

The image features a dark green background with a white line drawing of four hands, palms facing each other, holding a central circle. The hands are positioned at the top, bottom, left, and right, with their fingers slightly curled. The central circle is empty and serves as a backdrop for the text.

# HAND:ET



– A training programme to develop SEDA competences in teachers and other school staff





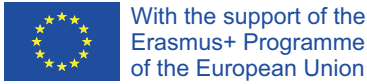
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2022

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# Proposed timeline of the FT implementation

	HAND in HAND: ET System	
Timeline: 2022/2023	Teachers	Leadership
August/ September	<b>2 days onsite</b> (including evaluation - questionnaires)	<b>1 day onsite</b> (including evaluation - questionnaires)
October	Online meeting (2 h)	
November	Online meeting (2 h)	
December	<b>1 day onsite</b>	
January	Online meeting (2 h)	Online meeting (2 h)
February	Online meeting (2 h)	
March	<b>1 day onsite</b>	<b>1 day onsite</b> (including evaluation - questionnaires)
April	Online meeting (2 h)	
May	<b>2 days onsite</b> (including evaluation - questionnaires)	
June	focus group – school-based (on site or online)	focus group – school-based (on site or online)
Σ	6 days of training + 5*supervision/ monitoring	2 days of training + 1*supervision/ monitoring

# Guidelines for the trainers

## About this material

What you have before you, is a programme developed for teachers and other school staff, the Hand in Hand:ET programme. The HAND in HAND:ET programme is the main outcome of the project HAND:ET - Empowering teachers across Europe to deal with social, emotional and diversity related career challenges.

The HAND: ET project started in March 2021 and will last for three years (until March 2024). HAND:ET is a policy experimentation project (under the Erasmus + program, Key Action 3) that brings together 11 partners from six countries: Educational Research Institute: Slovenia, Mid Sweden University: Sweden, Aarhus University: Denmark, Institute for Social Research – Zagreb: Croatia, University of Graz: Austria, Universidade de Lisboa: Portugal, Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education: Germany, Network of Education Policy Centers: Croatia, Ministry of Science and Education (MSE): Croatia, Ministry of Education, science and sport (MESS): Slovenia, and Bildungsdirektion Steiermark (Board of Education of Styria): Austria.

The project focuses on teachers by supporting the development of their social and emotional competencies (the acronym SEDA will be used from now on) as well as their diversity awareness. The aim is to empower them for the complexity of everyday working life with increasingly diverse classrooms, and to enable them to deal flexibly with new challenges. It also puts the teachers’ well-being centrally, by highlighting how developing SEDA competencies simultaneously fosters self-care for teachers, giving a central role to the teachers’ voices. Moreover, the project aims to contribute to the formation of a comprehensive EU teacher policy (by providing EU and country-specific recommendations), addressing contemporary structural problems in the teaching profession in an evidence-based, long-term way.

HAND:ET builds on the insights, and the lessons learnt from a project HAND IN HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies – A Whole School Approach, which was recognised as one of the ten most relevant EU projects addressing teachers and schools.

The purpose of the first Hand-in-Hand project was to develop the social, emotional and intercultural competencies of students and school staff. As a framework we used the concept of relational competence, the five concepts from the CASEL model: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. It was primarily the work of Blell & Doff (2013), Deardoff (2006) and Stier (2003) that formed the framework for developing intercultural competence.

The purpose of the current project is to develop and enhance social and emotional competencies, as well as the diversity awareness of teachers and other school staff. The same framework that was used in the HAND in HAND project for developing the social and emotional competencies, as well as relational competencies, will be used in this project. That means that some of the content from earlier materials will be used in the current manual.

For a more detailed description on how these conclusions were made, we refer to what is already written in publications concerning the earlier project (Kozina:2020; Lund, Nilsen et.al: 2019, Lund, Nilsen et.al: 2018).

In this manual, the framework is further extended with theory on stress reactions and mindfulness. Also, the theoretical framework is extended with theories on diversity with a particular focus on intersectionality, as well as on the diversity aspects; sex and gender, socio-economical background, and ethnicity and cultural background.

Additional information about the project and all the outcomes is available at **HAND IN HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity Related Career Challenges** project webpage. There you will find all the recent news, publications and materials relevant for the project and connected to the topic of empowering teachers to deal with social, emotional and diversity related career challenges. You can also stay updated on the recent project developments via the official project Facebook page.

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## The form

These guidelines are presented in two forms, one for teachers and one for school leaders. For teachers, the programme consists of six full days (from 9.00 – 16.00) which take place on site, and five online meetings in between the on site meetings. For school leaders the programme consists of two full days and one online meeting. The programme is developed and designed for the trainers in the Hand: Empowering teachers programme, who have followed the programme for trainers.

# The purpose of the HAND:ET programme

The HAND: Empowering teachers programme aims to offer teachers opportunities:

- To enhance and develop their SEDA competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making and diversity awareness;
- To enhance and develop relational competence;
- To become acquainted with the concept of empathic curiosity;
- To practice empathic curiosity through dialogue and practical exercises;
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language;
- To get a sense of the difference between personal language and analysing, evaluating language;
- To explore different points of view through dialogue and practical exercises;
- To develop empathic curiosity by practising empathic listening and questioning to understand the perspectives of others;
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind;
- To use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between ourselves and others;
- To become aware of how one’s own state affects relationships with other people;
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to make more conscious choices;
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to have more options about one’s choices for dealing with/reacting to a situation regarding ourselves, and in situations with other people;
- To get to know different approaches about how to regulate ourselves when under pressure;
- To share and discuss concrete examples, ideas and tools to inspire and support teachers in their work with diversity;
- To discover, discuss and develop understanding concerning power, privilege and personal prejudices in society, as well in school;
- To discover and develop awareness about one’s own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity, and how those may have an impact on embracing diversity in the classroom
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers, and the programme trainers.

# How to use the material

This programme is built for trainers to guide them in developing social and emotional competencies as well as increasing diversity awareness, in short: the SEDA competencies. We have created the programme as a combination of mindfulness practices, dialogue exercises, active listening exercises, exercises developing a personal language, discussions, exercises targeting diversity, group exercises, exercises in pairs and individual exercises.

However, this manual should be seen as a helping hand, not as the definitive truth.

The exercises are all described together with suggestions on how to communicate the exercise and its objectives to the teachers. The theory sections are written in a similar way, with suggestions for how the trainer can connect the theory both to the exercises, and to the overall goals of the programme.

**Theory**

The theory sections are quite extensive and are meant to provide a broader context of understanding for the trainers. The trainer can choose elements from the text so that the theory suits each individual group. PowerPoint presentations on theory will be available on the webpage, as resources for the trainers.

**Rationale and background**

In each description of the exercises you will find a paragraph called “rationale and background”. In some descriptions this text is also quite extensive. The text is both for the trainer and for the participants. Depending on the group the trainer can choose what it is important to emphasise, and decide how much theory is needed. Some groups might need a lot of explanation, others don’t.

You can choose to present the rationale for the exercise either before or afterwards. Sometimes it can be necessary for groups to know why they are doing the exercises, and sometimes it can be very instructive not to know, and to just see what happens.

If, as a trainer, you think it’s better to explain the theory and the exercises in a different way, due to your country’s context, please feel free to do so. As a trainer in your specific country, you are the expert on what that will work in the context of your country. If you find that a specific group needs more time to explore something than is suggested in the manual, just go ahead.

**Text of the day**

In the beginning of the description for each of the six days of training (not the online meetings) you will find a small poem or a text from a novel. This text is a poetic, inspirational input. The trainer can read this aloud for the participants, or leave it out.



## Adaptation and Fidelity

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In the previous project, a review was made of what is important in implementing social and emotional and intercultural learning programs in schools (Lund Nielsen et.al., 2019).

Five themes were identified as important, one of which was: ” the subtle balance between adaptation and fidelity might best be addressed in an adaptive curriculum emphasising active ingredients...”

The balance between adaptation and fidelity is important. On one hand, adaptation is necessary not only when working cross-culturally, but also between national groups of teachers, adaptations will be needed. On the other hand, we need to be doing the same programme - so, it has to be recognisable. That is why it is important to emphasise active ingredients. Some of the exercises cannot be replaced, and some of them can be.

If you do want to make adjustments, they must be done with something that points in the same direction as the exercises presented. This is the case for all the exercises, and for the theory too. Reading the rationale and background of the exercise, and using that paragraph as a guideline for adjustment, is a good starting point.

The theory is divided over the 6 days of training. If you find it useful or necessary to present some of the theory earlier or later than how it appears in the manual, feel free to do that.

Regarding adjustments on the exercises and the theory on social and emotional competences, it is important to do the following mindfulness practices: bodyscan, sitting meditation and yoga. However, you can adjust the time and choose between the suggested guidances or, even better, use your own words and guidance. Regarding the dialogue exercises it is important to use the presented dialogue structure. Concerning the content of the dialogue, it is also important to cover both pleasant and stressful experiences, but apart from that you may adapt the content of dialogues. The small exercises that are used as icebreakers are examples, and can be replaced with other, similar exercises.

When it comes to theory and exercises on diversity awareness, it is important that all areas in the programme are covered. This means that you have to give a theoretical input on all aspects given in this programme. However, you can make any adjustments you find necessary to suit the context of your country. For example, if you see that some of the exercises will be received badly by the participants due to the particular context of your country, of course you can adjust the exercise, or replace it with another exercise with similar content. It is also possible for you as a trainer to move diversity exercises between the suggested days, if you think that is more suitable for your group of participants.

## Expectations of the Teachers

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Insights from the previous Hand-in-Hand project, described in a literature review: *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies*, as well as the final monograph, with a particular focus on the school staff (Lund Nielsen et.al., 2019; Kozina, 2020), emphasise the importance of qualifying teachers. This is done by using more time and resources on **teacher professional development** (TPD), when implementing programmes that aim at increasing the students’ social, emotional and intercultural competences in schools. The teacher needs to develop their social, emotional and intercultural competences when training, and to develop these competences with the students. In general the teachers will need to work specifically with their own professional development, when implementing a specific programme in the classroom.

According to Lund Nielsen et.al (2019), it is not only important to create TPD regarding a specific programme, but it is also crucial to develop generic teacher pedagogical and relational competencies, such as teacher engagement and positive interactions with students. Student-teacher relations were the most consistent predictor of effect on professional commitment, for example. Lund Nielsen also points out the phenomenon of burnout as an area that requires interventions, and specific training to prevent it happening.

Bonde et. al, (2022) points out that research on mindfulness for educators shows how mindfulness-based interventions have an effect, improving mental health, preventing burnout, and also affecting job performance positively.

To sum up: this programme targets the teachers. It is teacher professional development. The training will be focused on developing social and emotional competencies, as well as the diversity awareness (SEDA) of the teachers. This in-service programme is to be seen as teacher professional development.

That means that there will be no expectation that the teachers should take the exercises presented into their classroom. It is not a programme made for students.

Of course, there are expectations regarding transfers to the classroom. We expect that the children will be indirectly affected by the teachers’ developing competencies. This will enable them to act differently, and give them more options for coping with the complexity and the challenges in their everyday life.

However, we do hope that the teachers will be inspired by the training. And we hope that the teachers will take some of the exercises that they meet in the training into their classrooms, which we also recommend.



# The Trainer

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As a trainer, you communicate your own understanding of the SEDA competencies. This understanding is both theoretical and directly experienced through your own practice, and the training conducted as a part of the HAND:ET project. It is important to keep the channels open, both to the theoretical framework and to your own personal experiences. We are often more familiar with the analytical, mental areas. To create a space where it is possible for the teachers to experience themselves in another way, you must have walked the same road as a trainer. This is to enable you to meet the participants in their bodily and emotional experiences, as well as in a more mental, and theoretical understanding.

Our instinct is to run away when things become difficult, and if you do not have direct experience of staying, exploring and perhaps making peace with unpleasant feelings and sensations, it can be difficult to meet and bear the unpleasant experiences of the participants.

You can also get too excited about the method, and lose sight of what is actually happening in the group. As a trainer of HAND:ET, it is important that you are curious, open and appreciative of what the teachers bring to the group. The teachers will probably choose different ways of engaging in the programme. Some will appear very interested, some may not be as committed, or not very positive. You will probably encounter uneasiness, maybe doubt or scepticism, and your communication might be challenged. Your own experience with mindfulness practice, the 60:40 exercises and the experience of being in discomfort and difficulty can help you in these situations. Standing firm in your authority as a human being and teacher, can help you avoid making the teachers' reactions into a problem.

It is a great help that you are familiar with the exercises that you are teaching, and know from your own experience that they can have different impacts on different people. It is also a great help for you as a trainer to keep doing the mindfulness practices yourself, when you are teaching other people to do them. That you continuously explore what it is like to be in the present moment in different situations with curiosity, kindness, patience and courage.

# Empathic Dialogue

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Many of the practical exercises in the programme are followed by a curious dialogue, where the teachers are invited to share their experiences. It is important that this dialogue is exploratory and curious. It is a dialogue, a conversation where two people are exploring together. It is not an interview or, in the worst case, a third-degree interrogation. For the trainer, the focus on the dialogue and the eagerness to ask the "right" questions can easily overshadow the fact that the dialogue is primarily about the trainer's ability to simply listen. Listening is the focal point. In the programme, the teachers will also practice empathic dialogue with each other. In this way, the trainer is a role model showing how to ask questions, and how to listen. You will also find specific descriptions in the manual, on how to guide dialogue exercises.

## Empathic listening

In a novel by the Danish author Svend Åge Madsen he writes that: *"No one has the time to listen anymore. When you never get to tell your life, it remains incoherent and incomprehensible."* (Madsen, 1988, p. 40, quote translated by the authors)

When we ask the participants about their direct and immediate experience after a practice or an exercise, it is an invitation to pause and to feel the sensations in their body, the life that is pulsating in their body right now, in this moment. And also to become aware of their emotions and the activity in their mind. The trainers' job is to listen and ask questions that help the participants to discover and become aware of their experiences. Listening is central. It helps us to capture what the participants are experiencing, so that we can take that as a starting point, if and when we choose to ask more questions. By listening with our presence and empathy, together we can create processes that are relevant and alive and that are already on-going in the participants.

We often make the assumption that listening is just a matter of keeping quiet and showing common courtesy, that as long as you listen, you hear everything. Something like holding a microphone, recording what is being said and afterwards being able to rewind back and forth hearing what was said. But it is actually much more complex.

Although, unlike the eyes, the ears just sit on each side of the head, they are far from passive recipients of sound. They are constantly making a selection with the help of attention, and reaching out and choosing what to be aware of (Westmark et al. 2014). What we hear is processed by our individual sensory apparatus and it is censored and interpreted by who we are, our biography, our biology and our current state. In the role of the trainer, one's own SEDA competencies are therefore central. We can ask ourselves what it is that we have trained our ears to reach out for throughout our life, and even more importantly what we have trained our ears not to hear. We may find that our listening is on autopilot, meaning that we are listening without really being aware. The first step is discovering this, because that gives us the chance to know and be aware that selection is always going on in our perceptual system. When we bring awareness to that, we can stretch our ears, listen and ask questions in ways that benefit the participants.

Inspired by the developmental psychologist, L. Vygotsky’s concept of the zone of proximal development, we can transfer this to the fact that in empathic listening, we create a movement from the known to what it is possible to know. Simply mirroring back what has already been said can create an opening, where something becomes clearer for the participants. They can make contact with something that is already present, but as yet unclear and unrecognised.

# Teaching ≠ therapy

It is important to remember that this programme is a learning programme, it is not therapy

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In the exploratory dialogue, the focus is always on the teachers’ direct experience regarding their body, their thoughts and their emotions. The dialogue is kept light and exploratory on a horizontal level. Examples of relevant questions are: What did you notice? What happened? Where can you feel it in your body? The questions asked help the participants to be fully present in the moment, just noticing impulses and sensations. To explore the moment with our senses, not our mental, analytical abilities. For example, if a participant is sharing what they were thinking of during an exercise, the trainer can point out that the participant could simply notice that they had a thought, instead of focusing on the content of that thought.

It is not the purpose of this programme to ask vertical questions about individual stories and content in stories. We are not really interested in the why. It is not analysing why the participants sense something in a specific way or why they find something difficult. It is important to be respectful and gentle with the participants regarding what they want to share. It is a good idea to encourage the participants only to share what feels safe and secure. And at the same time create an open space, where it is possible to share whatever the participants are occupied with, without judging it. That also applies if someone does want to share something personal, and vulnerable.

A way of asking horizontal questions is to ask group questions, for example, how many of you noticed that you were tired? The participants in the group can answer the question by raising their hand.

# How to guide a mindfulness practice

The trainer is guiding and practising at the same time.

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When you guide a mindfulness practice, your own foundation of experience and embodied training in mindfulness is your baseline. It is therefore important that you are actually doing the exercises yourself while guiding the teachers. This means using yourself as a container of knowledge and experience, and leading the guidance from a place that is safe and familiar in yourself. When you do that, you do not have to remember what to say or use some specific words from the manual, you can use whatever is there. You can put what you are actually experiencing yourself into words as examples, for instance when you move your attention to your feet. You can be in touch with your own feelings, and be aware of your reactions. You have the on-going opportunity to explore your degrees of attention to yourself and the teachers. From there you can regulate, attune and align yourself and your guidance to the group. This is a way of adaptation.

For some people, having their attention on the breath, or specific areas in the body, may be too intimate. It is important that in your guidance of a mindfulness practice, you always give different opportunities to direct attention to other places. Examples might be letting the attention rest on the feet, or on how it feels to be sitting on the chair. Another possibility is to invite the teachers to sit and listen to the sounds, or just sit and look out into the air.

In your guidance, it is crucial for the sense of psychological security that you emphasise that the teachers can maintain the feeling of being in control by choosing a focal point for their attention. And that at any time during the meditation, they can return to the focus they have themselves chosen.

As you might know from your own experience, it can sometimes be quite uncomfortable to move your attention inwards. You will certainly meet teachers that will feel uncomfortable, restless, bored or even overwhelmed with discomfort, when doing mindfulness practice. You can support the teachers by giving them specific instructions in your guidance on what they can do, if they experience that something is too uncomfortable during the meditations.

It is important to give choices and different possibilities. This can be suggestions about moving the body a little, changing sitting position, moving attention to something outside of the body, sounds or opening the eyes and looking outside the window, for example.

It can help the teacher who is feeling discomfort to know that they are not the only one feeling this way, and that it is not wrong to feel discomfort. It can be a good idea to keep repeating that the goal is not to feel good, relaxed or happy. It is to be aware of whatever is present in this moment (both comfort and/or discomfort). When your guidance is based on your own experience with mindfulness training, it is easier to meet the different experiences of the teachers. The most important thing for you as a trainer is to meet the teachers with understanding and a caring, respectful and kind attitude. It can help someone to know that they are not wrong and that all experiences are welcome.

## Options

## Discomfort

As a trainer, you should never fix anything for the teachers, or help them by solving anything for them. Keep in mind that the teachers themselves have whatever they need. They breathe themselves, and when they become familiar with the attention, then they can use the wisdom of the body and mind to be aware, and to contain different sensations and emotions. When you guide yoga or body scan, it can be an invitation to be more physically present in the body. These exercises can help to release tensions, gain energy, strengthen self-acceptance and self-care, and provide more mental clarity. But mostly it is a way of paying attention to the moment with kindness, without judging or wanting anything to be different.

**Use your own sensations and impulses in your guiding**

It can be a good idea to keep your eyes open, or open your eyes once in a while, when guiding a mindfulness practice. It is also important that you place yourself in the room in a position where you can have all teachers in your visual field. Primarily, you can have your gaze down in front of you, and look around once in a while. This allows you to adapt the guidance to the group of teachers you are working with.

If some of the teachers have difficulty sitting still, you can include that in your guidance by saying: “It is quite common to come into contact with our restlessness when we are sitting, you can explore if it is possible to investigate the restlessness”. “How do you sense restlessness?” If you see a teacher who looks very tense, then you can say: “Check if you have tension in the face or the neck. How do you sense that? Does it change or stay the same?”

**Disturbances**

There will most certainly be disruptions during a practice. These can come from the teachers or actual interruptions from the environment. Rather than seeing these as unwanted incidents or behaviour, you can welcome the disruptions by stating that these are phenomena that can be noticed. You can invite the participants to be curious and inquisitive about how the distractions affect their attention.

**Language**

When you guide, it is important that teachers meet you as the person you already are. You do not have to strive to appear to be any particular kind of mindfulness teacher. You can speak and guide with your own natural voice using ordinary language. Your language can be friendly and inviting rather than commanding. It is a good idea to avoid the imperative, and to formulate the instructions as possibilities, and maybe to include other options too.

Use sensory language and invite teachers into sensory mode rather than thinking mode.

By using words that refer to what can be sensed, you invite teachers to explore their bodily sensations directly. It can be words like: tingling, itching, tickling, stinging, painful, cold, heat, etc.,

Instructions and guides are kept short and simple. Vary the pace and the intonation so that the guidance stays alive. Remember to pause.

# Some guidelines concerning leading exercises on diversity

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Diversity work is a process. Working to increase diversity in your own school and classroom is about a process of change both at the organisational level, and at the individual level - about embarking on a journey that can be both fun and difficult at the same time. It is about making visible and changing internal power structures and systems, but also about examining your own values, prejudices and behaviours. The journey will hopefully make both you as a trainer, and also the participants, aware of the benefits of a society where all people are of equal value and where everyone’s knowledge and experience is utilised without regard to external factors such as appearance, origin or age.

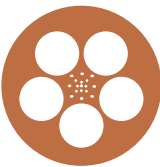
We have described the exercises in detail to support you in leading them. You can lead by yourself, but a useful tip is to lead together with a colleague. Feel free to remember to meet the participants where they are. Have confidence in the process, and that the solutions are found in the group. To increase participation and security in the group, you and the participants can set up rules of the game for the group. It is also good if, as a trainer, you know what makes you lose focus, ie what ”triggers” you. Are there questions that make you start a debate instead of creating a dialogue? Feel free to think in advance about how you want to handle such situations.

When you lead, it’s important to think about power and ruling techniques in the group. Are there power relations in the group that affect the participants? What is it permitted to think or not to think in the group? Who has the right to formulate what? Who are the participants listening to, and who are they not listening to? Keep in mind that if you break the pattern of power in the group, you may also face resistance. Please make sure that everyone is allowed to speak up and express their opinions. Encourage participants by asking questions so that they can clarify their opinions, using questions such as: ”How do you think now?”. Create a climate that allows participants to dare to change. As a leader, you should dare to be a leader, meaning you make sure that everyone gets space. Avoid favouring anyone, and be aware that most of us automatically give boys and men more time and space than girls and women, if we are not vigilant.





Trainers notes



# Day 1

## Text of the day

### Two kinds of intelligence

*There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired, as a child in school memorises facts and concepts from books and from what the teacher says, collecting information from the traditional sciences as well as from the new sciences.*

*With such intelligence you rise in the world. You get ranked ahead or behind others in regard to your competence in retaining information. You stroll with this intelligence in and out of fields of knowledge, getting always more marks on your preserving tablets.*

*There is another kind of tablet, one already completed and preserved inside you. A spring overflowing its springbox. A freshness in the center of the chest. This other intelligence does not turn yellow or stagnate. It's fluid, and it doesn't move from outside to inside through conduits of plumbing-learning.*

*This second knowing is a fountainhead from within you, moving out.*

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi  
translated by Coleman Barks



Lesson flow

We have made suggestions for time frames to follow. Our suggestion is to add two shorter breaks and one longer break for lunch.

Time	Content
20 min	Introduction of the trainers and the program
10 min	Exercise. Being here now
30 min	Presentation of the teachers
20 min	Exercise. On the other side of the road
60 min	Theory. Relational competence and five competencies described by CASEL
30 min	Exercise. Empathic listening
	Lunch
5 min	Exercise. Espresso
30 min	Theory. Diversity awareness – an introduction
30 min	Exercise. Self-reflection on diversity awareness
40 min	Exercise. Diversity in my classroom
10-30 min	Exercise. Body scan

Introduction of the trainers and the program

The following text is a suggestion about how to introduce the programme. It uses an everyday situation in a teacher’s working life as a starting point to explain what the focus and the objectives of the programme are. The trainer can use this example, or adapt by using another example, or leave it out.

The classroom is a complex entity, there are so many things going on. A teacher once described a situation from her classroom. This might not be the norm but it does show how many agendas can be present in a classroom.

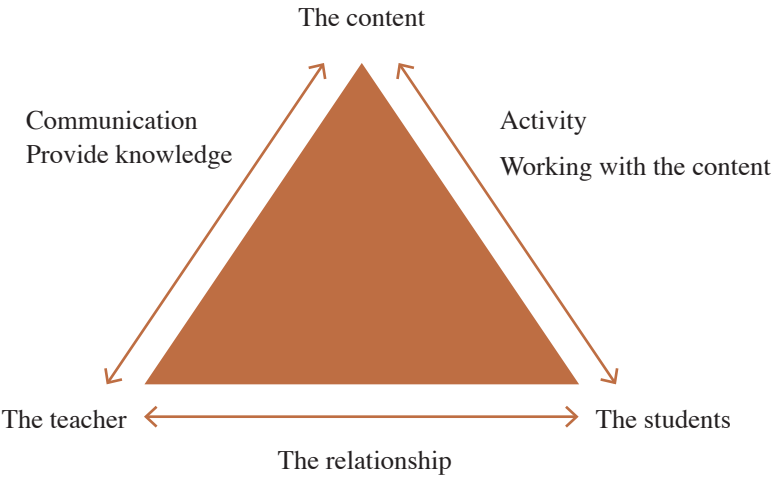
Example situation

The teacher was going to teach something that she was not very familiar with. So, she had prepared very well and used a lot of time on this specific lesson where she was going to teach the children something new. Her preparation had involved the content, and the didactics.

