

The logo for STUTOR features a stylized 'S' on the left, composed of three overlapping, rounded rectangular shapes in shades of blue and white, resembling a stack of books. To the right of this graphic, the word 'TUTOR' is written in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. The 'S' graphic is partially overlapped by the 'T'.

Teachers' upskilling aiming at a holistic inclusivity in learning

## Introduction to Inclusive Education

### Strand One - Introduction to the course



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## 0.0.1 Unit One Course overview

### Goals and learning outcomes

The course was developed as part of the Erasmus+ project TUTOR and is aimed at teachers and student teachers who want to develop an inclusive, anti-discriminatory and diversity-sensitive school practice. The focus is on promoting the participation of the following groups:

- Student, families, and communities with a migration or ethnic minority background.
- Students, families, and communities who identify as belonging to LGBTQI+ communities.
- Student, families, and communities who are currently experiencing socio-economic disadvantage or who have historically experienced socio-economic disadvantage.

In this introduction to inclusive education course, you will deal with the basics of inclusive education and reflect on how diversity can be made visible and valued in everyday school life. This is not just about theoretical knowledge, but also about your beliefs, morals, and value systems, your attitude, your communication, and your practice as an educator.

What the course aims to teach:

- central concepts and theories of inclusion,
- promoting self-awareness and the ability to reflect on and question oneself, and what one believes to be true, and how they came to hold those beliefs,
- improving the visibility of diversity and the representation of different life realities in the educational context,
- strengthening inclusion, belonging, and well-being for students, educators, leadership, and everyone who works in education.

What you can take away from the course:

- a deeper understanding of intersectional forms of discrimination,
- practical strategies for more inclusive teaching and education environmental design,
- methods for self-reflection and a change of perspective,
- impulses for your personal attitude, your communication and your role.

## Course structure

The course consists of an introductory module and three optional specialization modules. For the purposes of this pilot programme, you will choose one specialization module.

### Introductory module: Basics of inclusive education

The introductory module is **compulsory** for all participants. It teaches key theoretical principles and promotes personal reflection. Topics are

- Theoretical foundations and concepts of inclusive education in the educational context
- Language in the context of inclusion
- Education systems and structural framework conditions
- Basics of intersectionality
- Reflection on own positioning, privileges and assumptions

### Specialization 1: Inclusion in the context of migration and ethnic diversity

This specialization is aimed at educators who want to expand their intercultural competence in order to better support students with a migration biography or from ethnic minorities. Contents are:

- Introduction to culturally sensitive pedagogy
- Concepts of culture, difference and belonging
- Implementing culturally sensitive approaches in everyday school life

### Specialization 2: Inclusion in the LGBTQI+ context

This specialization focuses on gender and sexual diversity in education. It deals with:

- Introduction to gender-sensitive pedagogy
- Queer identities and life realities in the education context
- Development of strategies for LGBTQI+ inclusion
- Prevention and intervention in cases of discrimination

### Specialization 3: Inclusion in the context of socio-economic disadvantage

This specialization focuses on the effects of current or historical poverty, precarious living conditions, policy impacts, and the resulting educational inequalities. The content examines:

- Socio-economic barriers in the education sector
- Designing lessons that take different resource situations into account

- Methods and tools to promote participation and equal opportunities

### Learning formats

The course program combines different learning formats to address diverse types of learners and professional realities. The formats are designed to promote reflection, practice transfer and peer-to-peer exchange.

#### **Face to Face Online classes:**

These webinars offer space for discussion, peer consultation and joint reflection phases, as well as expanding on information or content.

#### **Accompanying online asynchronous and self-directed course:**

Between the webinars, participants complete a guided self-study course on the Learning Platform learning platform. The content consists of:

- **Presentations, readings, and other study material** on basic concepts and practical topics
- **Reflection tasks** to examine your own role, attitudes, and practice
- **Practical inputs** with concrete examples, methods and materials for implementation in the classroom
- **Multiple Choice Quiz** to test and consolidate knowledge
- **Tasks** to be completed and results presented by uploading to the learning platform, e.g. in the form of short reflections (100 to 300 words) on what you have read and how it applies to your practice, answering questions about readings or creating specific lesson plans.

You can work flexibly at your own pace within a set period of time.

#### **Peer exchange and feedback**

On Learning Platform, you will find a forum set up. Please engage with this forum as you would a networking hub at the beginning of the programme, and as you move through the course as a professional community of practice. There are selected tasks within the programme where participants give each other peer feedback or may choose to work together on case studies. This form of peer learning strengthens networking and broadens perspectives on inclusion.

