with the experience of a history and English teacher in a lower secondary school in Vienna with a very heterogeneous set-up of students, posing various challenges of diversity in the classroom.

Case Study

When Diversity as a Resource is not enough

Source: Forghani-Arani, et al. (2019): The lives of teachers in diverse classrooms. OECD Working Papers, pp. 20. https://doi.org/10.1787/8c26fee5-en.

Drawing on the work on teachers' lived experience and their meaning-making processes in selected school sites identified as so-called hot spot or high-need schools in Austria, the following account explores some of the challenges of diversity in the classroom.
A teacher of history and English in a lower secondary Viennese school describes the heterogeneous set-up of the students in her class:

I have students from – let's say – 12 different nationalities. Many of them are from India, one from Iran – her father is from Iran, her mother is from Iraq, there is one from Sri Lanka, two from Croatia, from Poland, three from Nigeria, actually there are only two Austrians. Many of the parents work at the UN. Many of them are expats' kids, UN kids, or the parents are here on business. Most parents work for international organisations.

A student of mine from Sri Lanka, he went to Hajj, you know the Muslim pilgrimage, and I could tell he was different, when he came back. He was just so filled with faith when he came back from Mecca. Imagine, there are millions of people circumambulating the Kaaba, and you are part of it, I mean for a 13-year old. Shortly after that we were studying major religions, and I said: "Well, tell us about it, you were there." And then he took his Holy Book, stood in the corner of the class, and chanted a prayer for us with all the movements that go with the phrases. Everything turned so quiet. Then he told us about his religious beliefs. He made it very clear that he would never ever marry a girl who doesn't wear a headscarf, and that he persuaded his mother and his sister to wear the hijab after he came back. He said: 'otherwise a woman's hair would catch fire.' That's when I said: "Let's change the topic."

When asked to share the reasoning behind her decision to "change the topic," the teacher explains:

This is always extremely sensitive. As a teacher, if I contradict him, I'd create resistance and opposition on his part. I would end up shoving him into a corner and that is exactly what I want to avoid as a teacher. That's not my job. That's not what I'm here for. That's not my role. If I let it pass and let the other kids take over the discussion - well actually I didn't even think of that option. You have absolutely no idea what would turn out. You never know. Someone could get up and say: 'rubbish' or 'that's nonsense' or something like that. So, I simply turned it off. I said: 'That's enough for now' because it was getting out of hand. It was actually kind of scary. I was somehow perplexed. You have to be so careful. It's like walking in a minefield.

Case Study - Analysis

The teacher explains above the potentially explosive collision of beliefs and perspectives as one of her immigrant students, moving across national, cultural, and religious borders, affects not only his own private sphere but the public space of the classroom (Levitt and Waters, 2002). This is one of the many instances where the social space of the classroom is reworked through her students' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society, continuously re-inventing the classroom space in unpredictable ways.

What is at stake in this and in numerous comparable situations that shape lives in diverse classrooms every day? For the teacher it is a case of **making the right pedagogical choices, judgements, and decisions**.

She makes two key decisions:

> 1) to invite and welcome the difference a student brings into the classroom, and the reverse,

> 2) to shut down the irritating difference the student brings into the classroom.

The teacher's first decision – to include – appears to be reasoned by a **commitment to diversity**, by drawing on students' diversity as an asset, by enriching the curriculum through students' knowledge, experience, or background. The kind of difference the young man introduces, however, does not seem to fit within the usual study of world religions in a history lesson. The plurality initially sought by the teacher can no longer be managed as a curriculum resource intended to enrich the topic of major religions. The potential response from the other students renders the event sufficiently 'scary,' in the teacher's view, to shut down the discussion before it becomes ignited.

Therein appears the teacher's second judgment. Her decision to change the topic stems from her concern that if things get out of hand, some harm could befall the young man or his classmates. There seem to be **several sources of pedagogical commitment at play in this classroom moment: the obligation to plurality and diversity, the obligation to be open to other ideas and perspectives, the obligation to care, and the obligation to protect, to name a few**. The teacher's pedagogical obligation to prevent harm creates a satisfying substitution, which replaces the lost gratification of plurality and diversity as an educational principle. […] Teachers tell us that teaching in diverse classroom is far more complex and intricate than having a positive attitude towards diversity and drawing on it as a resource.

Source: Forghani-Arani, et al. (2019): The lives of teachers in diverse classrooms. OECD Working Papers, p. 21. https://doi.org/10.1787/8c26fee5-en.

Activity one

Let the teachers read the case study and moderate a discussion along the following reflection points:

The teacher takes two key decisions:
1) to invite and welcome the difference a student brings into the classroom
2) to shut down the irritating difference the student brings into the classroom

There seem to be several sources of pedagogical commitment[2] at play in this classroom moment:
- the obligation to plurality and diversity
- the obligation to be open to other ideas and perspectives
- the obligation to care, and the obligation to protect

Leading questions for the discussion:
- Why do you think did the teacher suggested to change the topic?
- What might have happened if the conversation would have been continued?
- How does her reaction correspond to her efforts to recognise, appreciate, and include diversity in her teaching?
- How would you have managed the situation?

