



Me Too: Empathy for EU

Foreword

In an article published in The Guardian in December 2019, Joseph Stiglitz, holder of the Economy Nobel Prize, identifies 3 major challenges for Europe:

- *The Climate change*
- *The growing gap in Europe between rich and poor, which is undermining cohesion of societies*
- *Democracy – openly attacked by rapidly and steadily growing movements all over the continent which promise simplistic solutions based on hate-speech, disinformation, aggressive nationalism.*

The European Green Deal, announced by the European Commission in December 2019, seeks to respond to these challenges. In her speech, the President of the European Commission made it clear that active involvement and commitment of the European citizens and of all stakeholders will be absolutely crucial to its success. Indeed, she said, what will be necessary is a profound change of life, of individual citizens as well as of society as a whole.

Among many Europeans, there is growing awareness about these challenges, and many would agree that there is an urgent need for change – yet few are ready to really take any significant initiative towards change. On the contrary, we observe a growing tendency, also among the students of our schools, to limit oneself to an “all-about-me-world” and to life and communication within a bubble of like minded people.

In this situation, we believe that teaching and learning Empathy can be the missing link between awareness on the one hand and action/change, on the other. Informed Empathy is a key competence for successful life on personal, social and professional level; at the same time, it empowers young people for an active role in democratic society. Empathy contributes to greater understanding of and responsiveness to social, ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity. It fosters curiosity for the world “outside the bubble”, leads to questioning and critical thinking and subsequently to broader and more informed awareness and action with regard to the challenges Europe is facing. Above all, it encourages the adventure of looking at the world through the eyes of others and helps us understand ourselves as part of a huge living organism called nature. Deep respect is the expected result.



Lesson plan: Empathy and Leadership

With this lesson plan teachers can create awareness among the students about being an empathetic leader. The lessons consist of 8 case study videos, all of them addressing a different topic within the theme. The videos are meant to be a guideline to address the topic Empathy and leadership in classes of students in the ages of 12-18 years old.

Assignments

Before watching the videos

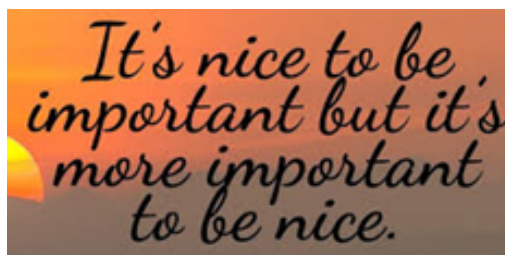
Task 1: QUOTES

Quote 1:

Empathetic leadership means being aware of people's feelings and thoughts, understanding their needs, providing appropriate support, and understanding how they handle situations and trying to improve or respond to them.

Quote 2:

Sir John Templeton said:



You can ask your students to brainstorm over the quotes or interview with the school head teacher/principal using the following questions:

- How do these words correspond with the way your principal takes care of their teachers?
- How do teachers keep on good terms with the students and still come up with high learning results?
- How do teenagers or young people like you "lead" their friends with empathy and without being seen as weak?



Task 2: SURVEY

Ask students to fill out this [survey](#) to see how well they understand the topic

TASK 3: DISCUSSION

- Ask your students if they understand the word *empathy*.
- Ask students for examples of an empathetic or non-empathetic situation (they will probably refer to the situations in the survey or other)
- Discuss the topic of *leadership*. Who are the leaders they/we meet on a daily basis? Elicit and assist with answers that will later be present in the videos - teachers, peer students, company managers, sports team leaders/captains, music band leaders, parents, friends. Draw the conclusion that everyone can be a leader when they promote leadership qualities.

Show the videos to your students.

[YouTube link to the videos](#)

After watching the videos:

Task 1: Discuss

Have the students discuss the different topics in small groups (2-4 students) and let them ask themselves some questions.

For example:

1. How do you feel about this video?
2. Can you place yourself in that situation?
3. How would you feel?
4. What would you do?
5. How would you like to be treated?
6. What would you do differently?
7. How would you solve the situation?
8. Would your solution be good for all parties involved?
9. How does the behavior in the videos make other persons feel?
10. Brainstorm about a possible solution for the situation in the video. What would you do?

Task 2: Present

The students can bundle the answers to the questions asked in a small presentation and inform their classmates about their solutions.