ACCORD PROJECT

Attain cultural integration through conflict resolution skill development

With the recent immigration flows, diversity has become a structural characteristic of European societies. The growing proportion of students with a migrant background implies a series of challenges for the education systems in most member states: diversity leads to educational disparities between dominant cultural groups and immigrant students; also, discrimination and intercultural conflicts have become significant phenomena at school. Teacher education programs do not seem to adequately address those challenges. Hence, there is a growing need to prepare educators to effectively deal with diversity and to build bridges towards migrant communities. Indeed, when adequately addressed, diversity constitutes a substantial opportunity for education: it may enhance rich learning processes by promoting intercultural interaction and peer-learning.

> **The ACCORD project (Erasmus +, 2017-19) aimed to prepare secondary school teachers to take an active stand against intercultural conflicts. Through an open online course using scenario-based learning (SBL) and game-based learning (GBL), teachers in five European countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain) developed competences in terms of intercultural literacy, inclusive education and conflict management.**

This document presents the ACCORD pedagogical framework of the project in terms of competence areas, pedagogical approaches and tools. Furthermore, it defines a competence framework for inclusive education and intercultural conflict management.

1. ACCORD Pedagogical framework

This first section synthesises the competence areas, pedagogical approaches and digital tools selected for developing teachers' intercultural conflict management competences.

Competence areas

Intercultural literacy: upstream competences required by teachers for addressing culturally diverse educational environments and interacting constructively with interlocutors from different cultural contexts.

Inclusive education: competences needed for applying methodologies oriented to an inclusive school, featured by intercultural interaction and a positive approach towards conflicts.

Conflict management: competences required for peacefully resolving conflicts when they occur, including communication, problem solving, negotiation and mediation. In education, the challenge is to channel conflicts into constructive responses and opportunities for group cohesion.
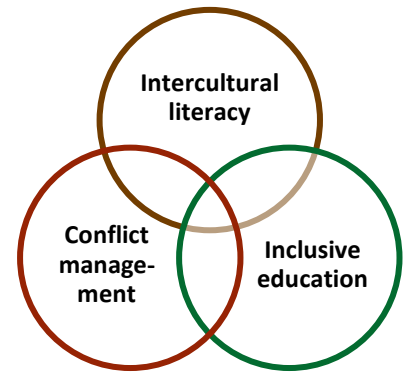
Intercultural conflicts define the implicit or explicit emotional struggle or frustration between individuals from different cultures over perceived incompatible morals, values, or goals, in a communication situation[1]. In order to help teachers to deal with such situations, ACCORD explores the different aspects and levels of intercultural clashes, as well as their impacts on the involved parts and on the overall classroom dynamics.

Pedagogical approaches
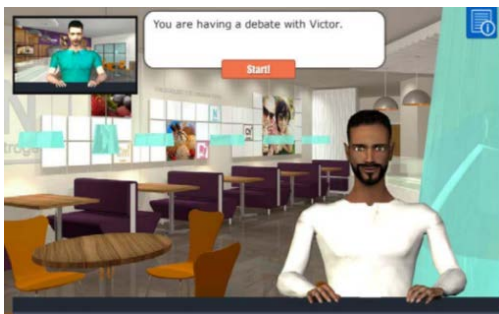
Scenario-based learning: SBL is part of the situated learning approach, which provides meaningful learning experiences by engaging students in authentic environments. SBL defines the use of scenarios to support active learning. Scenarios constitute a starting point for students to immerse in a real-world problem and in a subsequent solution finding process. SBL has proved to support reflective practices in teachers' professional development. In ACCORD, we designed scenarios depicting intercultural classroom conflicts, which teachers solve by testing different dialogue patterns.

Game-based learning: Digital games promote learner-centred methodologies which adapt to different learning styles and level of skills. Furthermore, they constitute interactive objects which provide players with a real sense of agency over their actions. They also create meaningful learning experiences where learners face real-world problems. Games constitute virtual worlds featured by freedom and exploration: they allow for trying out different roles and identities. They present risk-free environments where learners can try out various options without suffering the consequences of failure in real life.