#### **Reflective learning diaries**

You will be regularly asked to make entries in a personal learning diary. This diary accompanies your learning process and also serves as proof of your active participation. It supports you in linking the content to your practice and making your own development steps visible (see 0.0.3).

### Work-based learning

For a structured and targeted integration of real-world experience into your learning process, you will be asked to reflect on your current practice and the environment in which you work – sometimes in the form of an audit and other times just as a form of observation. You will be prompted to think about how you could change your practice or environment to reflect what you have learned as well as potential barriers and enablers. While this will be reflected throughout your learning journal or diary as you move through the programme, you will also be asked to complete a 500-word report or summary of your thoughts, reflections, and observations to upload to Learning Platform at the end of the programme to meet the work-based learning requirements (see 0.0.4).

### Evaluation and conclusion

**Successful completion of the program requires participation in the introductory module and at least one specialization as well as the completion of the work-based learning report.**

The following **five criteria** must be met in order to receive a course confirmation.

1. Online face to face class attendance,
2. Taking the quizzes - they are used as part of formative learning support to check your understanding and the results are not included in a final assessment,
3. Managing and uploading the solutions of at least three tasks,
4. Upload a reflective journal (see 0.0.3) to the learning platform,
5. Upload a work-based learning report to the learning platform at the end of the course.

The **course confirmation certificate** will be emailed to you after successful completion.

## 0.0.2 Unit Two: Situating Ourselves in the Programme

### Taking a look at yourself and your own attitude

Inclusion doesn't start with a curriculum or a toolkit - it starts with ourselves. It encourages us to reflect on our own perspectives, values, beliefs, and norms, and to recognize blind spots and understand how our understandings and beliefs of how the world works (our truths, value systems, and norms) are understandings that were created by the society and community in which we grew up and interacted with. What we think is true – a truism – may only be true for us, and when we don't understand that our own "truth" and someone else's "truth" is different, it can affect on how we teach, act, communicate, and construct a learning environment. Interrogating our practice and ourselves allow us to consciously perceive and appreciate diversity in the classroom.

Inclusion doesn't just mean starting structural changes in the school system - it can be seen very concretely in everyday life: in the way we talk to students, what expectations we have of them, and how we perceive their individual realities. This course invites you to contribute your own experiences, influences and convictions - and to critically question them at the same time. Inclusive education requires an attitude: an attitude of openness, empathy, and a willingness to engage with social power relations, exclusion and structural inequality. It asks you to be comfortable with being uncomfortable and to move forward even when you don't have the answers.

### Inclusion as a personal learning process

The introductory module is more than just a theoretical introduction: it is a personal learning process. You will receive impulses for self-reflection, have the opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues and learn about central concepts of inclusive education step by step. The focus is therefore on three central questions at the beginning:

1. What do I mean by inclusion?
2. What experiences have I had with diversity - at school and beyond?
3. What role do I want to play as a (future) educator regarding inclusion?

There is no "right" or "wrong". Rather, it is about becoming aware of the prior knowledge, assumptions and uncertainties with which you start this course. This self-reflection is the basis for your personal engagement with the content of the course.

This confrontation can sometimes be challenging. Issues such as discrimination, privilege or power relations often provoke strong emotional reactions - such as insecurity, defensiveness, anger or feelings of guilt. This is where the "**Pedagogy of Discomfort**" comes in: an educational approach that encourages such reactions to be met with openness and self-reflection. The central question is: Where do these feelings come from? What are they reacting to? And what do they reveal about my earlier beliefs and perspectives? Much of the content and methods of this course are based on this concept. It was developed by the Canadian educational and cultural scientist Megan Boler. In her "Pedagogy of Uncertainty", she advocates taking

emotions seriously in the learning process - especially when they cause discomfort. For Boler, emotions are not an obstacle, but a starting point for questioning deeply rooted thought patterns and making people aware of and working on socially shaped inequalities - such as racist, sexist or classist structures (Boler, 1999).

#### Pedagogy of Discomfort/

*“A pedagogy of discomfort begins by inviting educators and students to engage in critical inquiry regarding values and cherished beliefs, and to examine constructed self-images in relation to how one has learned to perceive others. Within this culture of inquiry and flexibility, a central focus is to recognize how emotions define how and what one chooses to see, and conversely, not to see. This inquiry is a collective, not an individualized, process”*

*(Boler 1999, pp. 176-177)*

A pedagogy of uncertainty is not only an invitation to reflect, but also a call to action: to confront one's own values and convictions and to be aware of emotional reactions - especially when new perspectives trigger irritation or uncertainty.