The class began, but all the children weren’t there. One of the boys had done something in the break between the previous lesson and this one, and the caretaker had told him to clean up. Another student had an exam that day, and some of the girls were quite excited about that. 10 minutes later the missing boy came into the classroom and, on his way to his chair, he managed to disturb all the students in his way by talking, touching etc. He sat down and the teacher started to teach. After a few minutes one of the girls left the classroom crying, and two of her friends followed her out of the room...

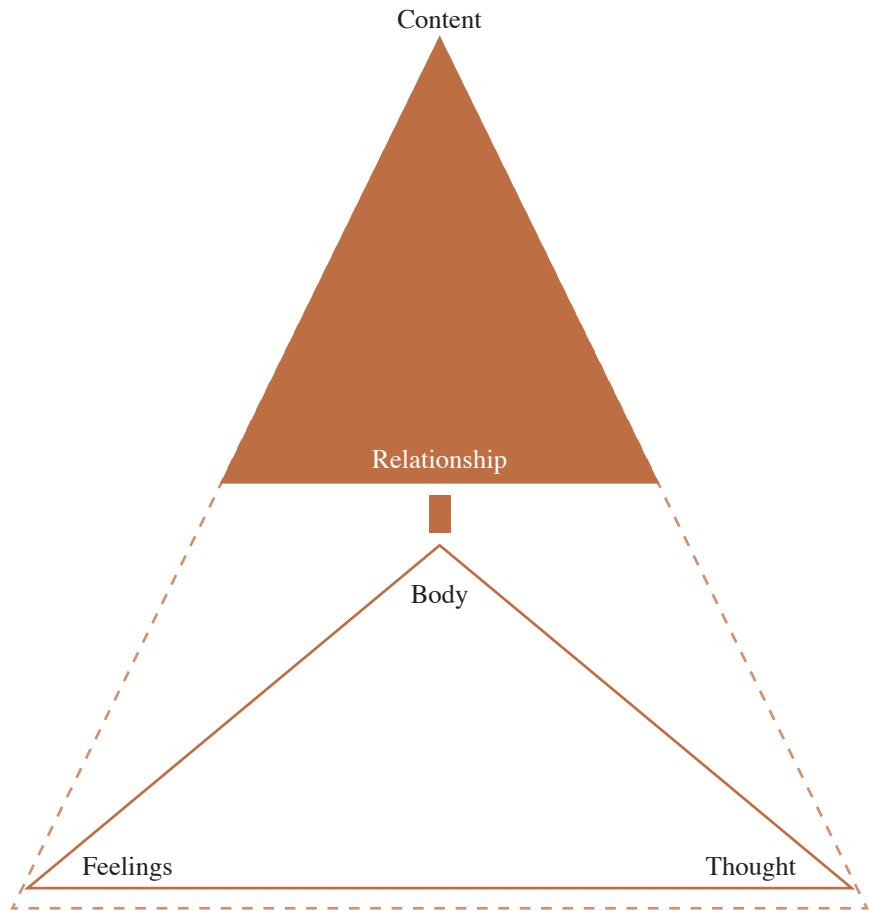
What could be done? The teacher’s first answer was that she should have prepared better and done more. The follow up question to this answer is: prepared what exactly? The teacher had prepared the content very well, and how she would present and work with the content in the classroom. She was met by the huge complexity that is always present in a classroom. That day she was met by incidents that she could not have predicted.

If we look at the didactic triangle it shows that any teaching situation contains these areas:



All three areas and their relationships are necessary for a learning situation. Often, what is prepared before a learning situation is how to communicate the content, and how to make the students work with it. And as shown in the example above, it is not enough. The relationships are vitally important for actually being able to communicate knowledge or content. How can teachers prepare for that?

Villain (2022) has made what she calls an elaborated didactic triangle to capture the complexity that is in all relationships.



To indicate what is going on, Villain has added another triangle to show that relationships are not simply relationships, they consist of a lot of unspoken matters that have an impact on the actual spoken communication.

This programme is developed for teacher professional development. It is a programme that will target how it might be possible to train and prepare teachers for the complexity they will meet in the classroom, and to prepare teachers to meet the children in all their complexity. The aim is to develop and enhance social and emotional competencies as well as diversity awareness (SEDA) in the teachers. This will be done through the presentation of a theoretical framework regarding relational competence and theory on social and emotional learning.

Addressing diversity awareness in this programme, is motivated by the fact that today's European societies are characterised by diversity, and that schools mirror society. Since students enter our classrooms with diverse backgrounds and diverse life conditions, the group of students that teachers meet are heterogeneous, and the task to create an equal learning environment that includes all students can be considered a challenge. Somehow, schools, and therefore teachers, have been assigned a key role in the diversity work of society. The European Commission (2017) points out that teachers need to be prepared to deal with diversity in their classrooms, and the Paris Declaration (Council of the EU, 2015), argues that the most pressing challenge for educators is the question of addressing the diversity of students in European schools. So, this programme aims to give teachers tools for promoting diversity equity in their classrooms.

The programme should primarily be seen as a training programme. A chance not just to learn about the content, but also to embody an understanding. We have created the programme as a combination of mindfulness practices, dialogue exercises, active listening exercises, exercises developing a personal language, discussions, exercises targeting diversity, group exercises, exercises in pairs as well as individual exercises. This means that there will be a lot of practical exercises.



Exercise

Time used  
5-10 minutes

Being here and now

Rationale and background

This exercise is a way of starting the day by giving the participants the chance to settle down. This is a new setting, some people might have been in a hurry, or have had a stressful morning in some other way. Some might have had problems finding the location, some might have been worrying about this project and what is actually expected from them etc. Starting like this is a chance to regulate ourselves, and just settle in.

It often takes a while to get the group together, when starting a new group. Some people know each other and others don't. Starting a group is the beginning of something, but at the same time, it is also in the middle of people's everyday life. The participants are concerned with a lot of things that are not really relevant for the objectives of this group, but which will have an effect on the group anyhow, because the individuals themselves are affected. This exercise is a way of developing awareness of what each individual brings into the group, not in order to do anything about it, but to create awareness so that each participant can understand their own impact on the group, and attune themselves according to that knowledge.

Objectives

- to notice what is present in your body and your mind,
- to move the attention from thoughts and mental activity to your body and your senses
- to get to know different approaches concerning how to regulate yourself when under pressure
- to use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between yourself and others,
- to be aware of how your own state affects your relationship to other people,
- to use the information from awareness of your present state to make more conscious choices
- to use the information from awareness of your present state, to have more options and choices to deal with/react to a situation involving only yourself, and in situations with other people

Materials

Chairs



Procedure

Place yourself as comfortably as possible. Take your time.

You can adjust your position, move a little bit if needed.

You can also take a look around, familiarise yourself with the space we are in. And without directly looking at the other people recognise that they are there. You are not alone.

You could also pay attention to the sounds that reach you.

You are just noticing what is actually here right now.

If it feels okay, you can close your eyes or you can keep them open, resting your gaze on the floor in front of you.

Now bring your attention to what has happened up to now. Recall your morning, from when you woke up, right up to this minute.

Pause

From here, you can direct your attention to your mind and to what it is occupied with. What is occupying you at this present moment? Maybe something happened this morning or yesterday that is still very alive in your mind? Or maybe you are concerned about something that is going to happen tomorrow, or at some other time? Just notice whatever is there.

Pause

Now you can bring your attention to your mood. What mood are you in? Are you feeling a lot of things, or are you quiet? Do your feelings vary, or is there only one that is quite stable?

Pause

Now you can bring your attention to your feet. What do you notice?

Do you sense any tingling, itching or tickling?

Do you feel warmth or coolness in your feet?

Or maybe you don't sense anything much. How do you know that? What is the feeling of not sensing, and is it possible to keep your attention there anyway?

Do you sense that you are wearing socks or shoes? What's that feeling like?

Can you feel the floor underneath your feet?

Bring your attention to your contact with the chair. The back of your thighs meeting the chair seat. And maybe the lower part of your back meeting the back of the chair.

You can't actually get this wrong. You are simply sensing whatever is there in your body at this moment. You don't have to be relaxed or happy, just notice what is there.

Now you can stretch your body if you need to, take a deeper breath and open your eyes if they are closed.





**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

This instruction is an example of a guidance. As always, use your own words and your own timing. What is important in this exercise is these three areas:

- 1) what has happened up to now?
- 2) what is occupying your mind?
- 3) What is your mood right now?

Remember to end the exercise by directing awareness to the lower part of the body, the feet and contact with the floor.

The instruction says pause after each of the three areas, but it is always important to remember pauses.

After a mindfulness practice like this, you can always let the participants reflect on what they have noticed in the exercise, in pairs or in groups of three.

This is the first exercise in the programme so it is important that you, as a trainer, are sensitive to what is needed. Is it too early for the participant to share or is it actually a good idea that makes the participant feel more safe and secure before sharing in the big group? If you choose a reflection, you can make it 3-5 minutes.

Reflection questions could be What did you notice in your body? If possible, stay with the sensations and stay away from evaluating: this was nice, this was awkward etc.

Did you notice any changes in your body, or your mind?

**Presentation/Exercise**

*Time used depends on  
the size of the group  
- probably around  
30 minutes*



**Presentation of the teachers**

The teachers presenting themselves could be done as an exercise

**Rationale and background**

The main function of this exercise is to be an icebreaker. It is to make the necessary, and sometimes very ordinary, presentation a bit more playful. Nevertheless, the exercise has some other aspects.

By asking the participants to choose something they like and something they dislike to introduce themselves, some of the theories that will be presented later are already in focus. The mind is always evaluating and judging: this is good and this is bad, I'd like more of this and I don't want that. And we often understand ourselves through these valuations. I am a person who likes to be with other people, or I identify myself as a person who doesn't like cheese. It is also a way of making groups, I identify with those who have the same likes as myself, and I confront those who have different preferences - or even worse, like what I dislike.

We are practising being looser, less rigid in our valuations. To realise I am more than just a person who likes to be with other people, and to accept that other people have different preferences, a fact we can be curious about instead of separating ourselves.

**Objective**

- Getting to know each other
- Connecting the group
- Pointing in the direction of how the mind works - evaluating and dividing

**Materials**

None

**Procedure**

Everybody introduces themselves by saying:

My name is...

I come from ... school

I like... e.g. to hike in the mountains

I don't like... e.g. to sleep in a tent



**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

The exercise can be done just as explained, and it is possible to add another level of reflection to it by asking questions afterwards, such as:

What was the easiest part?

Finding something that you liked or something that you disliked?

What did you notice in yourself when you heard the other participants’ statements?

Did you notice identification with some of the participants?

What happened when someone liked or disliked something the opposite to yourself?

You can ask for reflections, or you can ask the participants to just raise their hand if they agree with your question.

**Exercise**

*Time used 20 minutes*

**On the other side of the road**

**Rationale and background**

This exercise continues the work on identification and valuation from the “presentation of the teachers”. We work with identity by identifying through attraction and repulsion. We understand ourselves by liking one thing, and by distancing ourselves from something else. I am like this, and I am really not like that. We make in-groups with the people who identify with the same things, and out-groups with those who think differently. This exercise is a way of bringing awareness to the conception that we can only be one specific way. The various statements allow different groups to appear, and might well show that identity is more complex and that sometimes it is even hard to know how I see myself. This is illustrating the concept of intersectionality.

Another aspect of this exercise is realising that we’re actually not all that special – in a good way. Many people feel that they are doing something wrong, or that there is something wrong with them when they feel loneliness, when they are sad or angry or sense discomfort in one way or another. This exercise shows that these are actually universal feelings, and we are more alike than we might think we are.

Most of the statements are just for fun, sort of “fun-facts” about ourselves. The last statements are more serious and can be more vulnerable, but they are also the statements that facilitate the option to discover similarities, and to realise that we are not alone in feeling discomfort.



**Objective**

- to practice empathic curiosity through dialogue and practical exercises
- to explore different points of view through dialogue and practical exercises
- to notice what is present in our mind
- to use that knowledge or awareness in understanding the connection between ourselves and others
- to discover and develop awareness about our own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity, and how they may have an impact on embracing diversity in the classroom



**Materials**

None





**Procedure**

Read the following statements for the group and ask each person to place themselves where they identify themselves most. In some of the statements they might not feel totally aligned, in which case they choose whatever is most true. After each question the participants move back to the starting point, for example being together in the middle of the room, as a whole group.

Now and then during the exercise, the trainer can ask the participants to look around and see who is in the same group as themselves. Are the same people in the groups? Are the groups changing? You can also ask the participants to notice what it feels like to be in a group alone, or with only a few other people. And what does it feel like to be part of the majority?

They don't have to answer; these can just be reflectional questions.

Those who see themselves as men – women – another category

Eye colour – Brown, blue, green, grey

Those who once were good at playing football

Those who are still good at playing football

Those who have a height-adjustable table in their office

Those who have an office

Those who drink a cup of coffee first thing in the morning

Those who have a superior

Those who live in the country where there are born

Those who go skiing in the winter

Those who have become more sociable over the years

Those who had a difficult time in school

Those who don't want to talk to anybody when they wake up in the morning

Those who enjoy working in the garden

Those who bring their work into their home

Those who think that other people talk too much

Those who do not always know what to say

Those who like to make other people laugh

Those who look at their cell phone first thing in the morning

Those who wish they didn't look at their cell phone first thing in the morning

Those who experience themselves as being different from the majority in a group

Those who feel connected to some kind of religion

Those who know what loneliness feels like

Those who have a secret they have never told anyone



Stand for a moment in silence. You can ask the participants to close their eyes if that is ok or just rest their gaze on the floor. Ask them to recall the various statements, and the different positions that they chose.

Reflectional questions: Did anything come up?

What did you notice when standing in the different groups?

Reflections in small groups of 2-3. Summing up in the big group.

**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

You can add more statements, or leave some out. Maybe you know of an issue relevant for this group, that can be used as a statement. Be aware of the last statement that ends the exercise. It can be both a serious one, or a more light hearted one, depending on the group and the atmosphere.



**Theory**

*Time used 60 minutes*

*(Relational competence and CASEL)*

**Relational Competence**

We know from developmental psychology (Stern;2000) that a child is communicating from the moment it is born. A child needs relationship, and cannot survive without someone who takes care of it. This means that a child will attach to, and make a relationship with whoever is there. Jesper Juul describes how the child always cooperates (2011), often at the cost of their integrity and well-being, because they need the relationship so much.

We also know that good relations are essential in schools between teacher and students.

Nordenbo (2008) formulates it this way:

“If we want to create a good learning environment, it’s important to teach teachers to create good relations: To show tolerance, respect, interest, empathy and compassion to each child and appeal to the children’s understanding of a conflict instead of bullying them.”

This was stated in the earlier manual:

“Cornelius-White’s (2007) review of 119 studies shows the importance of the quality of the teacher-student-relation on academic performance and on emotional and behavioural aspects as for instance **satisfaction, participation and self-efficacy** (Cornelius-White, 2007), and the work of Durlak et al. (2011; 2015) comes to similar conclusions.” (Jensen et.al. 2018, pp. 13)

Klinge (2018) further emphasises that the teacher’s relational competence is the primary factor that determines whether the children are wasting their time in school, or if they can use school as a foundation for contributing their unique abilities and strengths to society. Klinge stresses how relational competence has an impact on children’s well-being, on their academic performance, on their ability to self-regulate, on how well challenged children manage, on their futures, and not least on the relationships in the class.

Ågård (2015) is interested in the link between the teacher-student relationships and the motivational factor for learning in the students. She writes how a positive relationship between teacher and student influences students’ motivation, and learning outcomes as compared to a number of other pedagogical factors.

Creating good relationships is a very important competence in the teacher’s professional development. A natural next question is, how can that be done?

One important factor is understanding what a relationship is. It is a constellation consisting of three parts: the teacher, the student and the relation. The relationship is the sum of each person’s condition, in the situation in which the relationship unfolds. The elaborated didactic triangle shows how thoughts, feelings and also bodily sensations are all part of the contact between people, and how they have an impact on the quality of the relationship.

Gustavson (2016) describes a relationship as a window. Both participants in the relationship are looking through the window. The window can be dirty and it can be difficult to see the other person clearly. What most of us do is to try and clean the other person’s side of the window, instead of cleaning our own.

Working with teacher professional development is about cleaning our own side of the window. For the professional to know and to be aware of what he or she brings to the relationship, how the professional impacts the relationship. It is an ongoing process in which we **examine, acknowledge and engage** the **patterns of thought and behaviour** that promote, or impede and obstruct, our path of fulfilling our professional commitment and potential, in relation to others.

The good news is, that the professional is able to change, and foster good relationships by knowing themselves and by being able to attune their behaviour in specific situations. When we talk about professional relationships, such as a teacher-student relationship, it is always the teacher who has the responsibility for the quality of the relationship, and it is the teacher’s obligation to work towards a relationship based on respect, interest, empathy and compassion. The teacher-student relationship is asymmetric. The teacher has more power and knowledge, and consequently more responsibility.

Jensen and Juul define relational competence as:

*“The professional’s ability to “see” the individual child on its own terms and attune her behaviour accordingly, without giving up leadership, as well as the ability to be authentic in her contact with the child. And as the professional’s ability and will to take full responsibility for the quality of the relation”* (Jensen & Juul, 2004).

In short, this means:

**To see each child as it is.**

To “see” the child means seeing behind their behaviour. To do that, it can be helpful to look at some common human existential needs.

The need for cooperation, the need for integrity and the need to feel safe. The need for cooperation and the need for integrity are very often in conflict. Frequently, when it comes to children, they will cooperate to feel safe and to be a part of a group at the expense of their own borders, their values and their own actual needs. They cooperate because the fear of being excluded is life threatening. As mentioned above, the need for attachment and the feeling of belonging is biologically embedded in the child from birth. The child’s life depends on it.

Cooperation beyond our own limits is not without cost. Reactions or symptoms will be seen in the behaviour of a child. This could be irritability, frustration, even anger or hatred. It could be longing for, and seeking contact without normal boundaries, or sorrow. Seeing the child means seeing behind the symptoms, understanding and being empathic to the child. Understanding that something else is going on behind the behaviour, and the behaviour is simply a sign.

### **Attune your behaviour to the situation**

Daniel Stern (2000) wrote about a concept called affect attunement, as a way of describing a successful communication between a parent and infant. Affect attunement is responding to an infant's expressions by meeting their expression with matching energy, meeting the rhythm, the intensity or the size of expression in a way that is responsive to the infant's needs and borders. How much contact does the child need? When does the child want to communicate, and when is it enough?

In a school setting, Klinge (2017) uses the concept of “tuners” as a way of describing teacher behaviours that are designed to make contact and establish good relationships with the students. Examples of “tuners” could be smiling and nodding, as a way of showing interest, when listening to the students. It could be lowering your body to be on eye level with a student, when talking to them. Of course, there is no objective list of “Tuners”. Something that was very useful in one situation could make another situation worse. What is important is knowing that as a teacher, you have the power and the opportunity to either upscale, or downscale, a situation. The teacher's behaviour is important, and it is not easy and it takes training. Firstly, noticing what is going on in yourself in this situation. Secondly, perhaps regulating yourself to avoid doing something that could escalate a potential conflict, or preventing yourself from doing or saying something that you would later regret. Attuning to the situation, is also knowing the student and what could be helpful in this situation. This requires the ability to go inwards and outwards, at the same time.

### **Maintain leadership and responsibility for the relationship and be authentic**

In all professional work charisma, the way of behaving and the personal strength of the professional all play important roles.

When working with other people, it is sometimes said that it is important to be professional. Being professional in the sense of putting on a professional mask, that covers and hides the person behind. It is the idea that being professional is showing stability in all situations, even when you are hurt or experience something forcefully. A professional is actually capable of delivery, no matter what personal state they are in - and they are not supposed to show doubt or weakness. This is the picture of leaving your personal and private persona on the coat rack outside the classroom along with your jacket, before entering the classroom as another person – a teacher.

In many ways that is an absurd picture. It is not possible to be another person or to leave the personal part of yourself outside. The person behind the teacher will be there anyway. Any child you ask will know the difference between two teachers, even though they have the same teaching experience and the same education. There will be a difference because they are two different people. The children will also know how to react and behave, when teacher 1 is in the classroom and how to relate differently to teacher 2. The person behind is present, even when they are being professional.

Even more important, being in a relationship needs at least two people. When working with other people making relationships, especially with children, it is necessary to meet as people. It is difficult to make the relationship a strictly professional one. Being personal or being authentic, means taking responsibility for the person you are, and for the effect that person has on your professional work.

One example of being personal and taking responsibility could be a day when the teacher is short-tempered, because of some private issue. Being authentic means being honest about that by saying for instance: I'm having a bad day, it is not your fault – please tell me if I become unreasonable. By saying that, the teacher allows the children to relax as they don't have to use energy speculating what the matter might be, and if they've done something wrong. The teacher shows the student's respect by acknowledging that their short temper might have an impact on the students. And the teacher takes responsibility for their own side of the relationship.

Being authentic doesn't mean being personal and revealing things about yourself that don't concern the students, and have no relevance in the situation. Again, it is important to remember that teachers are also subjects and therefore different human beings. Some teachers find it very natural to share personal stuff, and others don't. Being authentic is being true to yourself, and at the same time not giving the students any responsibility for your own limitations and your borders.



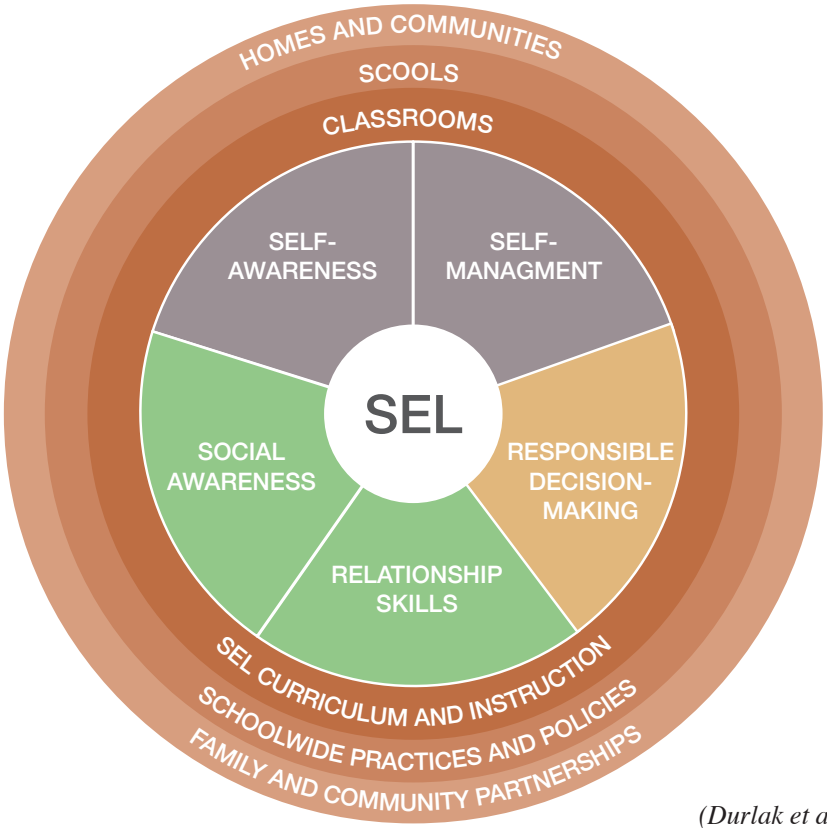


Theory

CASEL and the five SEL competencies

CASEL describes itself as an organisation with the aim of making social and emotional learning (SEL) part of high-quality and equitable education for all.

They use what they call the CASEL wheel, as a framework for all kinds of different SEL interventions.



(Durlak et al., 2015)

The CASEL wheel consists of five competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. These five competencies describe and target five specific competencies, and they are interrelated areas describing different elements of social and emotional competences. Together they cover the existential human theme of how to be both an individual, and part of a group or society. This connects very easily to the understanding of relational competence described above.

In the previous Hand-in-Hand manual (Jensen, et. al.; 2020) the definitions of the five competencies from the CASEL wheel were elaborated to align with important points and insights from the theory of relational competence. It is these definitions that will also be used in this programme. We refer to the earlier manual for a more thorough review of the changes and elaborations made to the CASEL’s definitions, and to how they were transformed and used in the Hand-in-Hand programme. (Jensen, et. al; 2020)

The first two competencies, self-awareness and self-management, concern the individual.

Self-awareness

The ability to recognise our emotions, bodily sensations and thoughts, and their influence on how we react. This includes having a sober, accepting/recognising way of looking at yourself, and the ongoing will and wish to be working at establishing all of that. (Jensen, Helle et.al; 2020)

For instance, self-awareness is trained by sitting in silence and noticing the bodily sensations that are present at the moment. It is being aware of our own patterns, values, prejudices and conceptions and how they colour our perception of reality. Training self-awareness is also the will, and the courage, to keep looking at your own part in any relationship. What do I, as an individual, bring into the relationship? The first step is to “see”, to be aware, it is not necessary to understand or explain why it is as it is. Be aware and take responsibility for whatever is there, these are my feelings and my responsibility.

The example used earlier in the paragraph “Maintain leadership and responsibility for the relationship and be authentic” could also be useful here: in the example from the classroom, the teacher has had a terrible morning and is actually in a very bad mood, when they meet the children. It has nothing to do with the children but it has an effect on the atmosphere. One of the children might ask the teacher: are you angry? And the teacher answers in a very angry tone: no, I’m not angry.