Digital tools

ACCORD training is supported by (a) a MOOC (https://accordgame.com/mooc) which includes a series of lessons and open educational resources; and (b) a serious game (http://accordgame.com) which allows for practicing conflict management skills in a role-play simulation. The game is organized into different classroom scenarios, where users play a character (a teacher) and negotiate with virtual agents (students). The game is

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[1] Ting-Toomey, S., Chung, L.C. (2012). *Understanding intercultural communication (2nd ed.)* New York: Oxford University Press.

based on five conflict management styles: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising[2].

3. ACCORD competence framework

This section identifies a framework of competences for inclusive education and conflict management which were developed through the ACCORD training.

> **Competence defines as "the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities (attitudes), in work or study situations and in professional and personal development" (The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, 2008).**

Competence framework design

In order to design the ACCORD competence framework, we followed different steps, as described below:

A	**Analysis of existing models**
B	**Extraction and selection of competences**
C	**Organization in knowledge, skills and dispositions**
D	**Adaptation to the results of the user needs analysis**
E	**Expert validation**

Presentation of the ACCORD competence framework

ACCORD competence framework for inclusive education and conflict management consists of three areas i.e., **intercultural literacy**, **inclusive education** and **conflict management**. Each competence area includes a set of descriptors classified into **(a) knowledge and understanding** - "I am aware of, know about and understand …"; **(b) skills** (cognitive and practical) - "I am able to …"; and **(c) dispositions** (beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment) - "I demonstrate". In total, the framework includes 30 descriptors.

AREA 1 - INTERCULTURAL LITERACY
Understanding and addressing culturally diverse educational environments

Knowledge

- **Understanding of cultural diversity as applied to education and society**
- **Appreciation of the different cultures present in the teaching environment**
- **Awareness of intercultural communication** (nonviolent communication; awareness of the main communicative conventions of the cultures present in the school).

Skills

- **Cultural understanding and sensitivity** (adaptation of behaviour to new cultural environments)
- **Intercultural communication** (adaptation of one's communication, empathic listening, consideration of non-verbal messages)
- **Critical cultural thinking** (awareness of cultural stereotypes and prejudices)

Dispositions

- **Intercultural open-mindedness** (value, interest and openness towards cultural diversity)
- **Cultural flexibility** (tolerance to ambiguity, disposition to adapt to new situations)
- **Social responsibility and initiative** (willingness to overcome stereotypes and prejudices)
- **Cultural empathy** (empathy with students from different cultural backgrounds)

[2] Rahim, A., & ... *Reports, 44*(3...

AREA 2 - INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Facilitating intercultural coexistence and positive approaches towards conflicts

Knowledge

- **Understanding of inclusive school principles** (for addressing cultural diversity in the classroom)
- **Curricular knowledge** (understanding of the purposes and contents of intercultural education)
- **Understanding and integration of the core principles of proactive restorative practices** (building healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict)

Skills

- **Culturally sensitive teaching** (integration of students' cultural references into teaching)
- **Creation of a classroom culture** (promotion of students' sense of belonging to the classroom)
- **Community building among colleagues and families from different cultural backgrounds**
- **Democratic teaching methodologies** (participatory approaches, equitable teaching)

Dispositions

- **Openness to reflect and evaluate own teaching practice and its impact on students**
- **Commitment to promoting the learning of all students** (disposition to provide culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all)
- **Awareness of the role of education for change and the social good**

AREA 3 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Carrying constructive processes as a means of resolving conflicts

Knowledge

- **Understanding of the factors that contribute to the development of classroom conflicts** (stereotypes and prejudices creating discrimination among students)
- **Knowledge of the main principles around conflict resolution** (steps, strategies and styles)
- **Understanding and integration of the core principles of reactive restorative practices**

Skills

- **Analysis of the conflict and students' emotions** (conflict's dynamics, needs behind behaviours)
- **Restorative practices** (discussion circles, restorative questions; support of students' responsibility)
- **Mediation** (helping students to switch perspectives and clarify their needs, manage breakdowns)
- **Negotiation** (separation of people from the problem; addressing the conflict in terms of

Dispositions

- **Emotional stability** (propensity to remain calm in stressful situation)
- **Flexibility** (disposition to decentre from one's own perspective, to approach alternative opinions, to engage in constructive and critical dialogue and to compromise)
- **Ethics and fair-mindedness** (integrity and ethical behaviour in using influence and power)