#### Reflection impulses to get started

- What images, thoughts or emotions do I associate with the term "inclusion"?
- When have I ever felt excluded or unseen?
- Which groups of students are particularly often excluded or disadvantaged in my education environment?
- What do I want from an inclusive education environment - and what makes me feel insecure?
- What does "inclusion" mean to me personally - and to what extent has this understanding been shaped by my earlier experiences?
- Which people or situations have particularly influenced my view of diversity and education?
- At what moments in my everyday (professional or private) life have I dealt with questions of belonging, exclusion or justice?
- What (conscious or unconscious) expectations do I have of certain groups of students - and where might they come from?
- What do I personally hope to gain from this course - for my attitude, my practice and my professional self-image?

This reflection can take the form of an initial entry in your personal **learning diary**. Your answers will remain confidential - they are solely for your own assessment.

## Motivation and goals

Now think about: What are my reasons for taking part in the TUTOR course? Are there specific challenges in my education environment? Or am I pursuing a personal interest in inclusive education? A conscious examination of your motivation will help you to develop in a targeted manner during the course.

**Then formulate personal learning goals for the course.** They will help you to stay motivated, plan your time realistically and make your progress visible.

Take your current life situation into account: How much time can you realistically devote to this course alongside your job, studies or other commitments? Which topics would you like to explore in greater depth? What specific changes are you aiming to make?

Write down your goals - preferably as SMART goals:

- **Specific:** What exactly do I want to achieve?
- **Measurable:** How can I know that I have achieved my goal?
- **Attractive:** Why is this goal important to me?
- **Realistic:** Can I achieve it under my current conditions?
- **Scheduled:** By when do I want to achieve it?

## Setting boundaries and making agreements

For your discussion to remain constructive and healthy, it is important that you **set clear personal boundaries** for yourself. It is not necessary (nor does it make sense) to reveal everything or to talk openly about all your personal experiences at all times.

At the same time, **agreements at group level** can help to create an open and appreciative learning atmosphere:

- respectful treatment of differing opinions,
- clear separation between the matter and the person,
- Willingness to look at other perspectives with curiosity,
- Respect for different comfort zones - no one must reveal personal details.

**Think about what suggestions you have for boundaries within your learning community**

## Self-care

Dealing with issues of identity, justice and exclusion requires emotional energy. Self-care is therefore a key skill - not only for teachers, but also for everyone involved in inclusion.

**"I take my own emotional reactions seriously and see them as part of my learning process - without having to immediately evaluate or suppress them."**

Mindfulness helps you to stabilize yourself, not to lose sight of yourself and to deal with challenging feelings. Possible forms are e.g.:

- Breathing exercises or guided meditations
- Walks in the countryside
- Writing in the learning diary
- creative forms of expression such as drawing, music or movement

**Find out what works for you - and how you can take care of yourself regularly during the course!** Here are some recommended resources on the topic of self-care:

- Guided Mindfulness Exercise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zyeq-4tvmqE>
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- Mindfulness script: <https://www.the-guided-meditation-site.com/letting-go-of-workhome-stresses-25-mins.html>
- 
- Mindfulness Resources: <https://www.mindfulteachers.org/blog/self-care-resources>

## References

Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Teachingemotion.com (n.d.). *Megan Boler: A Pedagogy of Discomfort*. Retrieved August 8, 2024, from: <https://teachingemotion.weebly.com/megan-boler.html>

## 0.0.3 Unit Three: Learning Journals

### Why a learning journal?

The journal is a central element of this course. It provides you with a safe space to reflect on thoughts, feelings and learning experiences - both in relation to the course content and to your own professional practice. In a course that deals with topics such as inclusion, discrimination, privilege and personal attitudes, the learning journal can be an important tool to:

- to promote self-awareness: What thoughts and emotions do certain topics trigger in me?
- Sharpen critical thinking: How can I apply what I have learned to my practice?
- Reflecting on professional growth: Where are my blind spots? Where do I see opportunities for development?
- to enable feedback: Your learning diary also serves as a basis for individual support and feedback from trainers.

The learning journal is part of the proof of engagement - it accompanies you through all course sections and at the same time serves to determine your own position and development.

### Journal types at a glance!

Throughout the course, you will be invited to reflect on your experiences, thoughts and feelings in writing. You can choose between different forms of journaling - or combine them flexibly. The following five forms have proven successful in the context of professional development:

#### **A. Classic learning journal - learning by writing**

A classic learning journal is kept in the style of a diary and actively uses writing as a means of reflecting on learning processes and professional practice. In it, you record what you have learned, how it might affect your attitude or your teaching - and how you would like to implement new ideas.