Maybe the teacher didn’t notice that they were angry, maybe they didn’t want to admit it. In any case it will probably reach the child as: something is wrong and I don’t know what it is, is it my fault, have I done something wrong?

Self-awareness is noticing your state of mind

In this example, the teacher can help the child enhance their self-awareness by taking responsibility for their own emotions by saying: yes I am in a bad mood but it has nothing to do with you, and I will do my best not to act it out here. Can you tell me if I do, please?

In this way, the teacher helps the child to trust their own sensations by acknowledging that the child sensed correctly. In this way, the teacher takes the authority and responsibility and is helping the child to develop self-awareness at the same time.

This is not easy. A completely understandable response to that example from a teacher could be: Have you been in a classroom recently? That’s not possible! And even if it was possible, it is actually impossible for me to do that because I am so stressed out that it is really difficult to be calm and answer nicely. Furthermore, I really get angry when someone asks me if I am angry. The next competence, self-management, is a way of targeting that.

**Self-management**

The ability to regulate our emotions, bodily sensations, thoughts and behaviours appropriately, in different situations. This includes managing stress, sensing and using impulses in a constructive way, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals. (Jensen, Helle et.al; 2020).

When we are under pressure our behaviour often becomes automatic. Very often we are reacting in order to get away from something sensed as being unpleasant. Our reactions reflect the need to regulate the sensations in the body, the emotions and the thoughts towards something calmer. It is natural. Every living being wants to avoid discomfort and move towards comfort. To do that, the individual has developed some habits and patterns that have proved themselves useful. They are developed both from evolution and biology, and from biography. The problem is, that when we react automatically it is often in a what we could call a “one size fits all” reaction. The same reaction gets used for every discomforting situation. And of course, the same reaction won’t work in every situation.

Working with self-management means pausing when you discover that you are under pressure, and bringing your awareness to your body, your breath or your senses. That provides the chance to respond with awareness, and an opportunity to discover other possible reactions to the situation, instead of reacting on autopilot. Reacting means doing something automatically, responding means being aware, and knowing and choosing what to do.

Responding process:

Impulse ► interpretation ► React/Response

The above model shows what is happening when we get an impulse. These processes are frequently happening at the same time, and are difficult to separate from each other. We feel an impulse and react immediately, without knowing we are doing it. The training adds awareness to each step: what is the impulse, what feelings does the impulse awaken and what are the reactions or responses? This is very difficult to do when it is actually happening. It can be done in dialogue, as the possibility of discovering what was happening, and in this way make new patterns, by finding a behaviour that would be more appropriate and create a more constructive situation.

This subject will be elaborated on later in the programme, when working with stress.

**Self-esteem and self-confidence**

Self-esteem	Self-confidence
To be	To be able
Valuable	Right/wrong
Acknowledgement	Approval
Taking seriously	Critique/praise
To be seen	To evaluate
Inner authority	Outer authority

(Juul, J. & Jensen H.;2002)

To have self-esteem means that you basically find yourself as being okay just as you are. It is not necessary to achieve anything specific in order to know that you are all right. There is a basic confidence in just being, saying that you have a right to be on this earth because you are a living creature. You don’t have to achieve, do the right thing, have a lot of competencies, you are all right just the way you are. As long as you are breathing, there is more that is right in your existence, than wrong.

Self-confidence is connected to achievement and doing. It is good to know that you are able to do what you can achieve, which gives a certain agency and self-efficacy. But if self-confidence is not paired with self-esteem, it is like a scaffold without a house. If you don’t get appreciation and approval from the outside, it can feel like you are worthy of nothing. Being is only worth something, and the individual only feels significant, with valuation from outside. So many children, and adults, think that they are not okay the way they are. They have to be, to behave or to achieve in some specific way to be liked, and to be appreciated, in order to be part of some vital group: the family, a group of friends or the school.

Being dependent on the praise and approval of others makes us vulnerable, it is important to enhance self-praise and self-approval. Not so that you turn away from other people, disallowing relationships, and not through enhancing self-preoccupation and not seeing the importance of others, but instead through an equal understanding of the value and uniqueness of ourselves, as well as everyone else. That takes training, and a nuanced understanding of what self-esteem really is.

Self-esteem has two dimensions, a quantitative and a qualitative dimension.

The quantitative dimension concerns knowing and being aware of yourself. It is knowing bodily sensations, thoughts, feelings and impulses in order to react in a given situation. That is self-awareness.

The qualitative dimension describes how you relate to whatever is discovered. The qualitative dimension concerns self-acceptance. Are you judging yourself and not allowing specific feelings or thoughts? Are you ashamed of certain reactions or impulses? Or, is it possible to have an accepting attitude to whatever is discovered? Accepting is a way of regulating, and can be seen as part of self-management. When you are accepting, you are not unconsciously moving away from discomfort. It is a way of meeting something that is interpreted as unpleasant, and containing it by accepting this is how things are right now. It is not a laissez-faire attitude. It is not thinking that everything is okay, and no development is needed. It is truly accepting that I can make mistakes, or be angry, or sad and that this is human, this is natural. Accepting is taking responsibility: I did this thing, and I might need to apologise to someone for my behaviour, and life will carry on.

Having good self-esteem means knowing and accepting. It means that when we are in a difficult situation, some part of ourself knows that this is a human condition. And that even though this is tough, I am still a human being with the right to be on this earth.

The two dimensions of self-esteem as described above, can be understood as an elaboration of the CASEL framework and the five competencies.

### **Personal language**

To talk in a personal language, means talking from your authentic self. Describing what reality looks like from your point of view. It is the language of describing feelings, sensations, conceptions and thoughts. When speaking in a personal language there is no right or wrong.

We are highly trained to speak in an analytical language. We have learned we have to analyse, understand and explain. In schools, we learn methods for finding the right answer, or the solution to a problem or a question. This is a necessary and useful competence that gives us the ability to create and develop. But there is a flip side to that competence, and it is when we think we can use that type of language in situations where it doesn't make sense to analyse or to categorise things as right or wrong. When talking about how a real person is experiencing a situation, you cannot make it into a question of right or wrong. A person cannot experience, feel or sense wrongly. For sure, it might be different from how the other individuals experience the same situation, but it cannot be wrong.

People are subjects in their own right, with a very different biography and culture that, taken together, colours and affects how each individual will experience and respond to any given situation. This is a way of seeing individuals as subjects, not objects. If people were objects it would be reasonable to talk about experiences as being right or wrong, because one event would always lead to a certain reaction or a specific experience.

But we are subjects, and by using analytical language when talking about ourselves or when talking to others, we can actually enhance a feeling of being wrong. By saying to a child: “That’s nothing, no need to be sad about that.” You are using analytical language. The conclusion that this answer is based on is: this situation shouldn’t lead to sadness. There is the objective truth of what is worth being sad about, and what is not. We probably think that we are helping the child, but what the child hears is most likely: I am wrong because I am sad. Being sad isn’t allowed; I can’t show that feeling.

Speaking a personal language is a way of training and enhancing self-esteem, especially the quantitative dimension. By listening to another person and encouraging them to talk personally, you are enhancing the qualitative dimension, by showing that the person is worth listening to and that the person’s experiences are valuable.

The next two competencies, social competence and relationship skills, target how to be in a world where we are not alone, but living with other people and sharing the world with other living beings. It deals with the competencies that are needed to live in a community with other people.

### **Social competence**

The ability to take the perspective of and to have empathy and compassion with others from diverse backgrounds and the ability to evaluate flexibly, on the basis of manifold perspectives and perspective change, practises and products beyond the self/other (perspective consciousness); to be aware of cultural synergies and dissents/perspective consciousness and to understand, accept and recognise social and ethical norms for behaviour and to make space for a different point of views and recognising the influence and importance of family, school and community. (Jensen, Helle et.al; 2020)

### **Diversity - awareness**

Social competence, as described above, is closely related to diversity awareness. In this project we see the Casel framework as a bridge to awareness of diversity in society and in school too. The concept of diversity awareness will be elaborated on and described in more depth when theory on diversity is presented.

### **Relationship skills**

The ability to establish and maintain constructive relationships and the will to carry on, even when it seems impossible to maintain the constructive relationship. This includes the ability to take personal as well as social responsibility, and to go into the relationship with personal presence, by being aware that a constructive relationship needs the individuals involved to make a synergy between taking care of their integrity and taking care of the society/the group. (Jensen, Helle et.al;2020)

This definition contains the different aspects of relational competence. The importance of creating constructive relationships, being authentic and taking responsibility for the relationship and seeing past the behaviour and work, on understanding the motives and intentions behind a specific behaviour.

The last competence is making a synergy of the competences concerning the individual, and the competences concerning being in a group, or in a relationship.

### **Responsible decision making**

On the foundation of knowledge of social groups and their products and practices beyond self/other, and knowledge about asymmetrical and disputed global cultural processes, it represents the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behaviour and social interactions, based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others. (Jensen, Helle et.al;2020)

It is necessary to know our own immediate response, in order to make responsible decisions. It is necessary to have self-awareness and listen carefully to ourselves and reflect, analyse, think, feel and sense, what would be the right decision for me. Self-management is also important. Being able to look forward, plan for a long-term strategy (if the decision concerns something in the future , for example career changes) and to regulate immediate needs that might pull us in another direction.

Referring to the well-known quote from John Donne: “no man is an island ”, responsible decisions are always made in a context. In order to be responsible, we need to know what is possible in the situation that we are embedded in. I might personally feel that it would be very good for me to choose to .... But that might hurt other people, or have consequences that decrease their options and impact wellbeing.

Making good choices means using the other four competencies in a balanced way.

Exercise

Time used  
30-40 minutes

Empathic Listening

Rationale and background

A significant part of this training is intended to develop empathic curiosity. Empathic curiosity can be described as a combination of empathic dialogue and empathic listening. Of course this is a construct, in real life it makes no sense to split it up into two entities, but when training and developing the skills, it is a way of scaffolding the training to look at each element.

Below are some ways of describing empathic listening:

Emphatic listening is:	Emphatic listening is NOT:
To be interested and curious in what is being said	To have a plan and a particular goal for the conversation
To openly invite any answers verbally and nonverbally	To ask leading questions
To ask clarifying and elaborating questions	To interrogate
To move in the direction of understanding - and to avoid misunderstandings	To talk about our own experiences
To meet the other person's feelings in relation to what is being told, with empathy and compassion	To conclude
To make room and pause for reflection	To interrupt
To acknowledge the other person's way of telling	To know-it-all, and ridicule or be sarcastic
	To resolve a potential conflict for the person talking
	To evaluate

Listening emphatically is the ability to listen without interfering. To listen to another person without interrupting is not easy, it can feel rather constructed, and for some people even rude and breaking social norms.

Making progress in developing empathic curiosity is training in simply listening. That is half of this exercise. The other half is developing personal language.



Objective

- to enhance and develop relational competence
- to become acquainted with the concept of empathic curiosity
- to practice empathic curiosity through dialogue and practical exercises
- to become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- to get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- to develop empathic curiosity by practising empathic listening and asking questions emphatically in order to understand the perspectives of others
- to share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.

Materials

None



Procedure

Find a partner. Decide who is A and who is B.

If you like you can place yourself in a position where your shoulders are aligned and you are looking in opposite directions and still have the possibility to look at each other.

For the next 1-2 minutes A talks about one of the questions below. It is a reflection, and the person talks about whatever comes up. There are no rules or any specific way of answering the question. Be aware of only saying what feels right for you to say, you are not forced to say anything. And if you get to a point where you don't have any more words, you can just sit in silence. Maybe something else will arise after a while, maybe not. In the silence it can be more comfortable to have the choice of looking somewhere else, rather than directly at the other person.

B just listens. Not commenting, not interrupting, not helping the other person with questions if they are silent. Just listening. B can show interest and make it clear that they are listening, but not with words just by using non-verbal communication.

The trainer keeps track of the time. Change roles. Be sure that both A and B talk and listen in each round.

After each question, there is a new round with a new question and a new partner.





Questions

- What would a perfect weekend look like to you?
- What would you do career-wise if you were to choose something else than what you are currently doing?
- Think of a teacher that made an impact on you. What was the teacher like? How did they impact you?
- Which movie that you have already seen, would you like to see again?
- A situation where you made another person happy.

Sum up the exercise in the big group. You can use these questions:

- What did you notice?
- How did you experience talking without being interrupted?
- What did you notice when listening without saying anything?
- How did you experience gaps of silence, if there were any?



Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

The trainer chooses a specific amount of time, for example one minute. Don't make the time slot too long the first time. However, it's also important to find a balance, and not make it too short either, so that the participants are challenged a little. This is in order to find the zone for proximal development.

In this description, five questions and five rounds are suggested. Depending on the group and the timeline, you can choose to do fewer.

Exercise

Time used 5 minutes



Espresso

Rationale and background

This exercise targets the group, and the individual.

It is a gear shift exercise or a brain break, and as such is a way of regulating yourself. It is positioned after lunch in order to gather the group after the break. Doing this exercise in a circle where participants can see each other, knowing that the group is doing it together, is a way of bringing attention to the group, and to belonging and relationships within the group.

The main thing in this exercise is patting your body, in order to have a physical sense of your body. The exercise is called "espresso" as a reference to the effect of drinking espresso.

This is also an example of an exercise that can be used by the teachers in the classroom.

Objective

- to enhance and develop self-awareness, self-management and social awareness, to notice what is present in the body and the mind
- to get to know different approaches on how to regulate ourselves when under pressure
- to share and discuss concrete examples, ideas and tools to inspire and support teachers in their diversity work
- to share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.

Materials

Nothing.

Procedure

Using one hand, pat on your other arm from hand to shoulder, whilst counting to seven. That means seven pats. Do the same on the other arm.

On the chest.

On the lower back.

On the thighs.

End the round by pushing your hands out in front of you making a sound: Whooo

Repeat this pattern of patting the body counting down: 6 – 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 (arms, chest, lower back, thighs)

Ending each round with the sound, and pushing your hands out in front of you.

Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

The trainer can just leave the exercise as it is, of course you can ask for reactions from the participants. Perhaps asking if they can use it in their classroom.



## Theory

### Diversity Awareness - an introduction

As a starting point for the area of Diversity Awareness, we suggest watching the video: All that we share, which is available as a resource on the webpage:

[TV 2 | All That We Share](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVO1Tc)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVO1Tc>

#### Why is diversity awareness important for teachers?

First and foremost, because we live in a society that is characterised by diversity and schools are part of this society. The European Commission (2017) points out that teachers need to be prepared to deal with diversity in their classrooms. According to the Paris Declaration (Council of the EU, 2015), the question of addressing the diversity of students is one of the most pressing challenges for educators. Diversity awareness concerns people's values, norms, notions and preconceptions about their own, and other people's, affiliations.

We can further present four arguments for why promoting diversity awareness in school is important:

- The argument of justice and democracy - access to education should not be limited by students' background, affiliation or identity. Different groups of students should not be favoured or disadvantaged by the pedagogy that is used.
- The argument of anti-discrimination - to work against discrimination regarding gender, ethnicity, religion or other belief systems, disability or sexuality.
- The argument of quality - If students' different backgrounds and experiences are utilised, the school can become important for a greater number of students, at the same time access to several different perspectives increases students' ability to understand different contexts. In other words, working with diversity awareness can contribute to making us smarter (Katherine & Phillips, 2014).
- Finally, there is an argument of power - which is related to the argument of justice and democracy but focuses more on diversity awareness as a tool for social change. Diversity awareness pedagogy can help to make norms visible, and problematise them to change exclusionary norms in school as part of society (Wickström, 2011).

In this program, we use the term Diversity awareness, as it refers to being aware of how norms, values and affiliation concern changeable processes, and that nothing is static. Through increased awareness of diversity, we believe that teachers can choose more consciously how to meet and promote diversity in the classroom. Therefore, the ideas within this programme should be understood as a tool for teachers, when reflecting on their teaching from the perspective of diversity awareness. Further, we see diversity awareness as the ability to embrace the uniqueness of all individuals across multiple dimensions, such as religious beliefs, ethnicity, age, gender, physical abilities, special needs, political beliefs and socioeconomic status, whilst keeping in mind that these dimensions interact and are combined in people's construct of social identities. To give an example, the gender dimension may mean that a girl identifies herself not only as a girl. She may also identify herself in relation to other dimensions such as age, ethnicity, socio-economic status and so on. This is what we refer to as intersectionality.

### Intersectionality

When talking about diversity, it is necessary to move away from constructs that merely consider people's characteristics in isolation from each other; intersectionality is something that needs attention (Bešić et al., 2020; Messiou et al., 2020). No one is simply a woman or a man, we are also always people with a skin colour, a sexual orientation, a class affiliation, a degree of functionality and so on. This is what we refer to as intersectionality.

The concept of intersectionality was popularised by professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1986. Crenshaw examined how black women are marginalised based on structures that included those dealing with more than one dimension of diversity, in this case, both gender and race, and how this created a particular form of discrimination. As one concrete example, Crenshaw highlighted the way that women's bodies have different values in the American justice system, for example, men convicted of rape received different lengths of punishment depending on the skin colour of the woman (Crenshaw, 1991). An intersectional approach involves considering how 'categories' or 'norms' are co-produced, and how they shape one another – like the various ingredients in a layered cake. In order to avoid reproducing normative assumptions about what a 'woman' is, for instance, an intersectional approach is necessary.

The realisation that gender, for example, is a differentiated category and ethnicity a different category has led to an approach that means we look at the living conditions of different groups as isolated processes, without points of contact with each other. In fact, intersectionality is about becoming aware that these processes are created, and are changed, in relation to each other. It concerns the way people's living conditions are shaped at the intersection of different power structures. So, people's living conditions are not created within one isolated culture, one gender order or one class order, but several orders that are also context-based (de los Reyes, 2005).

Often the metaphor when trying to understand intersectionality is a crossroad, an intersection. This metaphor suggests that each factor continues on the other side of the intersection – unchanged by the meeting.

Instead, we believe that a different metaphor better suits the way we understand the relation between the different aspects of diversity and the norms that follow, namely the metaphor of a cream-layer cake.



When we eat a cake like this, all the ingredients form a whole – the different parts shape each other from scratch, without any sharp contours.

Certain ingredients are clearly visible, but most are subtly part of what makes the cake what it is. When using this metaphor each ingredient can be seen as an aspect of diversity, something that forms the whole human identity. Some ingredients are visible on the outside, easy to interpret and have assumptions about, for example the cream and the berries. Using this metaphor, these ingredients could be seen as some aspects of a human identity that are more obvious than others, for example age, colour or biological gender. Other ingredients in the cake are not visible on the outside and some ingredients are in themselves a mix of other ingredients. For example, the dough is composed of eggs, flour, sugar and so on. This is also the case for us human beings, there are many aspects in our construct of identity that are not visible on the outside, for example our socio-economic background, religious or political beliefs or our sexual orientation. However, it's important to understand that all the ingredients that make a cake and all aspects of the construct of human identity matter. They make the cake what it is, and they make the person who they are too.

### **Norms and privilege**

Norms are notions, ideas and unwritten rules that shape us as individuals, shape our relationships with others and shape society. In all social relations, there are norms that govern how we are expected and allowed to behave. Since norms are created and negotiated in the interaction between people, they are also changeable and differ depending on time and place (Peas, 2010; Åkerlund, 2011). Norms are also interrelated, meaning that it is important to understand what conditions look like for people, with regard to several norms and diversity aspects. We adapt to most of the norms in society without thinking. To shake hands with the right hand is such an unwritten rule that we don't reflect upon it. When someone breaks the rules or norms they normally become visible, for instance, when someone suddenly reaches out with their left hand when greeting.

Norms are also connected to power. There are norms that affect society and determine who has privilege and influence in society, or an individual's private life. Such societal norms are usually invisible too, as long as people don't break them. There are also norms concerning how a human body is expected to function and how it should look. For example, the norm in western societies is to have a well-trained, slim body, to be white and to have a good western socio-economic background (Pease, 2010). This norm becomes visible when mirrored by people who have a different social and cultural background. This means that some people are given privileges over other people simply because of where they are born and the way they look, which is what Peas (2010) calls unearned privileges. Often people of privilege are unaware of the privileges they are given. For example, some men are willing to acknowledge that women are oppressed but less willing to see themselves as privileged. They do not recognise those privileges that come from gender, class, functionality and ethnicity, for example (Peas, 2010). The starting point for undoing privilege in society, and school, is to become aware and to recognise that oppression and privilege exist.

Some of the exercises and discussions that are presented in this programme are of a norm-critical nature. This means that they aim to give examples of how norms contribute to people outside these norms being treated unequally, and how people within the norm are privileged.

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

Self-reflection diversity awareness

Rationale and background

Start the exercise by talking about how this exercise aims to start you thinking about your own view of diversity. This can be seen as part of teachers' journey towards processing and developing diversity awareness. One of the prerequisites for being able to understand other people is understanding yourself. Research has shown that teachers' own attitudes and values concerning diversity plays a significant role in how all students will be included in the classroom society (Bohman & Miklikowska, 2020).

Objective

The purpose of the exercise is to discover and develop awareness about own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity and how those may have an impact on embracing diversity in the classroom.

Materials

Something to write down reflections on. This could be a notebook or a digital device.

Procedure

Tell the participants that they will be asked to reflect on various aspects of diversity, and how they themselves think and act in different situations that concern diversity. Participants should write down their reflections. Point out that they will not have to show their notes to anyone, but that they will use them themselves at the end of the program. Read the questions out loud one by one and let each reflection last for about three minutes.

1. What does diversity mean to you?
2. Who or what has influenced how you think about diversity?
3. What do you usually do when you witness someone being humiliated or discriminated against in some way? Does this correspond with how you want to act?
4. How do you usually react when you get into discussions about different ways of looking at diversity in society, or in your workplace?
5. Reflect about your awareness of your own prejudices and how they affect your way of thinking and behaving.

Reflections and guidelines for the trainer

After the exercise, remind the participants to keep their notes so that those can be used at the end of the program. In this way the teachers will be able to reflect upon the “journey” toward a profound awareness of diversity.

Exercise

Time used 40 minutes

Diversity in my classroom, for teachers

Objective

- To discover and develop awareness about own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity and how those may have impact on embracing diversity in the classroom
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.
- To become acquainted with the concept of empathic curiosity
- To practice empathic curiosity through, dialogue and practical exercises

Materials

Something to write down the reflections on. Paper and pen or computers.

Rationale and background

Begin the exercise by talking about diversity both as statutory grounds for discrimination, but also other aspects of diversity that can appear in the classroom.

Diversity aspects are often defined on the basis of the statutory grounds for discrimination, as covered by the laws of different countries. The grounds for discrimination covered by laws vary in different European countries. Examples of existing statutory grounds for discrimination are: gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or other belief, age and sexual orientation. In addition to these grounds for discrimination as defined in law, there are other aspects of diversity in our society, and in our classrooms.

Examples of other aspects are: class, body type, citizenship, language, political beliefs and clothing culture.

Procedure

Begin the procedure by letting the participants reflect individually on the questions below (10 minutes).

1. What does diversity look like in my classroom?
2. Which aspects of diversity are “noticed” most in my classroom?
3. How and when are these aspects “noticeable” in the classroom?
4. What do you find most challenging about yourself when it comes to diversity work in your classroom?



The next step is to reflect in pairs. One is describing what diversity looks like in their classroom. The other one in the pair is practising empathic listening and empathic asking of questions with the aim of understanding the other person, as well as the context. After 5 minutes change roles. (10 minutes).

Discuss all together. Ask each pair to share the essence of their dialogue (20 minutes).

**Reflections and guidelines for the trainer**

Please be flexible in the last discussion and ask how it felt to practice empathic curiosity if the pairs only mention diversity in the classroom. In case that you as a trainer feel insecure concerning how to support the participants in practicing empathic curiosity, please go back and read about this on page 14, also remembering that this is a process and the journey to be more empathically curious has just started.



**Exercise**

*Time used 10 - 30 minutes  
(depending on the group  
and how much time you  
have. Trainer's choice)*

**Body scan**

**Rationale and background**

Doing a body scan is an opportunity to learn something about the mind, to gain some experience about how the mind works, and how it can be trained.

**Focused attention**

A common experience when doing a body scan, is that our attention can be controlled and focused, and yet at the same time it's out of our control, living a life of its own. Our minds wander.

Doing a body scan means training the mind's ability to focus. It can be trained by having a specific area in the body as a focal point for our attention. We notice when our mind is wandering and bring the chosen area back as a focal point for our attention.

**To know what is present**

A body scan is also a way of paying attention to what this precise moment consists of. How do I sense my body and my mind? What is actually present right now? Knowing and bringing consciousness to whatever is here in the moment gives us a chance to respond to our impulses appropriately.

**Moving attention to the body**

The body is always in the present moment, whereas thoughts can pull us away from the present in speculations and worries. To bring attention to our body is a way of training self-management. Bringing awareness to the body makes it possible to regulate ourselves, when in an anxious or irritated state, for instance.

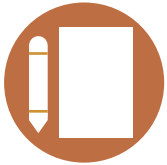
**Accepting whatever is there**

A body scan also means training acceptance and kindness towards ourselves, it develops self-esteem. Another common experience when doing a body scan is the idea that you are doing it wrong. That you aren't skilled enough to do a body scan, or actually lack the abilities that it takes to do a proper body scan. Doing a body scan is accepting things as they are right now, that you are good enough and that you don't have to change anything. There are no specific ways of doing a body scan, so you cannot do a perfect body scan. It is not achieving anything but creating space for sensing yourself, and creating self-esteem.