Activity two

Look through the tools bellow or think of any tool you would use in that situation or afterwards.

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[2] Rooted in Paulo Freire's philosophy of *critical pedagogy*, this concept emphasizes that education is not neutral; rather, it is a tool for social change, where teachers guide students to challenge injustices and become active participants in transforming society. Pedagogical commitment refers to a teacher's dedication to fostering students' intellectual and personal growth. It involves an active, ethical responsibility to engage students.

Tools

Ethical Reflection

The journal is a valuable tool for students to explore their personal beliefs and values in relation to ethical dilemmas. To implement this strategy, begin by introducing the concept to your students, explaining that the journal is a space for them to reflect on ethical issues, their personal experiences, and their emotional responses to various scenarios.

Encourage students to write regularly, providing them with prompts related to ethical dilemmas or situations they encounter in their daily lives, such as issues of fairness, justice, or moral responsibility. These prompts might include questions like, "Have you ever faced a situation where you had to choose between following rules and doing what you felt was right?" or "How do your values influence your decision-making in challenging situations?"

Judgement-free: As students write, they should be encouraged to express their thoughts freely, exploring both sides of an ethical issue and considering different perspectives. This reflective practice allows them to clarify their beliefs and understand how their values impact their choices. You may also engage with them to let them know that you appreciate their effort. However, it is not meant as a philosophical dialogue and the teacher may want to keep away from giving advice or trying to lead the student on a certain path.

Set aside time for students to share their reflections with the class or in small groups **if they feel comfortable**. This sharing fosters open dialogue about ethical issues and helps students learn from one another's experiences and viewpoints.

The students are meant to enhance their self-awareness, improved critical thinking skills, and a deeper understanding their own values and reflecting on them. The journal encourages students to develop the skills necessary to navigate complex moral situations in their own lives.

Collaborative Problem-Solving

It is a strategy where students work together to identify and resolve issues in a way that satisfies all parties involved. It emphasises cooperation, communication, and shared responsibility in finding mutually acceptable solutions.

Define the Problem: Start by clearly identifying the issue. Each participant shares their perspective, ensuring everyone understands the nature of the problem.

Generate Possible Solutions: Brainstorm a variety of potential solutions without judgment. The goal is to get as many ideas on the table as possible.

Evaluate Options: Together, assess the pros and cons of each solution. Consider how each option affects the needs and interests of all participants.

Choose a Solution: Reach consensus on the solution that works best for everyone involved. The solution should be practical and acceptable to all parties.

Implement the Solution: Agree on how the solution will be carried out, assigning roles and responsibilities.

Review the Outcome: After implementation, check in to see if the solution is working and adjust if necessary.

Cooling-Off Period

It gives students time to step away from an emotionally heated situation before discussing issues. This allows emotions to settle and more rational, calm communication to take place.

Recognise: The first step is to recognise signs of heightened emotions, such as raised voices or visible frustration. When you observe these signs, calmly intervene by suggesting a break for those involved to cool down.

Explanation: Next, explain to the students what a Cooling-Off Period entails, clarifying that it is a time to step away and collect their thoughts rather than a form of punishment. Reassure them that taking a break is a normal and healthy response – it enables everyone to think about their emotional involvement and also their rationale.

Cooling-Off: Designate a specific area in the classroom, such as a quiet corner or a separate room, for the cooling-off period and equip it with a few calming activities. Set a time limit (usually 5-10min). It is important to allow students the choice to take a cooling-off period voluntarily. Forcing them to take a break might escalate emotions, so they should feel empowered to decide when they need a moment to themselves. Ensure they understand that they can return only when they feel ready.

Check-In: After the cooling-off period, check in shortly with the students to see if they are prepared to discuss the conflict again. Guide them back to the original issue and encourage respectful sharing of their thoughts and feelings.

Moral Compass

The Moral Compass is a creative exercise that helps students visualise their personal values and ethical beliefs. To implement this activity, start by introducing the concept of a "moral compass", explaining that it represents the guiding principles that influence their decisions and actions.

Template: Begin by providing students with a blank diagram or template resembling a compass rose, with each cardinal direction representing different values such as *honesty, fairness, compassion, and responsibility*. Ask students to reflect on which values are most important to them and to place these values on the compass according to their personal significance.

Values: Encourage students to think about specific experiences or situations that have shaped their understanding of these values. They can write brief descriptions or examples next to each value, explaining why it holds importance in their lives. This process allows them to connect abstract concepts to real-life experiences.

Discussion: Once students have completed their maps, facilitate a discussion where they can share their moral compasses in small groups or with the class. This sharing fosters dialogue about the diversity of values and ethical beliefs within the classroom.

The benefits of Moral Compass Mapping include enhanced self-awareness and a clearer understanding of the values that guide their decisions. By engaging in this reflective practice, students develop a stronger moral identity and learn about the complexities and diversity around them.

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3.2 Case Study Activity (Self-Directed)

This Unit is part of the Self-Directed Learning. Look for the corresponding file on Moodle.