



Empathy in dialogue

Author: Jakub Niewiński

Theme:

Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination; contemporary social issues; human rights; refugees and migration.

Age group: 12 – 18 years old

Context:

Discussions about migrants, immigrants and refugees in the current society can be very challenging. On one hand, we are witnessing the suffering of people who are fleeing the war and trying to find a shelter for themselves and for their children, on the other hand there is a fear of the Other. This fear is very often connected to the stereotypical way of seeing refugees for example as terrorists. In the Polish media there is a lack of a transparent debate about the situation of refugees. Moreover, certain groups and institutions are spreading the hate speech. For instance, the metaphors used to describe the arrival of refugees such as the one of war (invasion, expansion) further stigmatizes this group of people. Very often, politicians in Poland are concerned with the question if refugees should be accepted, rather than how could they be integrated to a local community. Despite some improvements, there is still a number of barriers which make it difficult or even impossible for foreigners to find a job in Poland.

During this lesson students will have a chance to reflect on the hate speech in Europe, nationalism and extreme movements by which hatred is spread. In this lesson the emphasis will be on social inclusion. In particular, students will have a chance to reflect on their own identity and the teacher's role is to create a safe space for discussion in order for as many ideas as possible to get shared.

The main objectives:

- To raise awareness about the danger of prejudice and discrimination, hate speech, xenophobia and racism;
- to sensitize students for the problems of discrimination against minority groups and encourage them to engage in the activities which aim at preventing discrimination;
- to raise an interest about human rights and the need of every person for their rights to be protected;
- to increase an attitude of openness and respect of colleagues with different worldviews.

Methods:

- analysis of the resources
- brainstorming
- individual and small group work
- Psychogeography – students sit in a circle in order to create a spatial equality and pay attention to interpersonal relationships

Teaching tools and materials:

- projector
- laptops
- printed Breivik's speech
- colored markers/pens
- paper sheets

Preparation before the lesson at home:

Before the lesson students should watch the movie "Utøya: July 22" - a 2018 Norwegian drama directed by Erik Poppe and written by Anna Bache-Wiig and Rajendram Eliassen (in case there is a possibility the movie can be watched together in the school or students can go to the cinema together). After watching the movie students should reflect on the following questions:

- What has happened?
- How did people behave?
- Which words/sentences were important to you?
- Who is responsible for the crime/tragedy?
- How to protect people in the society?
- How to prevent crime against humanity?
- Who is the victim, perpetrator and bystander?

Lesson plan (90 minutes)

- I. Introduction to the workshop: aims and participants' expectations (10 min)
- II. "Paper identity" - awareness exercise part 1 (15 min)
- III. Breivik's speech in the court (30 min)
- IV. "Bystander effect" - simulation exercise (15 min)
- V. "Paper identity" - awareness exercises, part 2 (15 min)
- VI. Evaluation of the lesson (5 min)

I. Introduction to the workshop: aims and participants' expectations

The teacher describes the context, structure and goals of this lesson. He/she invites students to share their expectations and needs.

II. “Paper identity” - awareness exercises part 1

Students and the teacher sit together in a circle. The teacher gives them a clean sheet of paper on which they write their name or nickname, depending on how like to be called. Additionally, they should write three things that they like to do the most. Students are invited to share what they wrote on their paper. As a student is reading what he/she likes to do, he/she makes a very short break after each thing so that other students who like to do the same can show it by simply getting up from their chair. After everyone is done with reading out their notes, the teacher asks students to crumple their piece of paper and then bring it back to the original state. The teacher invites students to share their feelings at the moment when they were crumpling their paper and restoring it to the original shape. Students should reflect on how did they feel when they were symbolically deforming and destroying themselves, their names and identities.

Comment on this exercise: Despite the effort to make the paper look like it was in the initial state, creases and marks remain, and neither the time will make them disappear. The same happens with a man who experiences discrimination, various forms of violence (ridiculing, spreading a gossip, beating...), isolation and exclusion from the community etc. These forms of behaviour can affect everyone regardless of their appearance, gender, abilities because sometimes people have difficulties with accepting differences and diversity.

III. Breivik’s speech in the court

Students get divided into small groups of 4-5 members. Depending on the group dynamics students can choose whom they want to work in the group with or they get randomly divided. Half of the groups should listen to the part 1 of the Breivik’s speech, and the other half of the groups should listen to the part 3 of the same speech. While listening to the Breivik 's speeches in the court students should note down sentences/words which they consider as an example of hate speech and/or a manifestation of discrimination.