**Objective**

- To enhance and develop self-awareness and self-management.
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To get to know different approaches on how to regulate ourselves when under pressure





**Materials**

A mat, a blanket



**Procedure**

Settle yourself in a comfortable position. A body scan can be done lying down, sitting on a chair or even standing.

If you are lying down, you can position yourself laying on your back with your head either on the floor/the mat, or on a pillow. You can let your legs be stretched out with a little space between your legs and let your arms rest along your sides. Another possibility is to place your hands on your chest or your abdomen. And you can also place the soles of your feet on the floor and bend your knees and let them rest towards each other. That can be very nice if you have problems or pain in the lumbar region. Take your time and find a position that is as comfortable as possible right now.

If you are sitting, settle yourself in a comfortable position with your feet flat on the floor. (if all the participants are sitting, the trainer can use the guidance for a sitting meditation)

**We will now do a body scan.**

The focus in a body scan is sensing and feeling the body as it is, in this moment. We are not aiming for anything specific. You do not have to sense your body in any particular way and you do not have to feel anything specific - for example, you being completely relaxed or feeling nice and calm is not a goal. A body scan is about knowing how your body feels at this moment. In other words: You can't do a body scan wrong.

If at any time you feel that this is too much, too uncomfortable, maybe your body is aching or maybe it gets overwhelming, you can always move your body, put yourself in a different position, and focus your awareness on something that feels neutral or safe - a specific area in your body or on your breath, or just open your eyes and focus on what you can see.

You can start by bringing your awareness to your breathing.

Inhalation and exhalation. Notice how the breath moves your body. The body expands and contracts.

You can now move your attention to the full length of your body as it lies here. Is it possible to sense your body as a whole?

Perhaps you can move your feet and hands a little to bring your attention directly into your arms and legs. Then allow your body to be still again. How do you sense your body now?

Now, is it possible to feel the natural weight of your arms and legs and to allow everything to be as it is?

You might notice some tension in your body – maybe in your jaw - in the neck or shoulders, in your chest or abdomen? - Is it possible to be aware of tensions? And is it possible to let go of those tensions?

You can examine whether it is possible to breathe consciously in relation to the tension. Bring your awareness to the tension on an inhalation, and let go of it on the exhalation.

If that's not possible, it's not a problem.

An important part of mindfulness training is to discover and accept the moment as it is - with or without tension.

You can now direct your attention into both feet, giving all your attention to the sensations that you notice there.

Maybe you sense a tingling, stinging or buzzing sensation or maybe you sense something completely different.

Now let your attention move to the soles of your feet and feel the contact between the heels and the surface you are lying on. Or if you are sitting you can sense the contact to the chair and the floor.

Explore, and be curious about what you feel in your feet.

If, or rather when, at any point during this body scan you discover that your attention has slipped away or been wandering, you need to know that this is not a problem or a mistake. It is a natural habit of the mind.

What we are training is being aware, and noticing when the mind is wandering, and we train by focusing our attention by placing it in a specific area of the body. The training is to do that again and again, with kindness and acceptance. You don't have to criticise yourself when your attention runs away.

Now you can move your, attention to the lower part of the legs - and from there to the knees - and the upper part of the legs and hip joints.

Is it possible to zoom your attention out, so that it contains both legs from the hip joint to the tips of the toes?

And zoom in again, now focusing on the tailbone - and the sacrum - the entire pelvis.

You can move your attention further on to the lower back - the lower abdomen.

You might feel an impulse from the breath in the stomach – you can observe that the stomach rises and falls.

Move the attention further upwards in the body - from the area around the navel... to the chest.

It may be that you notice how the chest expands and contracts when you breathe.

You can then direct your attention to your shoulder blades, feeling the contact to the floor.

Try sensing the shoulders, the collarbone.

If possible, you can zoom the attention out so that it contains your torso - from the shoulders down to the pelvis.

Now make a leap with your attention, so that it moves to your hands.

Starting with your fingertips. What do you sense here?

Shifting the attention to the hands. What differences - if any - do you notice between the back of the hand and the palm?

Extend your attention to your arms - first the lower parts of the arms - then to the upper arms. Feeling whatever sensation there is in the contact between the arms and the surface. Simply allow whatever you sense.

Moving the attention to your neck... the back of the head... the contact between the head and the ground.

And your face. Zoom your attention into the centre of your forehead and let it rest here for a moment. From here it can be moved to your temples... jaws... the area around the eyes... the mouth and the whole face.

And if it feels okay, you can gently turn your attention to the sensation of breathing. Allow yourself to really feel all the movements that your breathing consists of: the expansion and the contraction. If it feels natural, allow your breaths to be long and full. You don't have to make an effort, or do anything to change the natural pace of your breathing.

You may notice how the feeling of contact with the surface constantly changes as the body breathes. For example, you can focus your attention at the surface contacts between your back and the floor.

Is it possible to let your attention stay with your breathing - a whole breath inhalation and exhalation? If you notice that your attention has wandered, you can kindly bring it back to your body's sensations of lying on the floor, breathing.

Give yourself a breathing space. Be curious and remember that what we are doing is offering the body and ourselves kind, accepting attention. If you find it difficult to keep your attention on the breath, or find it uncomfortable, let your attention rest in the lower part of your body or in your hands. Anywhere you want. You can't do this wrong!

Now you can start moving your body a little, opening your eyes if they have been closed. In a little while, I will ask you to sit up. When you do that, you can do it by rolling over on one side, and pushing yourself up with your hand, as it is a gentler way for your back to move into a sitting position. There's no hurry, take your time.

Find a partner for a short reflection on the body scan.

What did you notice?

When you reflect on your experiences, you can practice putting your direct experiences into words and seeing if it is possible not to judge.

Instead of focusing on this experience being nice or being horrible, try to describe what you actually sensed.

.....



**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

This is the first body scan in the training. It comes at the end of the first day. It is put in this position in order to give the participant the experience of a body scan, without explaining too much and without connecting too much theory to the experiences. That will be done on DAY 2.

You can adapt it to the time available.

This instruction should be seen as a template in the sense that it can be expanded or contracted depending on how long the trainer has, and how much time they want to use.

It is an example of how to do guidance, but as written in the paragraph: "How to guide a mindfulness practice" it is important to use your own words, and speak with a tone and a feeling in your language which makes the guidance come alive and be authentic.

Remember the pauses! They are not included in these written instructions.



Trainers notes



# Day 2

## Text of the day

### To listen

*What little Momo could do like no one else was: listening. This is nothing special, some readers will say, everyone can listen. But this is a mistake. Very few people can really listen. And the way Momo knew how to listen, it was completely unique. Momo could listen so well that stupid people suddenly had very clever thoughts. Not because she said something or asked what gave the other person such thoughts, no, she just sat there and just listened, with all her attention and sympathy. As she did so, she looked at the other person with her large, dark eyes, and the person in question felt thoughts arise in him that he had never known were inside him. She could listen in such a way that perplexed or indecisive people suddenly knew exactly what they wanted. Or that shy people suddenly felt free and courageous. Or that the unhappy and depressed became confident and happy. And if someone thought his life was utterly wrong and meaningless and he himself was just one of the millions, someone who doesn't matter and who can be replaced as quickly as a broken pot - and he went and told all this to little Momo. Then, while he was talking, he realised in a mysterious way that he was utterly mistaken, that he, just like her, existed only once among all the people, and that he was therefore important to the world in his own special way.*

Michael Ende





Lesson flow

We have made suggestions for time frames to follow. Our suggestion is to add two shorter breaks and one longer break for lunch.

Time	Content
40 min	Yoga/mindful movement and body scan
30 min	Theory. Mindfulness
10 min	Film on empathic curiosity
10 min	Theory. Empathic curiosity
30 min	Empathic listening 2
30 min	Mindfulness practice on body and breath
	Lunch
10 min	Icebreaker. Jumps from a chair
1 hour	Reflection on my organisation and my classroom
30 min	Dialogue Exercise - what are my values
20 min	The Pentagon
30 min	60:40 exercises

Exercise

Time used  
15-20 minutes

Yoga/mindful movement

Rationale and background

Yoga is a way of awakening the body and feeling life in the body.

Yoga is like a body scan, a way of directing our attention to the body and a way of being present in the body. It is a way of anchoring our attention in the present by focusing on our senses.

Many people associate yoga and physical activity with performance and achievement. There is a conception that being good at doing yoga means standing for a very long time in the positions, or being able to do them at a fast pace. It is about being very flexible, having endurance and, of course, looking good while doing it.

In this training yoga is about feeling the body. It means moving our attention into the body and becoming aware of the impact that the yoga positions might be having on the body.

Yoga teacher, Bernie Clark, says this about the purpose of doing yoga: "It's not about getting your body into the positions, it's about using the positions to get into your body."

And it is very important for feeling our own limits.

Each individual doing yoga is the only one who knows his or her body best, and each person is the only one who can feel how long they need to stay in a stretch, or if some of the positions are doing harm to their body. In other words, the person doing yoga is the only one who knows what is best for themselves.

Doing yoga is also an exercise for discovering patterns. An important part of developing the SEDA competences is realising and discovering specific behavioural and thought-determined patterns that affect our way of being in the world and being in relation with other people. Discovering and becoming aware of these patterns provides a greater freedom and nuance in our lives, because we see that they are only patterns or habits that can be changed. We are not destined to act in any specific way; there are choices and other opportunities.

Doing yoga with awareness is a way of discovering patterns.

Through the various stretches that we will do, you can examine which thoughts and feelings automatically arise in you.

Maybe thoughts are already arising now that you have been introduced to yoga, "I cannot figure it out", "Oh no, I'm so inflexible", "Yoga is so boring", "It will be embarrassing to do it in front of the others" or, "Great I am so flexible, now I can finally shine". No matter what thoughts you recognise, you can explore if you can simply notice them as thoughts. They are nothing more than thoughts, they are not reality, they are one picture, among other pictures of how you perceive the world, and yourself.

Is it possible not to judge your thoughts, and simply to notice that they are there?

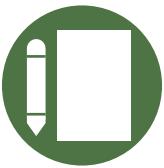
In some of the oldest instructions known about Yoga, it says that practising yoga must be safe and comfortable. It's about listening to your body, in order to know where your limits are, and not exceeding those limits.

When doing yoga, we can also examine what it means for something to be comfortable. Sometimes it can be pleasant to feel a stretch where it hurts a little. It can be sensed as a good pain. And other times it hurts in a way that shouts for us to get out of the position, and to move away from the pain.



**Objective**

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness and self-management.
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use the information from awareness of the present state, to make more conscious choices
- To get to know different approaches about how to regulate yourself when under pressure
- To discover and develop awareness about your own attitudes, values and prejudices
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.



**Materials**

A yoga mat.



**Procedure**

**Mountain pose**

Put yourself in a standing position with parallel feet, hip width apart.

You can bend your knees a little so that they are not over stretched, and press your feet into the floor.

This position is the starting position, and the one we return to between the different stretches.

It is called the mountain position.

Is it possible to stand with the strength of a mountain, imagining that there is a foundation or roots extending deep into the ground?

Let your palms face forward. Sense your feet and legs, and stand stable like a mountain.

You can move your attention to the spine and feel how the spine rises up the body.

The pelvis is located directly above the feet. The ears are in alignment with the shoulders.

This is your body. Is it possible to let your awareness fill your whole body, right here as you stand?

**Stretch your body**

Start moving your arms from this position up over your head and stretch your body.

Your hands reach upwards towards the ceiling while, if possible, you maintain a slight pressure with your feet against the floor.

You are now stretching in two directions: upwards with the upper part of the body and downwards with the lower part of the body. Breathe as freely as possible and check that you are not creating unnecessary tension in your face or your stomach.

Is it possible to just stand here and feel a stretch throughout your whole body?



**Stretch one side**

Now stretch the right side of the body by making that side longer. You can reinforce the stretch in this side of the body by stretching your right hand up toward the ceiling. You can imagine that you are reaching for something. If you want a deeper stretch, you can raise your left heel from the floor.

Change sides so that it is your left hand that reaches upwards and your right heel that is raised from the floor.

Stretch both arms toward the ceiling, then let your arms move down to end up in the starting position.

Stand for a moment - you can close your eyes if you like, and just scan with your attention how your body is feeling now. What do you sense in the areas that have been moved?

**Side bends**

Stretch your arms up over the head once more, fold in your thumbs, and let your arms move to the left, while moving your right hip to the right so that you are doing a side stretch.

Come back to the middle, and do the same on the opposite side.

Let your arms fall down along the sides of your body, and now stand for a moment and feel the impact from the stretch.



**Rotation of the spine**

From the mountain position you can move your head so that you are gazing over your right shoulder, creating a small rotation in the upper part of the spine.

The hip joints are still pointing forward, as well as the knees.

You can now let the chest follow the head so that the rotation of the spine becomes larger. Be careful with your knees; they don't like being twisted or rotated. If possible let the knees be in a position where they are still pointing forward.

Return to the central starting position, and move towards the other side doing the rotation on the opposite side.

Returning to the mountain position is always available. Just stand for a moment, and turn your attention inwards to your body and the physical sensations that you feel after the rotations.



**Bending forward**

From here you can bend your head so that your chin falls down towards your chest and continue the movement so that you are slowly folding downwards.

When you can't get any further, bend your knees so that you end up in a forward bend where your hands touch the floor. Bend your knees as much as you need to. If this is not possible, you can rest your arms on your thighs or just let them hang in the air.

In this position, a thought may arise such as: "I am not flexible enough". It's not about being flexible. It is about feeling your body in this position, and noticing the thoughts that may arise. And if possible, noticing without judging.

After a short while in this position, you can start gently stretching your legs, so that you can just feel a stretch on the back of your legs.

When you reach your limit or think that's enough, you can bend your legs again. Do it a few times - stretching and bending your legs.

You can end the movement with your legs bent and slowly start moving upwards. Let your head be heavy, and be the last thing that comes into place.

**The tree**

Stand with parallel feet hip-width apart.

Feel the contact to the floor and examine how you are standing on your feet.

Is there more weight on the right foot than on the left? Do you have more weight on the front of the foot than on the heel? Is it possible to distribute your weight evenly between your feet and between the front of the foot and the back of the foot?

Stand and explore, move a little from side to side, backwards and forwards.

Now you can move the weight onto your right foot and slowly lift your left foot off the floor.

Place the left foot on your right leg. You can put it in different places:

- At the ankle and with light support with the toes on the floor.
- Below the knee on the calf muscle
- Above the knee on the inside of the thigh

It is not so good to put your foot on the side of the knee, as that puts pressure on the knee in a way that is not good.

Choose a place that is a suitable challenge, so that you challenge yourself a bit, but not so much that the body tightens up and the position becomes too difficult.

Your arms can be placed along your sides, or you can let the palms meet in front of the chest or stretch your arms up over your head.

Find the position that is best for you, right now.

This position is a balance exercise. While standing here, you can notice how the body is constantly adjusting, and how it moves just a little to find balance.

There can be small movements, and there can be bigger adjustments when we are about to lose our balance.

There is no problem if you lose your balance. It is always possible to find your way back into the position.



Now, get out of the position by placing the lifted leg on the floor so that you once more stand with parallel feet, hip-width apart.

Do the same on the opposite side.

**Mountain position**

We end these different yoga positions by standing in the mountain pose once more.

Standing with parallel feet hip-width apart.

Is it possible to distribute the weight evenly between the right and left foot?

And similarly distribute your weight between the front of your foot and back of your foot?

Bend your knees just slightly so that you are not standing on overstretched legs and let your tailbone point downwards as if there was a weight on the tip of the tailbone.

Let your arms hang down by your sides, and turn your palms forward.

You can roll your shoulders slightly backwards to open your chest.

Your head is on top of the spine. Examine whether it is possible to put your head in the middle so that you do not lean it to one side or the other. You can also pull your chin slightly down towards your chest so you create a long neck.

Stand in this position and feel the contact with the floor, that has contact with the soil and the ground below us.

And also feel the top of your head, and the sky above us.

Again, you can use the mountain as a picture of how you stand right now, with power and strength. The earth below us and the sky above us.

Stand for a moment.

Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

From doing yoga, the participants move directly into doing a body scan

Exercise

Time used  
15-20 minutes



Body scan

The body scan follows directly after the yoga session without reflections.

Procedure

Same description as DAY 1 (page 57)

Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

You can end this morning programme with a small reflection. Ask the participants to find a partner. Each person has 5 minutes to reflect on what they noticed in the morning practice. What did they sense and feel in the body? Did they notice what happened to their attention? Was their mind wandering? And did they notice thoughts or feelings? The other person just listens without commenting, using the same instructions presented on day 1 in the exercise: empathic listening.

The trainer watches the time and tells the participants when to switch roles.

After the partner reflections is a good opportunity for the trainer to get some feedback on what the participants are experiencing while doing the exercises, and how. This can be done in the big group.

When listening to the participants' different experiences it is important not to value judge any statement, or give them the feeling that the exercise has been done incorrectly. You can't do an experience wrong! The aim is to find out what is actually present, not to get to anywhere in particular.

It's a good idea to use the feedback from the participants as a stepping stone to presenting the theory on attention and the mind.

times it can be pleasant to feel a stretch where it hurts a little. It can be sensed as a good pain. And other times it hurts in a way that shouts for us to get out of the position, and to move away from the pain.



Theory

Time used 30 minutes

Minfulness

The mind is wandering to the past and to the future

Unlike other living beings, a human being spends a lot of time thinking about and imagining things that are not real, and actually spends a lot of time not being present, spending time in an imaginary world, evaluating the past and preparing for the future.

Every present moment consists of what our senses perceive.

The body is here, the breath is here and the senses are too. Humans have five basic senses: touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. In the present moment there are also feelings and thoughts, but very often these thoughts take us away from the present moment.

The human mind is preoccupied with what has been - with the past. We evaluate and try to optimise by asking "what went well?". "What could I have done better?". And that is such a useful and necessary ability.

We remember and learn, and we use our experiences so that we become wiser and gain new skills. However, thoughts about the past can also turn into thoughts of regret, "If only I had not done this... then that would never have happened", "Why did I say that? That was so stupid". We can become completely caught up in thoughts of what we could and should have done, and what we shouldn't have done. Thinking about the past can also involve fantasies of how wonderful everything was in the good old days. And even though such fantasies can be alluring and tempting, and feel very nice in the present moment, they still contain a resistance against what is actually here, and they are a withdrawal from reality.

The human mind is also very preoccupied with the future. We plan and we structure. We are able to endure temporary discomfort if, by doing so, we get some different options and a better life in the future. We educate ourselves to get the job that we want. We plan trips, parties and other events for the benefit of ourselves and others.

But future thoughts can also be worrying thoughts, for example notions of things going wrong, fear of the future, thoughts and scenarios about possible disasters that could happen.

This is quote from Mark Twain: "I have had a lot of worries in my life, most of which never happened." – that quote frames precisely the tendency to worry about something that we don't know will become a reality. We create great discomfort for ourselves, based on conceptions and imagination.

The ability of humans to imagine things that are not present is, on the one hand, a gift and an ability that has enabled us to evolve as a species. On the other hand, it brings anxiety, worry and regret into our lives. Often, this ability of our attention to wander back and forth in time, overshadows what is actually happening in the reality we are in right now.

With the wandering mind, we have received a gift that enables us to develop, but it has a dark side and a cost on an emotional level - at least if we let our minds remain untrained and unaware of this.

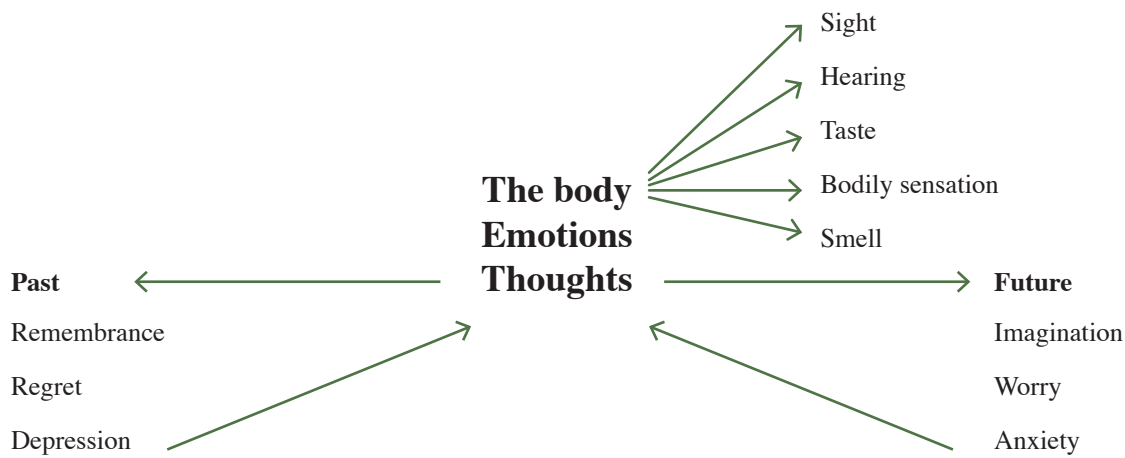


The essence of many older wisdom traditions is that happiness is found in the ability to be present in the moment. Mindfulness is a similar modern way to train the mind to be present here and now. The training is based on different training methods from yoga and meditation. And at the same time, the mindfulness tradition applies recent knowledge, scientific research and critical reflection in our development of the methods.

Practising mindfulness is being aware of whatever is here. It is defined by Kabat-Zinn, J. (2018) as:

*“The awareness arising through paying attention on purpose in the present moment, non-judgmentally, in the service of self-understanding, wisdom, and compassion’.* When we train the mindfulness practices like body scan and yoga, we practise being present, with acceptance, as well as understanding of ourselves and others. It seems like we are only training self-awareness and self-management, but actually by knowing and accepting ourselves and sharing thoughts and experience about the practices, we gain an understanding and acceptance of others as well. We realise that we have shared existential needs.

**The Present**



**The importance of being present**

In a study from Harvard University (Killingsworth et.al; 2010), the connection between joy and being present is tested. The researchers wanted to investigate how often the human mind wanders, and what topics the mind wanders towards, and what effect this wandering has on people's experience of happiness and joy.

In order to investigate this, the researchers developed an app that contacted the participants in the experiment at random times of the day, and asked them some questions, after which the answers were collected on a database.

For example the participants were asked: "How are you right now?" on a scale from 0 (very bad) to - 100 (very good). They were also asked: "What are you doing right now?" to answer that question they could choose one of 22 activities. Another question was "Are you thinking of something other than what you are doing right now?". The participants had four choices 1) no 2) yes, something nice 3) yes, something neutral 4) yes, something unpleasant.

When the researchers analysed the answers, they found that the mind wanders approx. 50% of the time. Which means that we are not present in the actual moment, in the here and now 50% of our lives.

In addition, they found that participants felt less happy when their minds wandered. This applied to all activities, including activities that we do not usually associate with pleasure and joy. Furthermore, the researchers found that the participants were not happier when their attention wandered towards positive things, when compared to being present in the moment, with their attention on the activity in which they were engaged. Clearly, they felt worse when they thought of unpleasant or neutral things, rather than being present in the moment.

The conclusion in this paper was that there is a connection between being present, and quality of life. You are happier and more comfortable when you are present and engaged with what you are doing - regardless of whether you value the activity as pleasant or uncomfortable.

**Training focused attention**

The good news is: it is actually possible to train to be present, to train to focus our attention in the present moment. It is possible to train well-being and enhance our experience of joy and satisfaction.

**Relationships**

The ability to be present also affects our relationships, and our experience of being met and seen by other people. Maybe you recognise the experience of telling a friend about something you are looking forward to, and getting the response - don't get too overjoyed, it might go wrong or might never happen and then you'll be disappointed... or they might ask you: "Have you thought of this, or that. I remember once I experienced... and that was really unpleasant, take care that you don't do the same". It is certainly said with the best intention to save you from disappointment, but in this situation a real meeting between two people is just not happening. The person responding is caught up in his or her own thoughts about the future and the past, and they are not present in the moment in the relationship. The first person just wanted to share something that they felt joyful about, but ended up in a situation of not being heard, or understood.

Another situation could be telling a friend that you are worried about something. In no time the friend changes the subject to something that he or she has experienced, or maybe even some other person they know that has experienced the same, just a little bit worse than what you told. In this situation the friend is being caught by associations, thoughts about the past or something they have heard or experienced themselves - and your own experience disappears. It has implications for the relationship and the meeting that is taking place right there at that moment. It is difficult to meet if you are not present together.

**Learning**

Being able to maintain your attention and to keep your focus on something specific, has an impact on how you learn. Gaining new knowledge requires focused attention and new skills. And maintaining focused attention can be very difficult. Maybe you can remember situations from your own studies and education, where the teacher suddenly said something that seemed completely disconnected. You had no idea what the topic was or what had just been said. Your attention had wandered, and had been to all sorts of places other than in the classroom. If you can't remember a situation about yourself, you might recognise it from being a teacher with children that find it very difficult to focus their attention. It's hard to learn something if you can't focus your attention.

Every learning situation contains elements of discomfort and frustration. Learning requires moving from one place to another, doing something you do not immediately master, and that can create frustration. It is human nature that we want to move away from what feels uncomfortable, and we are attracted to, and seek in the direction of pleasure and satisfaction. This is also the case for students. It is frustrating to learn something difficult, writing essays, and doing presentations for example. In the process of learning it is important to be able to absorb difficulties, and uncomfortable feelings. What you are doing might be a little difficult, you do not know exactly what to do, and there are so many opportunities for distractions that take us away from the uncomfortable feelings. That could be doing something else, such as cleaning, eating, surfing the internet or it could be complaining about the task, and so on. This is a strategy for getting away from unpleasantness, and moving towards something that can regulate that unpleasant feeling, instantly. The problem is that through this regulation, attention moves away from the learning process and from getting the task done.