A classic learning journal is often based on David Kolb's theory of experience-based learning (Kolb, 1984). This describes a four-stage learning cycle:



The classic learning journal particularly supports the observation and reflection phase, in which you think through your experiences in writing and prepare them for future learning steps.

### **B. Question journal - Structured reflection**

A question journal works with predefined reflection questions, usually following texts, videos or discussions. These questions guide you to engage with the course content in greater depth, link it to your own experiences and think through possible options for action.

This form is particularly suitable if you like to work in a **structured and targeted manner**. It also gives course instructors a targeted insight into your learning process.

Typical questions could be: Which statement particularly caught my attention - and why? or: How can I transfer this concept to my school?

### **C. Metacognitive journal - Reflecting on your own thinking**

A metacognitive journal promotes reflection on one's own learning. It is not just about documenting content, but also about observing and critically questioning one's own thinking, learning and understanding:

- How does my view of certain topics change?
- What habits of thought do I recognize in myself - and how do I deal with them?

This form of writing promotes so-called metacognitive processes, i.e. the ability to actively control one's own learning. It was largely coined by John Flavell, who described metacognition as a central element of successful learning processes - particularly regarding the planning, monitoring and evaluation of cognitive activities (Flavell, 1979).

### **D. Impulse journal - Free writing**

The impulse journal - also known as free writing - is particularly suitable for recording spontaneous reactions and initial thoughts. For example, after a text, video or discussion, sit down in a quiet place for ten minutes and write down what is on your mind without pausing, without evaluation and without correction.

This method helps you to make unconscious or instinctive thoughts visible before they are "smoothed out" through analysis or self-censorship. It is particularly suitable in moments when you feel irritation, contradiction or strong emotions - for example when dealing with issues such as discrimination or privilege.

Such texts are not intended for others but help you to take your emotional reaction seriously - and to reflect on it later.

### **E. Artistic journal - reflection with other means**

The artistic journal offers you the opportunity to engage visually or creatively with course content. It can include:

- Drawings or sketches
- Mindmaps
- Collages or scrapbook pages
- Photographs with comments
- Scribbles or visual notes

This form of expression is particularly suitable for visual or creative learners for whom writing alone does not cover all approaches. Creative expression can help learners to process content emotionally or express their own thoughts and feelings that cannot be put into words.

An artistic diary can be kept alone or in addition to one of the other forms - e.g. to visualize a reflection from the learning diary.

#### [Recommendation for the personal use of your reflective learning journal](#)

You are invited to experiment with the different forms and find the method that suits you and your learning style. You have several options, e.g.:

- You can decide on a main form, e.g. classic learning journal or question journal,
- You can change depending on the situation, such as making a journal entry in the style of an impulse journal if a topic particularly moves you emotionally,
- You can combine several formats, e.g. integrate visual elements such as mind maps into the classic learning journal format.

Your learning journal will be treated confidentially. It serves you personally - as a space for self-reflection, for documenting your development and as a basis for individual support during the course.

During the course, you will regularly receive specific stimuli for reflection - both as part of the webinars and via tasks in the online materials. Some tasks contain specific instructions for journal writing (e.g. on certain texts or concepts), in other cases you will be encouraged to reflect freely on readings, discussions or your professional practice.

Use the journal form that gives you the best access to your thoughts and feelings. Try to consciously take up the suggestions and reflect on them explicitly in your diary. This not only supports your learning process but also gives the trainer valuable information about your development in the course.

## References

Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive-developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 906-911. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice Hall.

Mavric, M. & Medic, B. (2022). The Use of Reflective Journals in Professional Development. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(2), 3803 - 3807. Available at: <https://>

### Articles and ideas for keeping a diary:

<https://cpet.tc.columbia.edu/news-press/journaling-to-reflect-and-connect>

<https://truthforteachers.com/professional-journaling/>

<https://www.teachthought.com/literacy/learning-journals/>

## 0.0.4 Work-based learning - your practical project

The work-based learning element of the course aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice and achieve a structured and targeted integration of real-world experience into the learning process. To this end, you will be invited to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the course in educational situations that are as authentic as possible. You have the freedom to design your own practice-oriented learning project. Here is a list of the formats you can choose from:

- Observation and shadowing
- Teaching internship or self-reflection on teaching practice
- Cooperation with inclusion specialists
- Activities for cultural immersion
- Real case studies and reflective practice
- Professional learning communities
- Communities of practice that arise in the weekly classroom training sessions

For the purposes of this pilot programme, you will be asked to reflect in case studies, engage in your own reflective practice, and to undertake knowledge exchanges as part of a community of professional practice on our open forum on Learning Platform. You will write a 500-word report of this to upload on Learning Platform at the end of the programme.