After listening to Breivik's speech, each group should try to recognize in their noted words/sentences different types of discrimination (e.g. sexism, racism...) and discuss what kind of concrete actions one can take in order to prevent and stop this form of discrimination. Finally, each group report the outcomes of their work. Students can connect the speech with what they watched in the movie as a preparation for this workshop.

In case students don’t find any examples of hate speech or discrimination, the teacher can use the following or tell the students to have a closer look at the certain timing:

Anders Behring Breivik closing statements to the court, part 1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVaVfyXbsbo>

6:57 “multicultural experiment in Norway”

7:43 “cultural conservative NGOs and youth organization didn’t receive any support”

9:20 “the problem is, that today we have ideals in Norway that are harmful for Norway, that will cause us great harm in our future”

10:48 “the ideal is to have sex with as many strangers as possible”

11:00 “we focus on dissolving the nuclear family – with all problems it brings with it”

11:44 “now I’ll get to the neglect of our duty towards our families and our nation”

11:57 “women should start having children in their 20-ies”

Anders Behring Breivik closing statements to the court, part 3.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bvH1ZOG45o>

2:23 “with proper aid of Norway’s mass media, we let a belrusian asylant, probably with Tartar background, called Alexander Igaravitsj Rybak, represent Norway in the international finale. It is okay to let an asylum seeking person represent us, to show that we are tolerant. But, what happened next? A few years later it is another asylum seeker, Nyambura Mwangi, from Kenia, who wins a melody from his bongo. The Russian Eurovision commentators struggled to explain: what is Norway doing, why would they send an asylant as their ambassador not once, but twice within a short period of time? Is there a lack of Norwegians in Norway or are they suffering from cultural self-concept? (...) This is scorn a great provocation towards all Norwegians that are opponents of multiculturalism. What is wrong with Marxists and liberalists? The answer is simple: a great number of Norwegians – and here I refer to the Marxists and liberalists – suffer from cultural delusions, cultural self-contempt, and require immediate medication. The medicine for this sickness is called: “more nationalism” (...)

IV. “Bystander effect” - simulation

There is one person who kneels down on the floor and others are standing in a distance of approx. 2-3 meters from him/her. This activity consists of four parts. During the first part those who are standing cut the hole in one sheet of paper and watch at the person kneeling on the floor only with one eye through the piece of paper. In the second part students are watching the person kneeling on the floor face to face. In the third part students can approach the person kneeling on the floor and put his/her hand on his/her shoulder and continue to watch him/her. During the first three parts of this activity students should not talk to each other but only watch the person kneeling on the floor. In the fourth part, students can come to a person kneeling (together or sequentially) and perform some form of action. After the end of each part students are invited to talk about their feelings, impressions and experiences. Person kneeling on the floor should always be asked first to share his/her insights. At the end of this activity the teacher invites students to reflect on it by using the following questions: What has happened during this activity? What does minority mean? Do you have some examples of minorities in our society, in your surrounding?

V. “Paper identity” - awareness exercises, part 2

This lesson plan should end with an activity which can have an empowering effect on students. The papers from the first part of the paper identity activity are now used again. Students are sitting in the circle, and they send their paper to the person on their right side. All student write something positive about the person whose paper he/she has in hands. Papers travel from person to person until everyone had a chance to write something on everyone’s paper and has received his/her paper back. As one’s identity has been destroyed by crumbling the paper, now it is symbolically restored again as each person receives a positive message from others about him/herself.

VI. Evaluation of the workshop

At the end of the lesson the teacher applies the evaluation activity called „the dynamic dialogue“. Students are standing in a circle and the teacher asks someone to come to the center and share which aspect of the lesson was the most valuable and powerful for them and why. Other students can show

their agreement with the person in the middle by coming to stand closer to the person who is speaking or disagreement by moving away from the speaker. Other students can share their reasons why they agree or disagree. Every time after the opinion is shared the rest of the students can change their position in case they changed their mind depending on what the student has shared. If some person doesn't agree with anything at all he/she can at any time step away from the group, find some free space in the room and express his/her own view. Other students can again come closer to the person as a way of showing agreement. Students should be aware that in this activity they can freely change their mind regarding opinions whenever they want and show it by moving closer/away from the person who is speaking at any point.

Another possibility for the evaluation is for participants to sit in a circle and for each of them (or some of them depending on the time, and their will to participate) to finish one or all of the following sentences:

- I have learned... / found out...
- I was surprised.../ I'm starting to wonder ...
- I can do ... not to discriminate against anyone in the future? (This sentence should be used depending on the group dynamic and age).



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