Solving a task requires both being able to focus attention, and also being able to accommodate and to stay with what feels uncomfortable, at the same time.

This is something we need to train!

**Film on empathic curiosity**

(The film is available as a resource on the webpage, [www.handinhand.si](http://www.handinhand.si))

As a starting point to empathic curiosity we suggest that you watch the film.

After the film, the trainer should describe the concept of empathic curiosity in more depth. Below, there is a theoretical text which you the trainer can use when introducing the concept.



**Theory**

*Time used 10 minutes*

**Approaching others with empathic curiosity**

In the program, the concept of empathic curiosity is used as a tool to understand others better, in society and in the classroom. Programmes aimed at embracing diversity benefit by working closely with perspective taking and empathic concern (Miklikowska, 2018). Empathic curiosity can be directed towards ourselves, towards people in our vicinity or towards people we don't know yet. Empathic curiosity means being interested in the person you are talking to, which also includes yourself, it also means not making anyone feel stupid, or small or that their thinking is wrong in any way.

In this programme, we are inspired by the work of the Swedish researcher and teacher Christer Mattsson who wants the classroom to provide students with profoundly different opinions the opportunity to meet, without threats or retaliation. This theoretical background is based on his work, and thinking on empathic curiosity. Mattson's starting point is that empathy means identifying with other people's needs, by trying to understand or by perceiving them (Matsson, 2020). That all action is situated, and that the experiences we carry with us come from our previous experiences, is another aspect. What happens in a situation depends on which experiences people bring into that context, and how they act in the situation, which means that the context is not static (Säljö, 2008). Changing consciousness always requires time (Mattson, 2019), and time is important when talking about empathic curiosity.

One example of the importance of time in the classroom is offering opportunities for self-reflection in conflict situations in the classroom, in order to calm down and take time to nuance our thoughts about our own and others' roles in the situation. Mattson (2019) believes that the best protection for democracy is strengthening freedom of expression, the rights of minorities and the independence of the judiciary. According to him, the classroom is a good place to talk about controversial issues, because today's classroom is tomorrow's society, and anything we cannot handle in the classroom will also be difficult to deal with in the society of tomorrow. School, and conversations in the classroom, can give people with profoundly different opinions the opportunity to meet and discuss, without threats or retaliation.

However, for these conversations to succeed, there are some basic conditions that must be met, according to Mattson (2020): We must distinguish between what is a debate and a conversation. A debate does not aim to resolve a conflict, but to measure who is strongest in the conflict. A conversation is focused on trying to resolve contradictions, and to understand each other. Every time you engage in a conversation, without also thinking that you might be wrong, the way you want the conversation to end is already predetermined. It will become a battle to win, and serving up arguments will be the focus.

Positive development can only happen when you are aware that you might be wrong, and are fully prepared to understand the other person's best arguments. We always defend who we are. If someone hears "you shouldn't think like that" or "you shouldn't do that" it can be experienced as an attack, and the reaction will be to defend what has been said or done. Empathic curiosity is the very opposite of being on the attack. It is being interested in the person you are talking to, not making someone feel stupid, or small or that their thinking is wrong. "I honestly want to know what's important to you instead, and I'm empathetic."



*Time used 7 minutes*



There are no forbidden topics of conversation, but there are some restrictions on what can be said. Whatever it is illegal to say in society, is also illegal in the classroom. Whatever is said must not be said with the intention of upsetting or offending someone, or making them sad. In this instance it is important to distinguish between saying something that can be perceived as offensive, and saying something in order to offend someone. It is important to think before you say anything; is what is about to be said kind, or will someone be hurt? Is it true, or is it something that was just invented to win a discussion? And is what is about to be said relevant? "Avoiding making oneself big at the expense of someone else's smallness, is to be kind." (Mattson, 2020, 45:44)

**Possible questions to discuss:**

- How do you think that practising empathic curiosity can contribute to a safe and inclusive classroom environment?
- Mattson claims that the classroom is a good place to talk about controversial issues, because today's classroom is tomorrow's society and anything we cannot handle in the classroom will be difficult to deal with in the society of tomorrow. What are your reflections about that?

**Exercise**

*Time used 30 minutes*

**Empathic listening 2**

**Rationale and background**

This is the second exercise in the progress of training empathic listening. The rationale is the same as the first exercise.

A new element is added to this exercise, which is that the listener repeats what the speaker says. It is a way of witnessing what has been said. It gives the speaker the chance to become aware of what they are actually saying and, through this feedback, elaborate and adjust what needs to be said. Hearing someone repeating your words makes them become real in a new way, to hear someone else saying your words makes a difference. They might be understood or interpreted in a way that was not your intention.

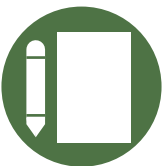
As for the listener, the task of repeating means focusing on what is being said, and trusting the process of the exercise - so that what is remembered, and what is being said, becomes a new starting point for exploration. At the same time, the listener is working on repeating without interpreting, repeating as neutrally and as close to what was actually said as possible.

As such, the exercise is a communication exercise related to and working with the traditional communication model, by repeating what was being said the exercise works on what is called “the noise”. It is a way of ensuring that what is being said and what is being heard are equivalent to each other.



**Objective**

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and diversity awareness
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To become acquainted with the concept of empathic curiosity
- To practice empathic curiosity through dialogue and practical exercises
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- To develop empathic curiosity by practising empathic listening and asking empathic questions to understand the perspectives of others
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.



**Materials**

None



**Procedure**

Find a partner. Decide who is A and who is B.

If you like you can place yourself in a position where your shoulders are aligned and you are looking in opposite directions, but can still look at each other needed.

**First round - 5 minutes**

A speaks and reflects about this question: When do I find my job satisfying and meaningful?

This is a reflection, just talking about whatever comes up. There are no rules for any specific way of answering the question. Be aware of only saying what feels right for you to share, you are not forced to say anything. If you come to a point where you don't have any more words to say, you can simply sit in silence. Maybe something else will arise after a while, maybe not.

B just listens. Not commenting, not interrupting, not helping the other person with questions if A is silent. Just listening. B can show interest, and make it clear that they are listening, but not with words.

**Second round – 3 minutes**

B repeats what A just said, as closely to what was actually being said as possible. The task for B is to repeat in as neutral a way as possible and without interpretations. At the same time trusting that what they remembered is what is important. It doesn't matter if something is missed out, or that something may be wrongly understood. The exercise is to repeat what was heard, which might not be the exact same thing that was said.

A listens without commenting, even if B has misunderstood something.

**Third round – 3 minutes**

Again, A talks and reflects about the question: When do I find my job satisfying and meaningful? Maybe something needs to be corrected, maybe some new insights arose while listening and some elaboration is needed

The trainer watches the time. After the three rounds A and B switch roles and do all three rounds of the exercise in their new roles.

Sum up in the big group, making space for the participants' reflections and feedback in the exercise.

The trainer can ask questions such as:

What did you notice when you were talking without being interrupted?

How did it feel just to listen?

What did you notice when your partner repeated what you just said?

How did you experience gaps of silence, if any appeared?

**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

After both partners have talked and listened, it can be a good idea to give the participants time for relaxed reflection and talking, without any particular framework.



**Exercise**

*Time used 30 minutes*



**Mindfulness practice on body and breath**

**Rationale and background**

This exercise is a mindfulness practice and relates to the theory presented earlier concerning attention, and the reasons for practising being present.

**Objective**

- To enhance and develop self-awareness and self-management.
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To get to know different approaches on how to regulate ourselves when under pressure
- To move attention from thoughts and mental activity, to the body and the senses

**Materials**

Something to sit on.

**Procedure**

Sit on the chair as comfortably as possible, in an upright position.

Take your time.

You can adjust your position, moving a little if needed.

You can investigate whether it is possible to make yourself at ease in a sitting position, where you are both sitting upright, and at the same time are relaxed. This is somewhere between collapse and tension.

You can take a look around, becoming familiar with the space we are in. Without looking directly at the other people, recognise that they are there. You are not alone.

You might also pay attention to the sounds that reach you.

Simply noticing what is actually here right now.

If it feels okay, you can close your eyes. Having closed eyes can make it a little easier to focus your attention.

You can also keep your eyes open, but if you do, let your gaze rest in front of you.



You can start by noticing how you are sitting.

Notice how the chair supports you. Sense the contact between your buttocks and the seat... and how the chair supports you on the back of your thighs... maybe supporting your lower back...

You can now send your attention to your feet. You can notice the physical sensations in your feet: are they cold, warm, do you feel something stinging or something else? You can also feel your contact with the floor, and perhaps you can feel your socks around your foot, or your shoes.

Also, notice how your feet are positioned in relation to each other.

Are they far apart, or do they touch each other?

Now shift your attention to your ankles and lower legs. Feel your knees and thighs.

If you can, expand your field of awareness to include the entire lower body... buttocks, hips, legs and feet.

Sit for a moment with your attention on the lower part of the body. You might sense the weight of your body on the chair, and down towards the floor... a grounding sensation.

You can now move your attention to your spine inside the centre of your body. The spine keeps you upright and rises up toward the ceiling, through your body.

You can start by following the spine from the tip of the tailbone and all the way up through the body, up to the last cervical vertebra, which is located inside the middle of your head between the joints of your jaw.

Sensing the spine might be a little more abstract, if you don't feel anything don't worry. Just let your attention move from the bottom of your body, and end in the middle of the head.

You can now shift your attention to your breathing. You don't need to change your breathing, simply notice it... inhalation and exhalation. Notice how your breathing is moving your body.

You can choose a place in your body where you let your attention rest on the breath.

It might be under your nose - the air coming in and out. It could be your stomach, or your chest or any other place that feels good for you.

Sometimes, when you turn your attention to the inhalation and exhalation it can provoke an uncomfortable feeling, and sometimes it can feel awkward, and even difficult to breathe. If you feel that, it is an experience you share with many others.

If it feels okay, you can curiously examine the feeling that arises. If it becomes too much or too uncomfortable, you can always move your attention to your feet and the lower part of your body. Or you can open your eyes and focus on the visuals, or the audial senses: what you see and what you hear.

Otherwise, simply let your attention rest, and focus on your breath.

When you discover that your attention is wandering, the training is to return your attention to the breath, again and again. That the mind wanders is not a mistake.

When we sit in silence not doing anything, there is room for our thoughts to begin planning or assessing situations we have been in.

We can train to discover the wandering mind, and focus our attention in the moment, on the breath, again and again.



You can also examine the quality of the breath - not as an assessment - but as a perception of how you experience the breath. Is it fast or slow? Deep or superficial? What is the rhythm like? Is it changing as we sit here?

Where do you feel the breath most clearly in your body?

If it feels okay, you can now take a few deeper breaths, stretch your body and slowly open your eyes.

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### Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

This instruction is an example of a guidance of a sitting meditation. As always, use your own words, and your own timing. What is important in this exercise is training to focus our attention and bringing awareness to the lower part of the body, the feet and the contact with the floor, as well as the breathing.

After mindfulness practices like this it is always possible to let the participants reflect on what they have noticed in the exercise. Do this in pairs or in groups of three.

### Reflection questions could be:

What did you notice in this exercise? If possible, stay with the sensations and avoid evaluating: this was nice, this was awkward etc.

Did you notice any changes in your body or in your mind?

Did you notice that your mind was wandering?

Did you notice any evaluation or judging?

Exercise

Time used

10 minutes

Jumps from a chair

Rationale and background

This exercise is a gear shift exercise, or a brain break. It comes after lunch in order to gather the group after the break. This exercise works by changing the energy levels through doing something very energetic, and slowing down.

It trains your ability to shift gear on purpose, as a way of regulating yourself. From being in a high level of arousal, to a lower one - or the other way round.

It is also an exercise that can be used when working with attention. This can be done by bringing awareness to what is happening when in a high level of arousal, and in a lower one.

This is also an example of an exercise that can be used by the teachers in their classrooms.

When done with children, it meets the children's need for movement, and the feeling of restlessness that some children have. That happens in the first part of the exercise, where the heart rate rises and you get to use your body. The last two parts gather the energy again, in the first round doing this slowly, and then doing it slowly and with eyes closed. It allows us to experience chaos and noise, and then regulate ourselves and gather focus.

Objective

- To enhance and develop self-awareness, self-management and social awareness.
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind.
- To get to know different approaches on how to regulate ourselves.
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.

Materials

A chair.

Procedure

This exercise has three rounds

First round – 1 minute

Stand in front of a chair. Now the task is to stand up on the chair, and get back down onto the floor as many times as possible within the next minute.

Second round – 1 minute

Then you do just ONE round – standing up on the chair and getting back down onto the floor just once – taking a whole minute, and you have to be in motion the entire time. That means you have to do everything very slowly indeed.

Third round – 1 minute

Now repeat the second round with your eyes closed, again spending the entire minute on just one round.

The trainer is responsible for watching the time and can call out after 30 seconds and again after 45 seconds.

Reflection in twos

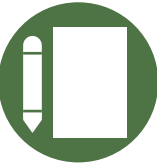
2-3 minutes

What did you notice in your body and in your mind during this exercise? How did the speed affect you?

Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

In this exercise it can be a good idea to give some different options. If you want to move up and down from a chair without climbing, this can be done from a sitting position to standing, or even from lying to standing.

It is also important to know that closing the eyes can be very provocative for some people, and it can create anxiety. In your guidance, say that it is always possible to open your eyes if you need to.



Exercise

Time used 1 hour

Reflections on my organisation and my classroom

Rationale and background

This exercise was also used in the previous Hand-in-Hand programme. This description is very similar to the original. Some parts have been elaborated on, and changed a little.

The exercise comes in two parts, both parts are described here.

In the book “Sustainable leadership – leadership from the Heart” Hildebrandt and Stubberup(2012) describe how the brain makes mental models, which creates patterns of behaviour. Mental models are generalisations, they are patterns based on repeated experiences and they are closely connected to our memory. The models help us organise all the impulses that we get from our senses. But they also discriminate among the impulses, seeing those impulses that fit the constructed patterns. This is called pattern recognition. It means that all impulses are organised in a specific, individually-created pattern, created by the life and the experiences of the individual. We experience the world through a pair of individually-shaped glasses. On that basis Hildebrandt and Stubberup argue that reality is created in each individual, biological unit. “Reality depends on the beholder” (p.127). Our reality cannot be defined as a singular truth because we see reality from different perspectives.

Among other things, training the SEA competences means becoming aware of your own reality, and making it conscious, but it is also understanding that we are different. For a moment we take the other person's perspective, and absorb the differences. According to Hildebrandt and Stubberup this requires the ability to inform and communicate, and the ability to sense the other person. Mental models are constructed, which means that they are not solid, and that they can change.

Change requires awareness. You need to be aware of your own mental model before you can change it. In the next exercise, the practice highlights the mental models in order to better understand what is going on in our different organisations. It maps resources and difficulties in a particular organisation, regarding the SEDA competencies. It brings awareness to the structures, patterns and habits of our way of looking at the culture in the organisation. Its purpose is to show that our way of judging both positive and negative is coloured, or determined by our mental models. This means that positive and negative statements are not solid, but are changeable. Part of the training in this exercise is to become aware of this changeability, and as a result train the ability to hold both positive and negative images and areas, at the same time.

Objective

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making and diversity awareness
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To explore different points of view through dialogue and practical exercises
- To develop empathic curiosity by practising empathic listening and asking empathic questions in order to understand the perspectives of others

- To use that knowledge of self-awareness in an understanding of the connection between yourself and others
- To become aware of how your own state affects your relationship to other people
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to make more conscious choices
- To discover and develop awareness about your own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity, and how those may have an impact on embracing diversity in the classroom.

Materials

Paper and a pen.

Procedure

This exercise is about clarifying how values affect our ways of seeing and relating to other people. We all have values, some of the values are very explicit and others are more implicit. Sometimes values can be perceived as universal truths, as something that cannot be changed. Values can become very clear when we meet somebody who has different values to our own. People who live by other rules, and who find other things important. Mostly, we avoid those people making in-groups with people like ourselves. However, being in an organisation such as a school, it is not always possible to avoid people with different values. What happens when as teachers, we meet different values in the classroom, values that might seem repellent to us? What happens to our relational competence when we meet repellent values in a child?

The first step is to be aware of our own values. To own them and to understand that they are not universal, they are created by the life and the culture in which we are embedded.

Part 1 – 30 minutes

We will begin by examining the school where you work, and the implicit and explicit values connected to that organisation.

Reflect - 5 minutes

On a piece of paper, write down all kinds of things that characterise your school. Things that work well and things that are not so good, what you like and what you don’t like. Focus on the school as an organisation. That means it is an overall view of the school. What is the culture at the school like? What is the relation between management and employees like? What kind of abilities and personalities are highly valued? What values are explicit, and what values are implicit in your school? Positive and negative, small things and bigger things.

Some examples of explicit values in organisations could be flexibility, creativity, and acceptance of diversity. Some examples of implicit values could be a certain sort of humour, or saying “yes” to whatever is demanded of us.



**Cluster the statements - 2 minutes**

Choose 2 negative and 2 positive statements – 3 minutes

Now look at what you have written, and choose the 2 most important negative statements as well as the two most important positive statements. Choose the ones that express your strongest feelings. Either draw a circle around your four statements, or collect them together by writing them out on your paper again.

For a short while, contemplate your four statements. Focus on each statement one by one. What do they mean to you? What is the core of the problem, or the resource? How do you recognise the problem, or the resource?

Choose one of the negative statements and one of the positive ones, and find a specific situation where this was active, meaning a situation where this aspect was actually happening.

Recall the situation. What was active? What feelings arose? What thoughts and what bodily sensations?

What are the signs that make you recognise the problem, or the resource? Do you feel it in your body perhaps? Do you recognise any specific feelings? Or any specific thoughts?

**Groups of three - 15 minutes**

Present your statements with the problems and the resources. Each participant in the group has 3 minutes to reflect. As always, it is important only to say the things that feel right for you. Be aware of your borders, and if there is something that you don't want to share, don't do. While one person is talking, the other two are listening emphatically.

**Reflect for yourself - 2 minutes**

Did the group reflections give you a different understanding of what you had written?

**Part 2 – 30 minutes**

Now we'll turn the focus on your classroom as an object of exploration.

**Reflect - 5 minutes**

On a piece of paper, write all kinds of things that characterise your classroom. Things that work well, and things that are not so good, what you like and what you don't like.

What is the culture in your classroom like? What is the relation between you and the students like? What kind of abilities and personalities are easy for you? What values are explicit, and what values are implicit in your classroom? Positive and negative, small things and bigger things.

**Cluster the statements - 2 minutes**

**Choose 1 negative and 1 positive statement - 3 minutes**

Choose the statements that express your strongest feelings.

Draw a circle around your two statements, or collect them together by writing them out on your paper again.

For a short while, contemplate the two statements. Focus on each statement one by one. What do they mean to you? What is the core of the problem, or the resource? How do you recognise the problem, or the resource?

Choose two specific situations, one showing the positive, and one showing the negative. Something happened on the outside, that made you feel something. What was it?

Feel the situations. What is active? What are the feelings? How do you sense your body, your breathing, and your thoughts in these situations? What are the signs that make you recognise the problem, or the resource? Do you feel it in your body perhaps? Do you recognise specific feelings? Or specific thoughts?

**Groups of 3 - 15 minutes**

Make small groups of 3 or 4. Present your problem, and your resource. Take 5 minutes each.

**Reflect by yourself - 2 minutes**

Did the group reflections give you a different understanding of what you had written?

**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

After each section, it's a good idea to do a reflection and feedback session in the big group. What did the participants experience when working with this exercise? Did they get any insights?





Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

Dialogue exercise – what are my values?

Rationale and background

When doing dialogue exercises, we are practising two things:

The listener is training the ability to listen with empathy and curiosity, listening without commenting and without evaluating or judging.

The speaker is training to speak in a personal language. In the two exercises on empathic listening the emphasis was simply to listen and simply to talk. This exercise brings another element into that form.

In this exercise, the listener is a dialogue partner and can ask questions. However, the questions must be asked out of curiosity, in order to clarify and help the person who is reflecting to elaborate, and to understand something in a more nuanced way.

Sometimes questions are asked as a covert attack. The person asking is most interested in their own point of view, and might even see the dialogue or discussion as a fight that can be won.

When we feel attacked, judged or evaluated we often defend ourselves, we start to talk in an analysing language, using arguments that we perhaps don't really vouch for. But because we feel attacked, we go into fight or flight mode - which is not a constructive way of sharing opinions and views. The purpose of the questions is to open reflection.

Objective

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making and diversity awareness
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To become acquainted with the concept of empathic curiosity
- To practice empathic curiosity through, dialogue and practical exercises
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- To explore different points of view through dialogue and practical exercises
- To develop empathic curiosity by practising empathic listening and asking empathic questions to understand the perspectives of others
- To discover and develop awareness about our own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity and how those may have an impact on embracing diversity in the classroom
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.

Materials

None



Procedure

Find a partner. Decide who is A and who is B.

Position yourselves in front of each other.

The question to reflect on in this exercise is: What are my values? What is important to me?

5-10 minutes for each participant to reflect

A talks and reflects, B listens and asks questions whenever something needs to be clarified or elaborated, then switch roles.

We often think that we understand each other. We might think we have the same values but we often understand the same words differently. We assume people's perceptions and understanding are the same. For instance, if A says that one value is being good to other people B can ask, what does it mean to be good? The questions are meant to deepen understanding and to make explicit what is implicit to the person talking.

Examples of open questions:

What do you mean by... being a good person?

How does that show in your classroom?

Can you elaborate on what you mean by...?

Every time there is something that you don't understand, ask your partner to elaborate or exemplify.

Sum up in plenum

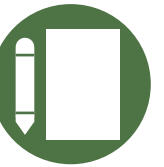
Sum up in the big group, making space for the participants reflections and feedback on the exercise. The trainer can ask questions like: What did you notice when you were talking and reflecting? What was asking curious questions like?

What did you notice when talking about this subject?

Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

The trainer is responsible for keeping time and telling the pairs when to switch roles.

After the exercise it can be a good idea to let the pairs talk informally, before summing up in the big group.

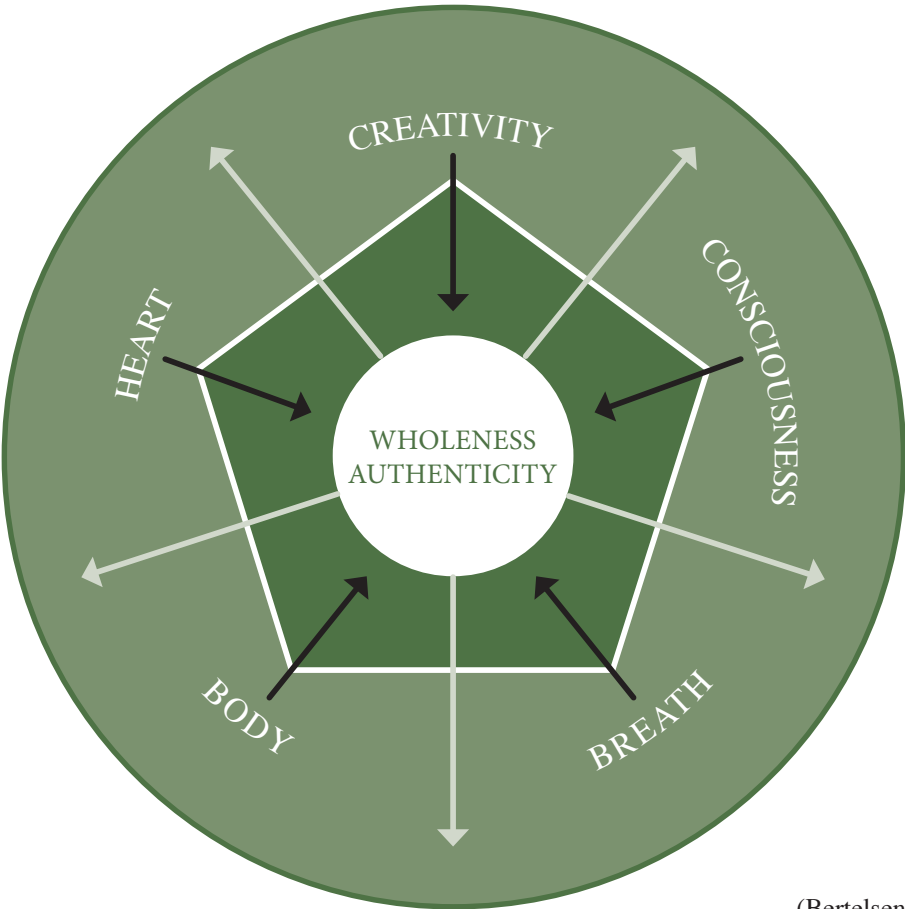




**Theory**

Time used 20 minutes

The Pentagon – a map of the human being



(Bertelsen, 2010)

The pentagon is a map for understanding and describing the nature of the human being. It is describing what could be called natural resources.

**Body** – we are born into a body and we can sense it. Everyone has a body.

**Breathing** – when we are born, we take our first breath and it becomes part of us, keeping us alive until the last exhalation. The breath is both controllable and autonomous. We can sense that we are breathing.

**Heart** – We are all born with the ability to make attachments and to love another person. We need love, and we are able to love. It is vital to have someone who loves us and takes care of us when we are born, otherwise we would not survive.

**Creativity** – All human beings are creative. The actual being itself is an expression of creativity in the sense that all individuals are unique, never seen before and never to be repeated. Throughout life we are acting and being creative every single minute, in the way that we react to all the impulses that constantly hit us from our senses. They are always a little bit different, never exactly the same - even though life can feel very much the same...

**Consciousness** – We are also born with a consciousness. We have attention, and we can be awake. Human beings also have the ability to know about themselves, and to know that they are awake.

These resources are innate, they are not a part of our personality because they exist before the development of personality. They are connected to the human being as such, not to the individuality of each person. (Bertelsen, 2010, p. 73-89). The pentagram describes what we have in common, what we share. Natural resources are something that we have, they are not anything that we need to learn. The resources are already there. What we need to do, is to remember them, to be aware of them and to focus our attention on one or more of the resources.

Being aware of these innate, natural competencies, expands our experience of ourselves, in the sense that more parts of the human being are brought into awareness. It makes it possible to anchor our awareness in a part of the human experience that is unaffected by the patterns and limitations of the individual personality. Most of the time, our awareness is preoccupied with the area of personality, which is often controlled by the impact of our childhoods and our various idiosyncrasies. Bringing our awareness inwards to the natural competencies, provides a momentary sense of un-attachment from personality, a process that creates freedom and space to view a given situation from another perspective (Juul et. al; 2016, pp. 26-27).

In working on developing and enhancing relational competence as well as the SEDA competencies, we use exercises that stabilise contact with the innate competencies.

This is what we do in mindfulness practices. When we do breathing exercises, body exercises, or a sitting meditation it is a way of bringing awareness to the body and the breath. When we talk about accepting and being kind while doing the practices, and when we emphasise that they can't be done wrong, it is one way of connecting to the heart.

Creativity and consciousness are involved in simply being aware, knowing that we are here and alive, sensing all the impulses and life in our body.

Bringing your awareness to one or other of the innate resources, is a way of anchoring yourself and regulating yourself. By doing that you can create a momentary pause, which can give you a short feeling of calming down in a stressful situation. It is actually embedded in the language, we say to people who are agitated that they should take a deep breath.

Paying attention to the body and breathing also helps us to stay present and focused, so that we are able to sense the impulses, when they occur. Not only in order to control them, but also in order to sense the energy in the impulses, and to use this energy in a creative way, both in relationships and in personal development, which both happen in a dialectic process (Schibbye, 2002), as mentioned above.

**Concept. 60:40**

In daily life, it is normal only to be consciously aware of what goes on in our surroundings, and not be aware of our own reactions to events, especially when we are with other people, and in particular when leading a group of people as a teacher, for instance. Our attention is mostly outside of ourselves. When in a classroom our attention is on the students, are they okay? Do they understand the content of the lesson? What do they think of me? Are they talking about me? And so on. Sometimes, this can even be experienced as being outside of ourselves. It is as if our attention is being drawn outwards and when later recalling a situation, it can be difficult to remember what was actually going on inside ourselves.

If you are not aware of your own state, emotionally as well as physically, it can generate reactions that are not appropriate in the situation, or in tune with the other people there.

In these training days, we have been doing mindfulness exercises as a way of bringing more awareness to our senses. We have used the practices as ways of developing self-awareness. Mindfulness can also be used as a way of anchoring oneself when we are under pressure. Mindfulness is also a method of training self-management, and the ability to regulate oneself.

In reality, you are mostly under pressure when you are in situations with other people. And when you are with other people, in particular in a school setting, the best solution might not be to leave the classroom to do a 10 minutes mindfulness practice in silence to regulate and anchor yourself.

The concept of 60:40 means cultivating an attitude where your awareness is shared between yourself and others. 60:40 refers to a position where you keep 60% of your awareness within yourself and 40% in the present situation, on what is going on around you. Of course, that is a random number and of course it can't actually be measured. The point is to really make an effort to bring your attention inwards, and outwards, at the same time.

Through exercises, it is possible to practice this balance of being simultaneously aware of changes on the inside, as well as on the outside. The following exercises are a way of working with this principle of 60:40.

**Exercise**

*Time used 15 minutes*



**Follow the hand**

**Rationale and background**

This exercise is for training and developing the ability to divide your attention between yourself and another person, by anchoring awareness of your breathing.

**Objective**

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use that knowledge or awareness in understanding the connection between yourself and others
- To become aware of how your own state affects your relationship to other people
- To use information from awareness of the present state, to make more conscious choices
- To use information from awareness of the present state to have more options regarding your choices in dealing with/reacting to a situation regarding yourself, and in situations with other people
- To get to know different approaches to how to regulate yourself when under pressure
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.

**Materials**

Enough space to move around.





**Procedure**

Find a partner

Decide who is A and who is B

A puts one hand in front of B's face, holding the palm towards the face.

**Round 1**

Now A moves their hand in different directions and in varying patterns, and B follows keeping their head at the same distance to A's hand, their attention is on the hand. A also has an awareness in the room, and is responsible for leading B safely around without bumping into other people, or the furniture.

Switch roles and repeat.

A short reflection: what did you notice? Where was your attention? What did you notice in your body, breath, feelings, and thoughts?

**Round 2**

Start the second round by standing in the mountain position. You can put your hands on your stomach to feel with your hands how your breath is moving your body.

Move your attention to the breath itself, and just follow your breathing for a while.

Now do round 1 again, but this time be aware of your breathing whilst doing the exercise. Divide your attention between awareness of your breathing, and of the hand. The breath serves as an anchor that keeps some of your attention within you. The attention of the person who leads is divided into three parts: themselves, the other person, and the room.

Finally, reflect for a moment on your experience with your partner. Did you feel any difference when your focus was on breathing?

**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

The feedback can be very different in this exercise. Some people find it very difficult, and other people might experience a closer connection to their partner when using the breath as an anchor. Meet all the different experiences with curiosity and respect. There is no right or wrong experience.



**Exercise**

*Time used 15 minutes*



**Yes...and...Tell a story together**

**Rationale and background**

In this exercise two people tell a story together. To be able to do that you need to be aware both of yourself and the other person. You need both to listen, and to create. You cannot make up your own story, you will have to stay open and curious about what the other person comes up with, something which continues throughout. This exercise trains and develops the ability to share your attention between yourself and the other person. In this exercise, your anchor is your creativity. You have to be aware of, and follow, the first impulse you get, at the same time being aware of your partner's impulses.

This is also an example of an exercise that can be used by the teachers in their own classrooms.

**Objective**

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between yourself and others
- To become aware of how your own state affects your relationship to other people
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to make more conscious choices
- To use information from awareness of the present state to have more options regarding your choices in dealing with/reacting to a situation regarding yourself, and in situations with other people
- To get to know different approaches to how to regulate yourself when under pressure
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.

**Materials**

None

**Procedure**

Find a partner

You and your partner are now going to tell a story together.

One of you starts the story and stops after a couple of sentences.

The other one continues by saying yes... and...





That means saying yes to whatever their partner came up with, and to continue the story where their partner stopped.

Try not to judge yourself. Say the first thing that pops into your mind.

There are no demands regarding the structure or quality of the story. You don't have to think about a logical storyline, and you have no responsibility for the quality of the story.

**Round 2**

Do the same thing, but swap over more quickly.

Leave no time for thinking.

You can continue with the same story, or start a new one.

**Round 3**

Do the same thing again, but this time look into each other's eyes while telling the story.

Short reflections or informal conversation in the established pairs. What did they notice when doing this exercise?

Now do the exercise once more, but this time instead of saying yes... and... you say: no...but...

Reflection: How did the change from yes... and, to no... but... impact the story, and the process of making a story?

.....

**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

The trainer can make a point about how we work together. Is it actually possible to say yes to the other person's ideas and contribute with your own at the same time?

It is an exercise that targets the competencies from the CASEL wheel, in the sense that the exercise emphasises the existential human theme of how to be both an individual and part of a group or society. To be both aware of yourself and the other person.





Trainers notes



# Online meeting 1

Lesson flow

This schedule is the same for all the online meetings, even though the exercises can vary within the themes. For example, the mindfulness exercises will not be exactly the same on all occasions. Remember to have a break within the two hours.

Time	Content
15 min	Yoga
15 min	Body scan
5 min	Self-reflection. Journaling
20 min	Sharing. Check in
30 min	Dialogue exercise. Empathic listening
30 min	Teachers’ reflections

Exercise  
Time used 15 minutes

Yoga  
  
Standing yoga as described in DAY 2 (page 65)  
  
Virtual room  
All together

Exercise  
Time used 15 minutes

Body scan  
  
Body scan as described in DAY 1 (page 57)  
  
Virtual room  
All together

Exercise

Time used 5 minutes

Journaling

What did you notice in the mindfulness practice? In your body, in your mind, in your emotional life? Reflect individually and write the reflections in a notebook. Your written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

Sharing: Check in

Virtual room

All together

Description

Checking in means all the participants can be present, by saying a few words about how they are and what’s going on in their lives. Not a long speech but just a few sentences describing their current situation in life. As always, nobody is forced to share anything they don’t want to share, but everybody saying something is preferable because it’s one way of participating and actually making the group.

By sharing and listening we are training to speak in a personal language and to use active, empathic listening.

In these online settings, this check in session is also an opportunity to ask questions about the programme, or the exercises.

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

Dialogue exercise. Empathic listening

Virtual room

Break out rooms

Procedure

Dialogue exercise, Empathic listening

Round 1 - 10 minutes

You will be sent out in breakout rooms in groups of three.

Each person in the group has 2 minutes to talk about the question: What is/has been important in my work in recent weeks?



Time used

Time used 30 minutes

It is reflection and a talk about whatever comes up. There are no rules of any specific way of answering the question. Be aware of only saying what feels right for you to say, you are not forced to say anything. And if you get to a point where you don’t have any more words, you can just sit in silence. Maybe something else will arise after a while, maybe not. In the silence it can be more comfortable to choose to look somewhere else, rather than directly at the other person.

The other two are just listening. Not commenting, not interrupting, and not helping the person in focus with questions if they are silent. Just listening. The others can show interest and make it clear that they are listening, but not with words.

The participants keep track of the time, and make sure that all three people in the group have time to reflect.

The trainer is responsible for calling the participants back to the shared room.

Round 2 - 10 minutes

Same procedure as round 1 but in new groups. With the same question: What is/has been important in my work in recent weeks?

Reflection - 10 minutes

All together.

What did you notice about talking about the same questions twice, but in different groups?

What did you notice when you were listening with your body and with your mind?

Teachers reflections

Teachers' reflections are a recurring activity for the online meetings. This activity should be done in steps:

- Virtual room: All together: Reflect individually and write your reflections in a notebook. These written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.
- Virtual room: Breakout rooms: Talk in pairs - participants share reflections. Please tell the participants to choose whatever they want to share.
- Virtual room: All together: Write again individually, if anything new came up when reflecting in pairs
- Virtual room: All together: The last step is to reflect together in the big group

The statements to reflect upon are:

Please write whatever comes to your mind about your participation in this programme so far.

Describe if, and how, you have been affected as a person by the programme so far.

Describe if, and how, your participation in this programme has had an impact on your professional role as a teacher, so far.

Describe how you think the exercises done so far could be used with students in your classroom.

Trainers notes



# Online meeting 2

Lesson flow

This schedule is the same for all online meetings even though the exercises can vary within the themes. For example, the mindfulness exercises will not be exactly the same on all occasions. Remember to have a break within the two hours.

Time	Content
15 min	Yoga
15 min	Sitting mindfulness practice
5 min	Self-reflection. Journaling
20 min	Sharing. Check in
30 min	Dialogue exercise. Empathic listening 2
30 min	Teacher's reflections

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

## Yoga

Standing yoga as described in DAY 2 (page 65)

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

## Sitting mindfulness practice on body and breath

Meditation on body and breath is described in DAY 2 (page 79)

Virtual room

All together



**Exercise**

*Time used 5 minutes*

**Journaling**

What did you notice in the mindfulness practice? In your body, in your mind, in your emotional life? Reflect individually and write the reflections in a notebook. The written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.

**Virtual room**

All together

**Exercise**

*Time used 20 minutes*

**Sharing. Check in**

**Virtual room**

All together

Checking in means all the participants can be present, by saying a few words about how they are and what's going on in their lives. Not a long speech but just a few sentences describing their current situation in life. As always, nobody is forced to share anything they don't want to share, but everybody saying something is preferable because it's one way of participating and actually making the group.

By sharing and listening we are training to speak in a personal language and to use active, empathic listening.

In these online settings, this check in session is also an opportunity to ask questions about the programme, or the exercises.

**Exercise**

*Time used 30 minutes*

**Dialogue exercise. Empathic listening 2**

Dialogue exercise, Empathic listening 2 as described in DAY 2, with a change of the theme for enquiring.

**Virtual room**

Breakout rooms

The trainer makes breakout rooms with groups of two.

**First round - 5 minutes**

A talks about, and reflects on the question: How am I affected by the situation in the world?

It is reflection and a talk about whatever comes up. There are no rules of any specific way of answering the question. Be aware of only saying what feels right for you to say, you are not forced to say anything. And if you get to a point where you don't have any more words, you can just sit in silence. Maybe something else will arise after a while, maybe not.

B just listens. Not commenting, not interrupting, and not helping the other person with questions if A is silent. Just listening. B can show interest and make it clear that they are listening, but not with words.



*Time used 30 minutes*

**Second round - 3 minutes**

B repeats what A just said, as closely to what was actually being said as possible. The task for B is to repeat as neutrally as possible, without interpretations and at the same time trust that what is remembered is what is important. It doesn't matter if something is not repeated, and maybe something is understood wrongly. The exercise is to repeat what was heard and that might not be exactly the same as what was actually said.

A listens without commenting even if B has misunderstood something.

**Third round - 3 minutes**

A final reflection. Maybe something needs to be corrected, maybe some new insights arose while listening, and some elaborations are needed.

The trainer watches the time, or leaves it to the participants because of the virtual setting. After the three rounds A and B switch roles, and do the exercise in their new roles.

**Teachers' reflections**

Teachers' reflections are a recurring activity for the online meetings. This activity should be done in steps:

- Virtual room: All together: Reflect individually and write your reflections in a notebook. These written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.
- Virtual room: Breakout rooms: Talk in pairs - participants share reflections. Please tell the participants to choose whatever they want to share.
- Virtual room: All together: Write again individually, if anything new came up when reflecting in pairs
- Virtual room: All together: The last step is to reflect together in the big group

The statements to reflect upon are:

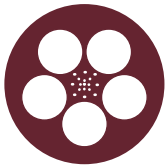
Please write whatever comes to your mind about your participation in this programme so far.

Describe if, and how, you have been affected as a person, by the programme so far.

Describe if, and how, your participation in this programme has had an impact on your professional role as a teacher, so far.

Describe how you think the exercises done so far could be used with students in your classroom.

Trainers notes



# Day 3

## Text of the day

*”An individual never has something to do with another person without him holding something of their life in his hands. It may be a very small matter, involving only a passing mood, a dampening or quickening of spirit, a deepening or removal of some dislike. But it may also be a matter of tremendous scope, such that the individual can determine if the life of the other flourishes or not.”*

Løgstrup 1956, (Translation 1997, pp. 15-16)

## Lesson flow

Time	Content
10 min	Welcome and presentation of the day
30 min	Mindfulness practice Yoga - sitting or standing Sitting mindfulness practices - someone I care about,
30 min	Sharing. Check in
20 min	60:40 exercise
30 min	A joyful situation
30 min	Theory. Good experiences require attention The brain changes by practising mindfulness
	Lunch
45 min	Exercise. the walk of privileges
30 min	Theory. The diversity aspects of sex and gender
30 min	Exercise. Shaping Gender
30 min	Exercise. Frames

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

Sitting Yoga

Rationale and background

You can choose to do standing yoga as described in DAY 2 or you can do sitting yoga as an alternative.

We have previously mentioned that doing yoga is a way of training self-awareness and self-management. It is an introduction to various ways of bringing awareness to the present moment, and being aware of the body and the breath.

Doing yoga is about sensing your body, and moving your awareness to the impact of the different positions and stretches. Doing yoga is also about knowing your own limitations and bodily borders, and being true to those limits and respectful of them.

Objective

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To become aware of how your own state affects your relationship to other people
- To use information from awareness of the present state, to make more conscious choices
- To use information from awareness of the present state to have more options regarding your choices for dealing with/reacting to a situation regarding yourself, and in situations with other people
- To get to know different approaches on how to regulate yourself when under pressure

Materials

A chair

Procedure

Seating position

Position yourself as comfortably as possible. We will start by exploring different ways of sitting. You can start by finding as relaxed a position as possible, as if you were going to sleep on the chair. You can stretch out your legs, lean back, let your arms hang, let your head hang. Or whatever it means to you to be in a relaxed, possibly even a lazy position. What is it like to sit like that? How does it feel in your body? What happens to your attention and to the feeling of being awake when you are sitting like this? What is your degree of alertness?

Now try the opposite. Straighten your back, push your chest forward, hold your head high, and make a small hollow in your back, place the soles of your feet on the floor. How does it feel to sit like that? How does this sitting position feel in your body? What happens to your attention and to the feeling of being awake when you are sitting like this? What is your degree of alertness?



You can now investigate whether it is possible to find a sitting position somewhere between those two positions. Upright, yet relaxed.

Place your feet on the floor, hip width apart. The back holds itself upright. You can notice the balance between your right and your left side. Is there more weight on one side than the other? And is it possible to distribute the weight evenly?

What about the position of your head? Is your head leaning slightly to one side or the other? Are you looking up or down? If it feels ok, you can lengthen your neck by pulling the chin towards the chest a little.

This is a sitting mountain position.

Stretch

Now stretch your arms and move them towards the ceiling so that you are stretching your body. You can look in the direction of the hands.

Where are your shoulders, are they lifted? If they are, you can see if it is possible to lower the shoulders and stretch the arms towards the ceiling, while creating slight pressure towards the floor with your feet.

Stretch your right side by stretching your right hand up toward the ceiling, as if you were about to reach something. Change sides and do the same with the left hand. Switch from side to side.

Finally, you can stretch both sides once more and then let your arms come down along your sides.

Sit for a moment and sense your body and your breath.



Side bend

Grasp the chair seat with your left hand. Extend your right hand toward the ceiling and move it further out to the left so that you are doing a side bend and stretching the right side of your body. Do the same on the opposite side.



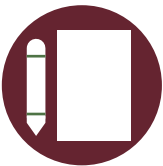
Spinal twist

If you are sitting on a chair with a backrest, you can grab it with your right hand and place your left hand on your right thigh or your knee. Now look over your right shoulder. You are now rotating your spine.

Do the same on the opposite side: grab the backrest with your left hand, right hand on your left leg, and look over your left shoulder.

Then return to the starting position.

If there is no backrest on your chair. You can look over your shoulder and place your arm wherever it feels natural.





**Stretch around neck and head**

Find the starting position, the sitting mountain pose.

Now you can drop your right ear down towards your right shoulder.

If it feels okay, you can place your right hand on your head above your ear, putting slight pressure with your hand so that you can feel a stretch on the left side of your neck. You can press your head slightly upwards against your hand so that you don't overstretch.

Now move the chin down towards your collarbone so that the stretch is on the side of your neck. You can place your hand just behind your ear, and once again press your hand down carefully whilst pressing your head lightly against your hand.

Then let the chin move down towards the chest and stay here for a while. You can place your hand on the back of your head, or just let your head hang.

Now move your head back to the starting position.

Do the same on the opposite side.



**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

Continue directly to the next mindfulness practice.

**Exercise**

*Time used 15 minutes*

**Someone I care about**

**Rationale and background**

As we have mentioned before, doing mindfulness practices is a training in being more aware of what is happening right now, in this moment. It is knowing where you are and what this moment consists of. Mindfulness is also a practice of accepting and being non-judgemental towards yourself and others. This is one important element of building relational competence.

In this mindfulness practice the focus is on the natural resource or capacity a human being has to have kind feelings towards others. The practice cultivates and focuses on empathic feelings as a way of training acceptance and kindness.

Building relational competence is about being more empathetic and compassionate with yourself and with your counterpart in any relationship. And it is about becoming more present in difficult situations, remaining in touch with yourself even when you feel vulnerable and incompetent.



**Objective**

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and diversity awareness
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To practice empathic curiosity through, dialogue and practical exercises
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- To explore different points of view through dialogue and practical exercises
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between ourselves and others
- To be aware of how your own state affects your relationship to other people
- To get to know different approaches for how to regulate yourself when under pressure



**Materials**

A chair



**Procedure**

Position yourself comfortably on the chair – notice how the surface of the chair supports your body.

You can guide your attention to your feet. If it is difficult to sense the feet you can move them a little, by bending and stretching your toes. Or you can be curious about the sensations of not feeling your feet. How do you sense that?

You can see if it is possible to sense the surface of your feet and sense them from within as well. From your feet you can guide your attention to your hands. If it feels good you can bend and stretch all the fingers on both hands.

And notice how the hands rest against the chair or against your body.

Is it possible to sense the surface of your hands, and sense them from within as well?

Now guide your attention towards your face. If it feels ok you can make exaggerated grimaces stretching your facial muscles, and then let your face rest.

Bring your awareness to the entirety of the circumference of your body and the extremes: feet, hands and face.

From now on, you can rest your attention on your breathing

Anchor your awareness with your respiration - inhalation and exhalation.

Let your awareness dwell on your respiration for a while.

Now notice that it's possible to be aware both of your breathing and the extremes of your body at the same time.

Sit for a while just noticing.

You can always simplify the practice by just focusing your awareness on one area: the feet, the hands or the breath.

Now you can guide your attention to your chest and the area around your heart. What are the physical sensations in this area?

Maybe you can feel your heartbeat or maybe you can hear your heart. Or maybe you can't. You don't have to sense anything specific. We are training a curious and non-judgemental attitude, that means just noticing – not doing anything, and not creating anything to feel.

Maintain awareness of the heart area and be aware of any feelings or emotions that might occur. Maybe you sense something intense, maybe it is more subtle.

The next part of the practice is an invitation. You can always bring your attention to your feet, your breath or even open your eyes and look out the window if it gets too intense or too overwhelming.

The invitation is to recall someone you care about. Someone that means something to you. This could be a friend, a spouse, a child or a family member, someone you like and care about.

Notice how it feels in your heart when you think of that person. Whatever feelings or senses that come up are okay. You might even discover opposing feelings. Is it possible to accept whatever appears, and whatever you notice?

After a while you can focus your attention on the feelings and move your focus away from the person a little. Is it possible to let your attention stay with the feelings, sensing and exploring the feelings?

Now move your attention to your feet. Sit for a while with your attention on your feet.

Is it possible to direct or feel the same kindness or care that you earlier felt for that person, but this time for yourself? To direct kindness and care towards yourself?

We can sit for a moment in silence, exploring what comes up when we have a kind attitude towards ourselves.

Now move your attention back to your feet. Sit for a while with your attention on your feet.

Move and stretch a little, and open your eyes if they are closed.

Find a partner for a reflection: what did you notice in this practice, both in yoga and in the sitting, mindfulness practice? What did you notice when thinking of someone that you care about? What did you notice when directing kindness towards yourself? Did you find it easy or challenging?



**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

For some people this exercise can be overwhelming. It is important to guide choices so that the participants are offered different options. This might be to focus on the feet, the breath, opening the eyes and looking out of the window, or listening to the sounds you hear.

It is actually part of the training to learn to focus your attention on something neutral when overwhelmed. It is a way of building self-management.

**Exercise**

*Time used 30 minutes*

**Sharing. Check in**

Checking in means all the participants can be present, by saying a few words about how they are and what's going on in their lives. Not a long speech but just a few sentences describing their current situation in life. As always, nobody is forced to share anything they don't want to share, but everybody saying something is preferable because it's one way of participating and actually making the group.

By sharing and listening we are training to speak in a personal language and to use active, empathic listening.



Exercise

Time used 20 minutes

60:40 exercise. Walk and See

Rationale and background

This exercise trains and develops the ability to divide our attention between ourselves and another person, by anchoring some of our attention in our body.

The core of this exercise is creating small meetings between the participants, by looking each other in the eyes. This small act of looking in the eyes of another person can create a lot of thoughts, and can activate reactions closely connected to social norms and what is acceptable behaviour when interacting with another person.

As described above, we have an existential need to be part of a group, to be accepted and to feel that we have value for other people. This need can be so strong that the danger of being excluded, because you are not able to read the social codes, can determine your behaviour. We attune, and try to read the other person's needs. We frequently do this at the expense of our own needs. Sometimes we ignore our own needs, and we sometimes don't even recognise them until later.

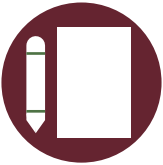
All of our awareness is placed outside of ourselves, and we don't know what is happening inside. At that moment, there is no self-awareness.

This exercise trains us to keep some of the awareness focused on ourselves, when in a situation that has the potential to create uncertainty, and the urge to adapt.

The concept of 60:40 is described on DAY2

Objective

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and diversity awareness
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To practice empathic curiosity through, dialogue and practical exercises
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- To explore different points of view through dialogue and practical exercises
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between ourselves and others
- To be aware of how your own state affects your relationship to other people
- To get to know different approaches for how to regulate yourself when under pressure



Materials

Space to walk around.

Procedure

Phase 1

Everybody finds a space on the floor and settles themselves in the mountain position.

Standing in this position you can start to move your weight from your toes to your heels, moving forward and backwards. You can make small movements or you can make bigger movements and challenge yourself. It is not a problem if you lose your balance. You can always find your balance again, and continue moving.

You can also move from side to side. Moving your weight from one foot to the other.

And you can move in circles.

Your feet are your roots holding you to the floor and grounding you. The rest of the body is moving like a reed in a lake. From side to side, back and forward, in circles. You can experiment and be creative, and follow your movement impulses.

Now move your weight to one foot, lift the other foot so that you are standing on one leg. In this position you can start to bounce on the standing leg. These are small movements up and down, like jumping without actually leaving the floor. Do this for as long as possible and then move your weight to your other leg, and do the same. You can do this a couple of time swapping your standing leg whenever you feel that it is time to change.

If it feels okay, you can challenge yourself a little and only change legs when you have reached your limit. Don't cross your limit, of course. It is still important to listen to your body and be respectful and kind about what is possible for you today.

Now settle yourself in the mountain position once more. Sense your body and the activity in your body. Stand for a moment and feel the floor under your feet and the breath in your body.

Phase 2

If it feels okay, you can look up, becoming aware of the other people in the room. You don't need to look directly at each other or make eye contact, just have an awareness that other people are there.

What happens to your attention when you look around? Is it possible to keep some of your awareness on the feeling and the contact to the floor whilst looking around?

Now start walking around in the room, mingling with each other. You do not make contact yet, just know that they are there. What is happening with your attention? Is it possible to keep some of the awareness on your walking feet being in contact with the floor?

The next step is to create some little meetings. When you meet someone simply stop, look the person in the eyes, then move on.



The training is to keep some of your awareness on your feet and the contact with the floor, whilst you are having eye contact. You split your awareness between the other person and yourself.

You can stay in a contact for as long as you like. But be aware of your own needs and limits. What is suitable for you? How long do you need to make a contact? And when is it long enough?

This exercise is about listening to yourself and allowing yourself to follow and respond to your own needs. It might be that the other person needs longer or shorter contact time. Is it possible to allow that too, and at the same time trust that the other person is capable of taking care of their needs themselves?

Whilst walking around, and in between the meetings, it is always possible to take a break from contact by standing in your own space and reconnecting to your feet.

Now return to the circle. Stand for a moment in the mountain pose and notice what is active in your mind and in your body.

Turn to the person next to you for a short reflection:

What did you notice in this exercise?

Was it possible to divide your awareness between yourself and the other person?

What was your experience of having a shared awareness? How did it affect the relation or your perception of the other person?

**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

The exercise consists of two phases. In the first phase, it is important to create a good connection with the feet. That makes it easier in the second phase to keep the contact with the feet and to divide the awareness.

The important thing is to create this connection, and the exercises in phase 1 are examples of doing just that. You can choose some other exercises if you prefer.



**Exercise**

*Time used 30 minutes*



**A joyful situation**

**Rationale and background**

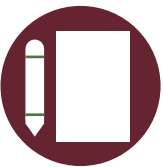
This will be explained afterwards in the theory paragraph.

**Objective**

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and diversity awareness
- To become acquainted with the concept of empathic curiosity
- To practice empathic curiosity through, dialogue and practical exercises
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- To explore different points of view through dialogue and practical exercises
- To develop empathic curiosity by practising empathic listening and asking empathic questions to understand the perspectives of other people
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between ourselves and others
- To become aware of how your own state affects your relationship to other people
- To use information on awareness of your present state to have more options regarding your choices to deal with/react to a situation regarding yourself, and in situations with other people
- To get to know different approaches for how to regulate yourself when under pressure

**Materials**

None.





**Procedure**

**Guidance**

We will now carry out an exercise and a reflection about how a good, joyful or pleasant experience is perceived.

Sit as comfortably as possible on the chair.

You can close your eyes if you like, or let your gaze rest on the floor.

Is it possible to turn your attention inwards for a moment? Can you move your attention to your feet and your contact with the floor, and the physical sensations in your feet.

You can then shift your attention to your breath. Without changing anything, you don't have to breathe in a particular way, but you can simply notice that you are breathing, following your breath for a moment with your awareness. Notice how the breathing is moving through your body.

And what is your state of mind, or your mood? It's not about being in a particular mood, but discovering how things actually are.

How are you at this moment?

I will now invite you to think of a situation from the last week or two where you experienced something nice - something that made you happy, or joyful or was pleasant. It doesn't have to be a big thing... a huge feeling of happiness... or the best day of your life.

It can be a minor thing, for instance that you saw a beautiful sunset, a colleague brought you a cup of coffee, a stranger smiled at you as you walked down the street. Anything at all.

And if you've had a really bad week and it's hard to find anything good, you can investigate if there have been situations that you perceived as being slightly better than your general situation. Or perhaps just a neutral situation?

Once you have found a situation, give it space in your memory and in your mind.

What happened in the situation? Were you alone, or were you with others? What was it that made the situation nice?

You can now examine how you sensed the experience. What comes to your mind and to your senses when you recall the situation? It might be that you felt something very clearly in the situation, and it may be that some feelings are emerging now that you are thinking back to it.

It might also be the case that you are not really feeling, or sensing anything. That is not a problem, and doesn't mean you can't do the exercise. You're just investigating the situation, and this doesn't have to be in any particular way. Not feeling anything is also a way of being clearer and more aware of what happened.

Can we investigate how a good experience is felt in the body? In your face, chest, abdomen, arms and legs?

And what emotions were active or present in the situation? (Joy, satisfaction, gratitude...)

Did you notice any thoughts? It may be that there were no thoughts, and it may be that thoughts pop up now that you are bringing awareness to the situation.

You can now turn your attention to how things are right now. What are you noticing now? What do you feel in your body, are there any feelings or emotions, or any thoughts? And what do you sense in your body?

If it feels okay, you can take a deeper breath, open your eyes and stretch your body.

**Reflections in twos**

Find a partner.

You can now share your experiences of a good situation with someone else.

When you share, it is important that you are aware of what and how much you want to share. You are not forced to say anything that you would rather keep to yourself. You don't even have to share what actually happened. We are investigating what is characteristic when we perceive something as being nice, joyful or pleasant.

You can focus on how you sense a good experience in your body, what thoughts and feelings occurred, and what it feels like to tell someone about it.

A starts by speaking and B listens. This means that only A is speaking, B is present but says nothing. B listens without commenting or asking questions.

You get 3-4 minutes each to talk and to listen.

The trainer watches the time and says when to swap roles.

It may be that during this period you find that there is nothing more to be said.

If you have nothing more to say, just sit in silence. You don't have to look at each other but can use the silence to focus on the situation. It may be that something comes up after you have sat in silence for a little while.

After sharing, the trainer sums up the different experiences. This can be done by writing the different categories on a board and asking the participants to fill them out.

It could look like this:

Body sensations	Feelings/emotions	Thoughts	How is it now
Relaxed	Joy	"I wish it was always like that"	"I can still feel the joy"
Warm in the heart	Feeling of freedom	"How lucky am I"	"I must remember to enjoy .."
Butterflies in the stomach	Happiness	"I am in"	"I must remember to notice..."
A tingling sensation in the body	Meaning	"I feel loved"	"I'm really happy to hear someone else's good experience"
Lightness	Cohesion	"This is just nice"	
Lowered shoulders	Satisfied		
	Relieved		

If it makes sense, you can read out loud what has been written on the board.

Reflect together with the group:

Looking at our shared experiences, what characterises a pleasant experience?

What elements will often be present?

Very often situations are perceived and interpreted as being nice when we feel contact and cohesion with ourselves, another person, an animal or nature.

Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

In the sharing part of this exercise, the length of time needed may be a little different from group to group. There can be a point in challenging the participants a little, so that silence can arise as well as the opportunity for further reflections.

After the reflection you can summarise by writing the different sensations and perceptions so that everybody can see them. Sometimes people connect with rather difficult feelings when doing this exercise, and it is important that these feelings are just as welcome as what we normally associate with joy, being happy or experiencing something nice.

Emphasise what we are sharing. Even though we might be very different in personality and culture, we still have some of the same perceptions and understandings regarding the characteristics of a joyful situation.

You can include some points from the following text when summarising the excise.

What characterises a good experience?

Human beings perceive good experiences in more or less the same way.

In the body, they can be felt as relaxation, but actually also the opposite - as excitement or tension, but in a good way.

The face and the body smiles, the heart is warm, the stomach relaxed or filled with excitement. The body can be felt as being vital, light and full of energy. And also the opposite - relaxed, grounded and quieter.

Feelings and emotions might be joy, contentment, excitement, gratitude, hope and faith in ourselves and the world.

Good experiences are often characterised by very few thoughts. The thoughts may come a little later, and there can be a tendency for the thoughts to try to maintain the good experience.

There are three things that characterise a good experience.

1. Good experiences require us to be aware, that is, that we are present in the moment.
2. They also require that we are in touch with the situation, that we are aware that something nice is happening and can settle our attention on it. We must know it, and feel it.
3. Finally, our thoughts are absolutely crucial to whether an experience is interpreted as being good or bad.

When we feel safe, and feel that we are included and part of a community, we feel much better. We are social animals and we easily feel threatened when we are not included.

It is possible to have more good experiences by being aware, by being in contact with our body, mind, breath, with nature and other living beings. We can begin to be aware that we are actually always part of the great community that consists of all living beings, who all want to feel good, just like ourselves.

We can bring the attention back to this moment again and again, and let our mind rest in our body, in a sort of accepting attention.





**Theory**

*Time used 15 minutes*

## Good experiences require attention

In a way, human beings are biased so that we automatically remember negative experiences, but we get used to good experiences, and forget to appreciate them.

### It's harder to remember good experiences

When we experience something bad, it is not necessary to make an effort to remember it, it is simply stored automatically in our memory.

On the contrary, we have to use real energy to remember good experiences.

There are several studies that point in the direction of us actually having a preference for capturing information that is linked to unpleasant experiences.

### Hippocampus and amygdala

Among other things, this has to do with the way our memory works. The hippocampus is the centre of the brain that is responsible for the storage of information, and for our memory. It is the hippocampus that decides whether information should be stored and turned into a memory, or whether it should disappear into oblivion.

But the hippocampus does not work alone, and it is strongly affected by the area of the amygdala, which is referred to as the fear centre of the brain. It is sometimes called the emergency centre of the brain.

The purpose of the amygdala is to increase our chances of survival, it is constantly screening the environment to check if there is anything that could be potentially dangerous, or if there are any signs of something to eat.

The cooperation between the amygdala and the hippocampus takes place through the amygdala passing information to the hippocampus. The hippocampus categorises this information as positive, negative or neutral information, and after that, stores it as memories.

Experiences categorised as either very positive or very negative emerge more quickly into the consciousness when we recall situations. We have a better memory for situations that are linked to strong emotions, and there are many indications that we remember the negative situations best.

Mindfulness is being aware and present in the positive, the negative and the neutral moments.

### Two biological mechanisms

Within positive psychology, one of the starting points is that a human being is born with two biological mechanisms: one that represses positive experiences and one that promotes negative ones.

The concept hedonic adaptation describes the process of how human beings get used to positive or negative stimuli. What was experienced very intensely with a high level of pleasant or unpleasant sensations in the first meetings with a given stimulus, will be neutralised over time and perceived as a neutral stimulus without intensity.

The adaptation helps people to get through fearful experiences. However, combined with another mechanism that humans possess, the negativity bias, it can easily turn into a life where we forget or don't notice the good things, and instead focus on everything that is wrong (Rozin, 2001).

What initially gave us a good experience and a feeling of pleasure, becomes everyday, and we stop noticing it. We become blind to the elements of our life that once triggered positive sensations.

Negativity bias on the other hand, is the term for the human tendency to promote negative experiences. It is a trend that has evolutionary roots. In the stone age, happiness was a life-threatening luxury. It did not matter if you enjoyed life, because it was all about survival, it was vital to be able to recognise the signs that could mean death and destruction.

You probably know those mechanisms in your own life. A bad experience with a favourite dish can have the effect that you never eat that dish again. We also know that it is difficult to forget one unpleasant experience with a person you care about, even though you actually have had several positive experiences with the same person. When you get feedback for a performance, or are evaluated in your profession it can be difficult to hear the positive things that are being said. Very often we focus on the negative items that come after the BUT... - the negative parts of the evaluation.

Or you are doing a presentation in class, and most of your students seem interested. But if there is one person who radiates that what you are saying is uninteresting and indifferent, this person is very often the one who gets all your attention. Our attention is often drawn in the direction of dissatisfaction, that is frequently what is remembered afterwards and what our own evaluations of our performance are based on. We remember the times things went wrong, rather than the successes and the small episodes of well-being and joy in our everyday life. And we focus on problems and failures, more than we appreciate joys and successes.

This tendency to remember and focus on negative experiences has an important function in relation to our chances of survival. Of course, it is important to stay away from food that makes you sick or is toxic. It is also important to know the signs that might indicate that a person is dangerous. The other side of the coin is that in modern times and in modern societies only focusing on negative information is no longer necessary for our survival. In fact, instead it seems as if focusing on the negative has actually become a threat to our survival. For instance, if we look at how stress, anxiety and depression have become a threat to public health, and can be seen as an epidemic all around the world.

The stories we have about Stone Age people are, of course, just stories. There is also the story that humans walked around happily until they became aware of themselves. Until they discover that they are naked, that their actions have consequences, and that there will come a time when they will have to take care of themselves.

We might believe in that story a bit too much, to the extent that we think everything is our own fault, that we are responsible for everything, both when things are going well and especially when things are going badly.



The story that all religions and wisdom traditions share is that attention, empathy and compassion can be cultivated. Mindfulness is a training where we can consciously pay attention to the moment, and also spot the small situations of joy and pleasure that are actually there. For that is the moment that we turn off the autopilot, and are fully present with what is.

It's not a denial of the negative, making a world where only positive statements and interpretations are allowed. Nor is it a prohibition on thinking negative thoughts or having so-called negative emotions. It's simply about discovering that life contains both the positive and the negative, and discovering that everything changes. Life alternates between pleasure and discomfort. You are not wrong or living your life badly when you feel uncomfortable or are sad or angry, this is all part of everybody's life. By acknowledging both aspects we live a life with more nuances and possibilities, and we might get rid of some of the guilt.

**Three good things or three blessings**

Professor of psychology and one of the founders of positive psychology, Martin Seligman, has developed some simple methods that can be used to bring more joy and a greater experience of happiness into our life. One of those exercises is that every night before going to bed, you think about three things that have gone well during the day and that you are happy about or grateful for. This can be something really nice that has happened during the day, something delicious you have eaten, a nice sunrise or just the fact that you are grateful for your physical health or that fact that you have a person that you care about. It can be large and small things. Research into the effect of this small simple exercise shows that participants experience greater joy in life when they do the exercise regularly.

The exercise is described in this video:

<http://sites.google.com/site/psychospiritualtools/Home/psychological-practices/three-good-things>



**Theory**

*Time used 15 minutes*

**The brain changes by practising mindfulness**

The human brain is plastic. This means that the brain shapes itself according to the mental activities that are taking place. It can be compared to physical exercise. It is the muscles that are being used that grow. In the brain, neural networks are formed based on the activity that takes place, greater activity creates more, and thicker networks. This also means that the brain can change, if the mental activity changes. Studies of different professional groups have shown that the part of the brain's neural network that is related to spatial understanding grows in taxi drivers. The brain creates a kind of inner GPS through exercise and training. It is the same area of the brain that enables migratory birds to find their way (Maguire. Et. al, 2006). It has also been shown that the brain is changed by playing music or by juggling (Rodrigues et. al. 2010) and (Draganski et al., 2004). There is always mental activity in our brain, which means we are always training something. We are constantly shaping the brain: some areas get bigger and others grow smaller - even without us noticing it.

When talking about other skills, it is common knowledge that you become good at what you train or practice. How do you train your brain? Are you training something you want to get better at? Something you want to grow and give more space to?

Giving awareness to joyful and pleasant situations and experiences, trains the brain to be more aware of the good things in life, and to enrich and expand the interpretation of what a pleasant experience is.

Mindfulness is one way to train the brain by becoming aware of mental activity and the mental models we are training, and by actively choosing those qualities or abilities we want to grow, not the ones that are not useful or beneficial for our lives. Different studies have shown that the brain, and mental activity are changed by practicing mindfulness.

**Better sleep**

In a study in which a group of young people who were addicted to drugs were taught mindfulness, it was found that the young people who practised mindfulness between sessions increased their sleep by one hour a night, as compared to the young people who did not practise. This was about 5-10 minutes of practice a day for 2-3 days a week (Britton et al., 2010).

**Physical changes in the brain**

In an overview of studies concerning the correlation between brain changes and different forms of meditation training, the authors point out that physical changes are seen in several different areas of the brain. (Tang, Yi-Yuan et al., 2015).

This can be explained by the fact that mindfulness and meditation techniques generally make use of various forms of mental activity that activate complex networks in the brain.

Brain research is a new science and there are many methodological reservations. However, it seems that there are some areas in the brain where the changes observed are related to mindfulness and meditation training. These are:

- Increased activity in the prefrontal cortex, which has an impact on our ability to regulate and retain attention, our ability to plan, evaluate, understand correlations, enhanced awareness of reaction patterns. The prefrontal cortex also governs the ability to have an awareness of ourselves.
- Several other significant areas in the brain are also affected by mindfulness and meditation training. Examples are the memory area of the hippocampus, the area for attention and body sensation via the sensory cortex, the insula and enhancement in areas that are important for our ability to regulate emotional impulses.

These areas have an impact on how we learn. Mindfulness trains areas of the brain that are important for our ability to learn as well as for our well-being in the world.

**Regulation of emotions**

In general, several studies of mindfulness interventions show that the intensity and frequency of negative and unpleasant experiences decreases, and a positive base mood increases. Positive effects are seen in relation to being able to regulate emotions and feelings. It becomes easier to be able to accommodate discomfort, as emotional reactions to unpleasant activities are reduced, and the return to an emotional baseline after being exposed to stress, happens more quickly. The physical reactions to stress also diminish more quickly.

In addition, participant own reports from the surveys show that the problematic experience of being unable to regulate their emotions, is generally reduced.

**Exercise**

*Time used 45 minutes*

The walk of privilege

**Rationale and background**

This group-exercise about privilege raises awareness of how social background and societal norms are linked to injustices. The exercise highlights the advantages and disadvantages that individuals and groups can get based on how they are categorised and given different conditions in life.

Every society and every classroom has a set of norms and values, some characteristics that are more valued and that gives more opportunities in life. Some of these characteristics are explicit and some are implicit. Sometimes we don't even notice privileges because they are intertwined in our societal and school cultures. Understanding and acknowledging privileges is key to understanding ourselves as well as others and how privilege based on social background affects our chances in life.

The school is structured and legitimised in a specific way that is connected to societal law, and to the economic situation in each country. The principal of the school has a personal interpretation of the values and has his or her own set of values. Same thing counts for the teachers. They have an understanding of the values of the school and they have their own set of values. The values – implicit and explicit – are important for those who have privilege in school.

**Objective**

The aim of the exercise is to raise awareness of various forms of privilege thus understanding how the intersectionality of, for example, socioeconomic status, gender and other demographic variables shape conditions for people’s possibilities in society. The exercise also aims to increase participants' understanding for how these conditions impact social inequality in society and in school.

**Materials**

No extra materials are needed

**Procedure**

The trainer can start the exercise by giving some theoretical background to the exercise (*see under rationale*).

The exercise can be done in two versions. Either the participants can start from themselves or the participants can do the exercise by getting cards with roles that illustrate different roles. It is also possible to do both versions depending on time.



1. Ask the group to quietly place themselves on a line in the room. Tell participants that you will be reading aloud a number of claims. Every time a statement agrees with ourselves or the participants' role, they are supposed to move a step forward, otherwise they stay in the same place. Of course, the participants always have the option to remain still or move forward. Start by reading out some simpler statements that the group should take position to let everyone try out how the exercise works. Read each of the statements aloud, and pause between each one to allow participants to take steps that might pertain to them.
2. After you read all the statements, ask the participants to look around at where people are positioned in the room.
3. The third step in this exercise is about reflections in groups of 4-5 participants. In the group reflect and discuss the following questions:
  - What happened during the exercise? Were you surprised by anything?
  - How did it feel to be in the group that took a step forward or remained still?
  - How did it feel to be in the front or back of the room?
  - Was there a time when you wanted to be a part of the group moving forward?
  - What might we draw from this exercise that can help us in our everyday lives?
  - How can you apply what you have learned here to your work as a teacher?
  - What statement made you think most?
  - If you could add a statement what would it be?
4. The last step in the exercise is to reflect in the big group. Ask each group to share something from their discussion. To wrap up the whole exercise as a trainer, you can go back to talk about the objectives of the exercise.



**Reflections and guidelines for the trainer**

The purpose of the exercise is not to blame anyone for having more power or privilege or for receiving more help in achieving goals, but to have an opportunity to identify both obstacles and benefits experienced in our life.

On the following pages examples of questions to ask the participants and examples of role-cards are provided. You as a trainer decide if you want to use the role cards or not. It is simply two ways of doing the exercise. Using some questions with double negations forces the participants to really think about the meaning in each statement. However, it is important that you as a trainer choose what questions to ask and make adaptations necessary in order to fit your group of participants and your specific country context.



**Example 1: Questions for yourself/grown-ups – take one step forward if:**

1. My holidays are celebrated in the country I live in.
2. No one has asked me if I am a boy or a girl.
3. I do not have to skimp at the end of the month.
4. No one has explained my mood by saying that I am menstruating.
5. My opportunities to get a job are not negatively affected by what my name is.
6. My first language, my religion and my culture are respected in the society, which I live in.
7. I travel wherever I want without having to find out in advance there are any obstacles on the flight, train or bus.
8. I'm not afraid of being stopped by the police.
9. I never have to look over my shoulder when I am out alone in the evening.
10. I have never experienced that my conditions in life have been affected by my gender.
11. I can buy skin-coloured patches that are similar to my skin colour.
12. I have never been called something condescending that referred to my sexual orientation or my gender expression.
13. I have never been called something condescending that referred to my skin colour or what part of the world I come from.
14. I can enter public swimming pools without having a thought about which dressing room I should use.
15. People rarely or never cast sceptical glances at me when I am walking in town.
16. No one has asked me where in the world I really come from.
17. I entered this building and the room without thinking about thresholds and stairs.
18. I have not had any financial difficulties in my life.
19. If one or both of your parents graduated from college, take one step forward.
20. If you knew since you were a child that it was expected of you to go to college, take one step forward.
21. If you have immediate family members who are doctors, lawyers, or work in any degree-required profession, take one step forward.
22. If you almost always see members of your ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and class widely represented on television, in the newspaper, and the media in a POSITIVE manner, take one step forward.
23. If you almost always feel comfortable with people knowing your sexual orientation, take one step forward.
24. If walking alone at night, you never have to worry about anyone feeling threatened because of your presence, take one step forward.



Example 2: Questions for students

1. My holidays are celebrated in the country I live in.
2. No one has ever asked me if I am a boy or a girl.
3. My first language, my religion and my culture are respected in the society, which I live in.
4. I travel wherever I want without having to find out in advance there are any obstacles on the flight, train or bus.
5. I never have to look over my shoulder when I am out alone in the evening.
6. I have never experienced that my conditions in life have been affected by my gender.
7. I can buy skin-coloured patches that are similar to my skin colour.
8. I have never been called something condescending that referred to my skin colour or what part of the world I come from.
9. I can enter public swimming pools without having a thought about which dressing room I should use.
10. People rarely or never cast sceptical glances at me when I am walking in town.
11. No one has asked me where in the world I really come from.
12. I entered this building and the room without thinking about thresholds and stairs.

Example 3: Role cards

You're a thirty-year-old woman. You study at the university and have been living in the country for five years.	You are a Jewish man in his thirties. You are an actor, but you work as a care assistant.
You are the chairperson of the youth organisation of a political party. Your parents came to this country from Chile in the 70s	You're a young guy who lives in the suburbs of a big city. Your mother works as a cleaner, your father is unemployed.
You are studying law at the university. You are single and just over thirty years old.	You are a high school teacher and are still living in your hometown.
You're a fifteen year old girl. You live at home with your parents, in a village. You are adopted.	You're a man in his fifties. You work as a police officer. You have just got divorced from your spouse.
You're the daughter of an auxiliary nurse. You're studying economics at the university. You play floor-ball in your spare time.	You are a refugee in hiding. You're living with your family in one room, in an apartment.
You are a heterosexual mother of two who works selling office supplies. You live in a detached house.	You're a seventeen year old girl who didn't finish compulsory school. You're working in a fast food chain.
You are a heterosexual man working as a dancer in the opera. You grew up in a small town in southern Sweden.	You work in an office and use a wheelchair. You are the daughter of an American ambassador.



**Theory**

*Time used 30 minutes*

# The diversity aspect of sex and gender

Going back to the metaphor of a cream-layer cake, we have up to now talked about diversity as a whole cake consisting of different aspects (or ingredients). Now, we will zoom in to some of those diversity aspects. With the awareness that several diversity aspects are important and play a role in people's conditions in life, we have had to address some of these. The diversity aspects that are focused on in this text are sex and gender, socio-economic background and ethnicity and cultural background.

## Gender and sex

One important aspect of diversity is the differences in expectations, opportunities and obligations linked to sex and gender. Researchers usually make a distinction between sex and gender. Sex concerns the biological and legal gender, while gender is linked to a social gender (Davies, 2003; Johansson & Molina, 2005). The concept of social gender means that gender is constructed, socially, culturally and historically (Hirdman, 2003). This is related to gender identity and gender expression, i.e., how we feel and what we express, and it is linked to expectations, to norms and to power. What we expect from individuals, linked to their gender. Gender and sex must always be linked to other aspects such as class, ethnicity, neurodevelopmental conditions, religion, and age. This is called intersectionality, a topic that has already been addressed in the section on diversity. Connected to intersectionality is what in empirical studies describes as “double oppression”, which means that women who belong to ethnic minority groups are doubly oppressed, based on their own group's gender order, but also that of the majority society (de los Reyes, 2005). If intersectionality is not taken into account, sex and gender issues risk becoming an issue for white middle-class women only (de los Reyes, 2005).

## Different perspectives on gender

Within gender and sex research, there are three different perspectives (Eidevald, 2011):

1. Girls and boys are seen as different. Sex is described as biologically given, something which shows those differences, and gender is seen as its social effect. From this perspective, it is obvious that women and men develop differently, to some extent. In this case, it would be interesting to study how we treat girls and boys, and how men and women, on the basis of our differences, could be equal. Research priorities could be female and male brains, and the differences between girls' and boys' educational choices, and their grades and so on.
2. Differences between girls and boys are seen as a social construction. That girls and boys are different is due to them being treated differently. The goal becomes working to counteract differences between girls and boys, because they are basically seen as equal. For example, research could focus on how teachers' perceptions of girls and boys affects them in their work, linked to assessment and performance.
3. Girls and boys are seen neither as the same, nor as different. Differences between women and men, between feminine and masculine, are both seen as socially constructed differences, because it is not possible to draw a definite dividing line between what is body and what is gender. Here, any possible differences between men and women are not interesting, rather how sex and gender are constructed and how individuals relate to them is of interest. We neither "are" nor "become" female or male, instead humans are constantly "doing" gender. In this way, an individual can simultaneously be included in what is considered both feminine and masculine. Within this perspective how girls and boys do gender in preschool could be studied, for example.

To be sex and gender aware we need to reflect upon our own understanding of these concepts and discuss them with others.

## Expectations, norms and power

The identity of the individual is not the only concern of gender, so too is power and diversity (Davies, 2003). The power relationship between the sexes is central in gender theory, where this perspective highlights male superiority and female subordination at a structural level (patriarchy) (Wahl, Holgersson, Höök & Lindhag, 2001). According to Acker (1992), gender is created in practice, based on four processes:

1. The production of gender divisions in the practice within organisations, in professions, in tasks, in levels and in power. This division is often characterised by male superiority and female subordination.
2. The creation of symbols, images and various representations that express, confirm and sometimes contradict gender divisions.
3. Interaction between individuals (women-men, women-women, men-men) who create situations of superiority and subordination, and who create alliances and exclusions.
4. Mental processes in the individual linked to the demand for appropriate behaviours and attitudes.

## Sex and gender in society

In the autumn of 2017, the #metoo movement began. It was a campaign where women, non-binary people and transgender people came together and spoke about sexual harassment and sexual violence. The movement spread rapidly throughout the world and is probably something we all met in different media. According to Peace (2020), patriarchy can only be overcome if we recognise and overcome male privilege. He refers to Schacht's (2003) list of male privileges which includes, among other things, that men can be reasonably certain of the following: to be paid more than their female colleagues, not to be subjected to sexual abuse when they go home one evening from the bus, that the majority of the content of the news and the newspapers is about men, and that if the man has children, it is not him but his wife who is expected to take the main responsibility for home and children.

This can be compared to a post from a Swedish Instagram influencer (Filindfors) with just over 40,000 followers who asked men “Imagine a day without women in the world. What would you do?”. The men replied: “Don't know.", "Gameing", "Nothing different, would probably be a bit like it always is, but more boring". Women were then asked the reverse question, and a selection of their answers was: "I would dare to go home alone”. "I would go out and run in the woods", "I wouldn't have to be afraid", "Not worry about my daughters", and "Dare to wear the clothes I want to wear, without thinking about how they might be perceived”.



The European Parliament's website describes how women earn on average 15% less than men per hour. This is in spite of the fact that women, on average, have higher education than men. There are also many differences between EU member states. The gap is largest in Estonia (23 percent) and the EU country with the smallest difference is Romania (3 percent). However, a smaller wage gap does not necessarily mean more equality. A low proportion of women in the labour market often results in lower wage differences. A large wage gap can also be an indication that women more often work in low-paid areas, or that a large proportion work part-time.

### **Sex and gender in the classroom**

How can we work with gender issues in the classroom? First, we need to make our preconceived notions visible and then challenge them. The idea that there are two sexes, and only two, and that they are mutually exclusive is deeply rooted in our thinking (Mehan & Wood, 1975). This is based on the idea of the man and the woman as each other's opposite, where people are expected to fit into these two categories (Butler, 1990). So, children learn to embrace femininity and masculinity as if it is an unchanging part of their personal and social selves (Davies, 2003). Davies describes how individuals are seen either as boy or girl, as masculine or feminine, as male or female, but this does not have to be the case. We do not need to divide people into two polarities. Nor should we put an equals sign between boy, masculine and male, for example. A boy or a man can be both masculine and feminine. How an individual acts and how they behave is founded in an intertwining of physiology and their environment (Davies, 2003). All individuals are unique and should not be forced into categories that diminish them.

Secondly, gender is constructed in a social context. So, this means that how we talk about sex and gender and how we act in connection with these issues is important. Consequently, in a school context how teachers, students and others in the school talk about sex and gender and how individuals (children and adults) are treated regarding sex and gender is of the utmost importance. Davies (2003) emphasises that children need freedom to define themselves, in a way that does not mean that they are defined as male or female. In this way, she continues, in the future children can have the freedom to define themselves as who they are, without the requirement to live up to the idea of male or female. Qualities that are now linked to masculinity and femininity such as being caring, strong, and so on, remain as qualities but are not automatically linked to femaleness or maleness (Davies, 2003). You do gender, it is not something you have because of your x and y-chromosomes (Elvin-Nowak & Thomsson, 2003).

Having a gender perspective means having an awareness of how sex and gender affect us and our environment. To curiously discover, critically examine, but above all to respect all individuals. An awareness of sex and gender allows gender-conscious pedagogy. Gender pedagogy focuses on sex and gender identities, making language central (Davies, 2003; Eidevald, 2011). How we talk about something affects how we think about it. So, how we talk to, and about, children affects how they think. In educational practice, emphasis is also placed on materials, environments and toys (Dolk, 2003). So, it is important to be aware of the learning environment which the students are in, and as a teacher to critically examine materials, environments and toys that are in the learning space. Do these invite activities that broaden students' sex and gender identities, or do they shrink them?

Doing gender in a less gender stereotypical way does not mean that we erase gender and make men and women sexless (Elvin-Nowak & Thomsson, 2003). So, the goal is not for everyone to be equal, but to give individuals greater opportunity to develop and live the way they want to, without unnecessary restrictions. In order for society to become more equal, gender needs to be constructed in a different way to the way it is today. Doing gender differently does not always have to mean big societal changes, since small differences in everyday life also play a role. For example, this might mean daring to say no, or taking the seat that you are entitled to on the bus, or changing the sex of the people in the story you are reading for a child. Together we can contribute to a society that is more equal where all individuals have the opportunity to develop and live, without limiting stereotypes.

### **Possible questions to discuss after presenting the theory:**

- Reflect on how we adults can indirectly influence and/or reinforce traditional gender patterns among students in different situations.
- How can we work to give all students greater opportunities to develop without restrictions linked to sex and gender? (This can be linked to language, materials and environments).

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

Shaping gender

Rationale and background

Norms and power structures around masculinity and femininity not only affect how we think, but also how we behave. A person who is perceived to be a woman is expected to move and act in ways that are considered feminine. The same goes for men and masculinity. Whatever is perceived as masculine or manly is also valued higher, and given more space.

Objective

- to discover, discuss and develop an understanding concerning power, privilege and personal prejudices in society as well as in school
- to discover and develop awareness about own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity and how those may have impact on embracing diversity in the classroom

Materials

Always commercials [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs&ab\\_channel=Always](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs&ab_channel=Always)

Procedure

1. Initially, the participants sit in a circle. Ask everyone to find a comfortable position and to notice how they are sitting in the chair, what their arms are doing, and how their feet feel on the floor etc. Then ask them to sit like a woman. Ask the participants once again to notice what they are doing with their arms, how their feet feel and how their posture is affected. Then ask the participants to leave their place in the ring and start moving around the room and walk like a woman. When the participants have moved around the room for a while, they should start paying attention to each other. They can greet each other, like women. Ask the participants to rush to catch the bus like a woman, throw a ball like a woman, and laugh like a woman. Then let the participants return to their places in the ring.  
Now ask the participants to sit like a man. Ask the participants once again to notice what they are doing with their arms, how their feet feel and how their posture is affected. Then ask the participants to leave their place in the ring and start moving around the room and walk like a man. When the participants have moved around the room for a while, they should start paying attention to each other. They can greet each other, like men. Ask the participants to rush to catch the bus like a man, throw a ball like a man, and laugh like a man. Then let the participants return to their places in the ring.

2. Discussion

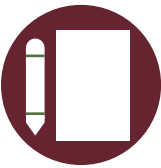
Afterwards, discuss how it felt to move like women and men. What did they feel like? Were there any differences? How much space do you take up in the different roles? Are there similarities between how men and women are expected to behave? For example, what are the consequences when a woman moves more like the stereotype of a man? If the participants portrayed women and men differently, also discuss why so. What are their thoughts about that?

3. Then watch the video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs&ab\\_channel=Always](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs&ab_channel=Always)  
together and discuss what thoughts it evokes.

Reflections

Keep in mind that many people may feel performance anxiety about moving or acting in front of others. It can also be loaded and uncomfortable to do this exercise in a group where you do not feel secure. Be sure to emphasise that this isn't about being an actor, and that there is no right or wrong, no good or bad. It is also important to create an atmosphere where everyone can feel that participation is completely voluntary. Suggestion, follow up this exercise with the exercise "Frames".



Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

Frames

Rationale and background

Our society has more or less explicit rules for appropriate male and female behaviour. In other words, in reality there are two frames that everyone should fit into – a masculine male frame or a feminine female frame. In this exercise, it is important to consider the role that the frames play for a person’s level of authority and status. This exercise is linked to the theory section on sex and gender.

Objective

- To enhance and develop SEDA competences: Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making and diversity awareness
- To discover, discuss and develop an understanding concerning power, privilege and personal prejudices in society, as well in school
- To discover and develop awareness about our own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity, and how those might have an impact on embracing diversity in the classroom

The purpose of the exercise is to reveal societal rules about masculinity and femininity, and how these frames might affect individuals.

Materials

Whiteboard/flipchart

Whiteboard pen/marker

Two drawn frames to be filled with attributes

Procedure

1. Brainstorming. Talk about how society typically defines male and female attributes and draw two frames side by side on the board. Brainstorm about the contents of the frames. What is considered to be masculine? What represents acceptable male behaviour and appearance in our society? What is considered to be feminine? What represents acceptable female behaviour and appearance in our society? Point out that the purpose is to describe the general societal standards for femininity and masculinity, not personal standards. Start with one frame. Write the words that the group attributes to masculinity and femininity in each frame.
2. Going into the topic more depth. Divide the participants into small groups. The task is now to go deeper into the topic, and participants are asked to add meaning to the concepts written in the frames. At this stage, the discussion can also be about the personal standards of the participants. The groups can now freely discuss the words written in the frames. For

inspiration, as a trainer you can encourage the group to discuss the following questions: What is required for a person to be considered male or female? What should the person look like, what should they do in their free time, what does someone who is male or female eat? How do male or female people live?

3. Then reassemble the whole group. Write down more words in the frame, based on what the participants bring up, for example "strong", "made up", "tough", "caring". Fill in one frame at a time and collect a number of words and properties in the first frame. Feel free to have another round on the same frame, if it is a small group or there are only a few words. Then move on to the next frame and do the same with that one. Write down what is described as feminine in the girl frame, and what is described as masculine in the boy frame. The participants do not have to agree with each other on all the words in the frames, on the contrary, it enriches the discussion when there are many different perspectives.
4. Discuss in pairs and consider the contents of the frames.
  - Reflect on what comes to mind when reading the words.
  - Discuss whether the attributes in the masculine frame are considered to be of greater value than those in the feminine frame.
5. Review some of these reflections in the group. If it does not come up naturally in your discussions, add information such as it being impossible to live up to the standards in the frames completely. Also point out that the masculine frame can be placed higher than the feminine frame, because women and femininity are considered as inferior to men and masculinity. Also highlight that in our society manly men and feminine women are assumed to be heterosexual.
6. Once again, ponder the following in pairs and discuss:
  - What are the advantages of adhering to the attributes in the frames?
  - What are the consequences of deviating from them, for example when a woman is too forward/pushy or a man is too sensitive?
  - What happens if you cannot tell a person’s sex?
  - What roles do skin color and class play in the way males and females are perceived?
  - Why are tomboys often positively perceived?
  - On the other hand, why are boys who have feminine qualities not perceived as positively?
7. In the big group, discuss the consequences that might arise from deviating from the frames. The consequences may come in the form of jokes, comments, strange looks, harassment and violence.

Reflections

This exercise contains a variety of discussion questions. Adjust the questions to suit your current diversity aspects, if necessary. The questions should be seen as suggestions and can be reformulated to better suit your target group. As the exercise contains many steps it is possible for you as the trainer to adjust the number of steps, and choose the steps that suit your context best.

Trainers notes



# Online meeting 3

Lesson flow

This schedule is the same for all online meetings even though the exercises can vary within the themes. For example, the mindfulness exercises will not be exactly the same on all occasions. Remember to have a break within the two hours.

Time	Content
15 min	Yoga
15 min	Sitting mindfulness practice
5 min	Self reflection. Journaling
20 min	Sharing. Check in
30 min	Dialogue exercises - a joyful situation
30 min	Teachers’ reflections

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

## Yoga

You can choose to do standing yoga (page 65) as described in DAY 2 or sitting yoga (page 108) as described in DAY 3.

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

## Sitting mindfulness practice on the body and the breath

You can choose to do a body scan (page 57) as described in DAY 1, a sitting meditation on body and breath (page 79) as described in DAY 2, or sitting meditation including someone I care about (page 111) as described in DAY 3.

Virtual room

All together

**Exercise**

*Time used 5 minutes*

**Journaling**

What did you notice in the mindfulness practice? In your body, in your mind, in your emotional life? Reflect individually and write your reflections in a notebook. The written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.

**Virtual room**

All together

---

**Exercise**

*Time used 15 minutes*

**Sharing: Check in**

Checking in means all the participants can be present, by saying a few words about how they are and what’s going on in their lives. Not a long speech but just a few sentences describing their current situation in life. As always, nobody is forced to share anything they don’t want to share, but everybody saying something is preferable because it’s one way of participating and actually making the group.

By sharing and listening we are training to speak in a personal language and to use active, empathic listening.

In these online settings, this check in session is also an opportunity to ask questions about the programme, or the exercises.

**Virtual room**

All together

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**Exercise**

*Time used 30 minutes*

**Dialogue exercises. A Joyful situation**

Dialogue exercise, A joyful situation as described in DAY 3 Find a partner.

The trainer makes breakout rooms with groups of two.

Share your experiences of a good situation with someone else.

When you share, it is important that you are aware of what, and how much, you want to share. You are not forced to say anything that you would rather keep to yourself. You don’t even have to share what actually happened. We are investigating what is characteristic when we perceive something as nice, joyful or pleasant.

You can focus on how you sense a good experience in your body, what thoughts and feelings occurred, and what it feels like to tell someone about it.

A starts by speaking and B listens. This means that only A is speaking, B is present but says nothing. B listens without commenting or asking questions.

You get 3-4 minutes each, to talk and to listen.

**Virtual room**

Breakout rooms

**Exercise**

*Time used 30 minutes*

**Teachers’ reflections**

Teachers' reflections are a recurring activity for the online meetings. This activity should be done in steps:

- Virtual room: All together: Reflect individually and write your reflections in a notebook. These written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.
- Virtual room: Breakout rooms: Talk in pairs - participants share reflections. Please tell the participants to choose whatever they want to share.
- Virtual room: All together: Write again individually, if anything new came up when reflecting in pairs
- Virtual room: All together: The last step is to reflect together in the big group

The statements to reflect upon are:

Please write whatever comes to your mind about your participation in this programme so far.

Describe if, and how, you have been affected as a person, by the programme so far.

Describe if, and how, your participation in this programme has had an impact on your professional role as a teacher, so far.

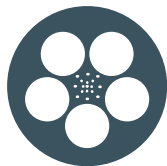
Describe how you think the exercises done so far could be used with students in your classroom.



Trainers notes

Day 4

Text of the day



Guesthouse

*This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.  
Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honourably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.  
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.  
Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.*

Jalaluddin Rumi  
Translated by Coleman Barks (2004)

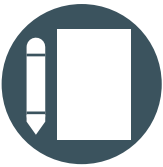


Lesson flow

Time	Content
10 min	Welcome and presentation of the day
30 min	Mindfulness practice Yoga - sitting or standing or lying Body scan
30 min	Sharing. Check in
30 min	Relational competence. From obedience to responsibility
45 min	Exercise. A situation where I felt valuable in my profession
	Pause
45 min	Exercise: Reflections on situations concerning aspects on diversity
15 min	Exercise. Reversed freeze dance
20 min	Exercise. Tease, disturb get in contact
30 min	Exercise. An unpleasant experience
30 min	Theory. What is stress?
20 min	Group Work. How do I recognise stress as a proffesional?

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes



Lying yoga

You can choose to do standing yoga (page 65) as described in DAY 2, sitting yoga (page 108) as described in DAY 3 or you can do lying yoga as an alternative.

Materials

Mat

Procedure

Lying position

Lie on your back on a mat on the floor. Make yourself as comfortable as possible.

You can start by looking around and becoming familiar with this perspective of the room. Where are you and what can you see? You can also just notice that you are not alone. And you can become aware of the sounds in the room and from outside.

If it feels okay, you can keep a small gap between your legs and let your feet fall out slightly to the sides, and let your arms lie alongside your body. You can examine what it feels like with your palms either facing upwards, or downwards towards the mat.

You can become aware of your body’s contact with the floor. Notice how your body is supported by the mat and the floor, from the heels to the back of your head, the back of your whole body. You may notice more precisely where the body is in contact with the floor: which areas of the body have contact with the floor, and which do not.

If it feels okay, you can focus your attention on the breath. What do you notice when your focus is on your breathing? Where can you feel the breath in your body?

Stretch the body

Now start lifting your arms from the floor as slowly as possible, and move them in the air towards the ceiling and further down towards the floor behind you, so that you finally lie with your arms on the floor above your head.

Stretch your body in both directions, hands stretching in one direction and feet in the other.

Stretch one side of your body so that you make one side longer, as if you were reaching for something behind you. And then do the same on the other side. Finally, you stretch your whole body again.

Now move your arms from above your head, along the floor and down beside your body. Is it possible to follow the movement with your attention? Can you be attentive to which muscles are involved in the process of moving your arms? Can you feel when a new muscle takes over?

When your arms are back in the starting position, you can simply lie there for a moment and notice the sensations and impulses in your body.



**Stretch your lower back**

Now bend both legs and lift your knees towards your chest.

You can hold your hands either below your knees on the upper shins or on the kneecaps. Gently move your legs down toward your chest to stretch your lower back.

You can now rock back and forth across the pelvis and make small circles with the pelvis. Experiment a little, and find out what feels good for you right now.

Now stop moving and actively pull your legs down towards the chest. You can also lift your forehead up to your knees so that you form a kind of ball with your body.

The lift comes from the area around the shoulder blades and chest - not from the neck.

If you notice that it is straining your neck, you can either raise a hand to support your neck or move your head back to the mat.

We can all rest our heads on the mat again, and stretch our legs out, and let our arms come down along our sides.



**Bend one leg at a time**

Now bend the right leg and pull it up towards the chest. Hold your hands behind the knee or on the kneecap. The left leg is stretched straight out on the floor, or if it feels better, you can place your left foot on the floor so that your knee points towards the ceiling.

Gently pull the right leg further down towards the chest.

You can make circular movements with your ankle joint, in both directions.

You can then take the movement to the hip joint, making circular movements in the hip joint by gently moving the bent leg in circles.

You can experiment if you like, making the movements bigger or smaller. You can move faster or slower. Or you can just let the leg stay in one position stretching it, if that feels good.

Stop moving and pull your leg down towards your chest, and if it feels okay, you can simultaneously lift your forehead up towards your knee. Again, the movement comes from the chest and not from the neck.

Rest your head on the mat again, and release your right leg down to the mat, laying your arms down along your sides.

Now lie here for a moment and feel the impact of the movement in the body. How do you sense your right leg in comparison to your left?

Now do the same exercise with the opposite leg.



**Stretch the back of the thigh**

Place your left foot on the floor with your knee pointing towards the ceiling.

Place your right ankle on your left knee and let your right knee fall out to the right. You may feel a stretch on the back of your right thigh.

You now have different options.

You can either leave your leg where it is now, or you can lift your left knee in this position up towards the chest. Hold your hands either on your kneecap or behind your knee. It is important that you are aware of your limitations and don't overdo the exercise.

Be aware of when the stretch is appropriate: not too much and not so little that you can't feel it. Right now, we are training to bring our attention into our body and also to feel our bodily limits.

The goal is not to be flexible or to get stretched out as much as possible in one direction or another.

If it feels okay, you can stay in this position for a while. You can investigate whether it is possible to send your attention where you feel the stretch most vividly.

You can also combine the stretch with your breathing so that you focus on the area where you feel the stretch on an inhalation, and let go of the focus on an exhalation.

Follow the rhythm: inhalation: focusing, - exhalation: letting go.

You can now release the position and lie in the starting position with your arms and legs stretched out on the mat.

How do you sense your body now? Can you feel that you have moved it? How?

Do the same exercise with the opposite leg.

We now make the transition to a body scan.

**Bodyscan**

**Procedure**

Same description as DAY 1 (page 57)

**Sharing: Check in**

Checking in means all the participants can be present, by saying a few words about how they are and what's going on in their lives. Not a long speech but just a few sentences describing their current situation in life. As always, nobody is forced to share anything they don't want to share, but everybody saying something is preferable because it's one way of participating and actually making the group.

By sharing and listening we are training to speak in a personal language and to use active, empathic listening.



Theory  
Time used 30 minutes

Relational competence - From obedience to responsibility

The concept and the understanding of relational competence that we use as a framework in this project, as well as in the previous Hand-in Hand project, is the work of Jesper Juul and Helle Jensen (Juul & Jensen; 2002)

The main work describing the concept is called Relational Competence – Towards a new Culture in Education. This title stresses one of the main points, that by building relational competence we are working on a new way of meeting, and behaving with children. The German translation is “Vom Gehorsam zur Verantwortung” which means from obedience to responsibility. Relational competence is the capacity and ability to see children as equal human beings in their own right.

As a professional, the relationship with children is asymmetric. The professionals have more power and knowledge due to their education, their job and their status in society. Being equal in that context means that different points of view are valued equally, feelings, experiences and self-understanding are seen as important information, and as a necessary part of building a good relationship.

Both parties are considered equally important for the establishment and development of the relationship, but because of the asymmetry, the professional is responsible for the quality of the relationship.

A equal relationship is a relationship based on respect, not fear. In a school setting this means creating an atmosphere of equality, respect and responsibility in contrast to the fear of doing something wrong, or of being punished for not behaving the way the teacher wants. It means behaving with respect for the group, and for the common good - not out of fear of authority. In the longer term, it is about learning how to participate in a democracy.

This movement from obedience to responsibility requires a new set of relational values. They should be seen as a lighthouse, creating a path towards a different attitude to children.

These values can be described like this, in comparison to what used to be the case:

Before	Now
Using power	Inclusion
Disciplining	Dialogue
Focusing on the child’s behaviour	Focusing on the relation behaviour
Intention	
Correcting	Empathy/caring
Adjudicating	Acknowledgement
Reflection	
Outer Authority	Inner Authority



Reflection

Share with the Person sitting next to you:

- How do you experience the two kinds of values when you are with children?
- Which of the two kinds of values are most children brought up according to – as you see it?
- What are the consequences?

The Danish researcher on relational competence Louise Klinge (2017) writes about her interviews with children about what makes a good teacher. They all answered that a good teacher:

- Is aware of all their students
- Can explain the tasks so that the children understand them
- Can feel the needs of the students, for example, in relation to when a break is needed
- Makes teaching fun
- Teaches as if it is important, and as if they themselves really like teaching
- Will give students a chance, even if they make mistakes, instead of getting angry.

On the other hand, the interviewed children also talked about how much harm it does to be yelled at.



Reflection

Share with the person sitting next to you (10 minutes - 5 minutes each):

- Talk about the best teacher you ever had – what was their way of behaving like, what made them so great?
- Talk about the worst teacher you ever had – what made them the worst?

Exercise

Time used 45 minutes



A situation where I felt valuable in my profession

Rationale and background

This exercise is both a reflection and a dialogue. Its purpose is to enhance awareness of what actually works in professional life. It directs your focus towards yourself to explore with curiosity and kindness something that happened in a specific situation, and the consequences your own state and interpretations might have had on the situation, and the impact you might have had on the relationship with the child involved. By doing this we are also training self-esteem, talking about yourself using a personal language and acknowledging that you have value in your profession.

By doing this we are creating awareness and more clarity, which gives the opportunity to use these relational abilities in other situations.

The exercise also trains the ability to listen and to ask questions, without solving a problem or giving advice.

Objective

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision making
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To become acquainted with the concept of empathic curiosity
- To practice empathic curiosity through, dialogue and practical exercises
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- To develop empathic curiosity by practising empathic listening and asking empathic questions to understand perspectives of others
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between ourselves and others
- To become aware of how our own state affects our relationship to other people
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to make more conscious choices
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to have more options regarding our choices for dealing with/reacting to a situation, regarding ourselves and in situations with other people



Procedure

Guidance

Sit on the chair as comfortably as possible.

You can close your eyes if you like or let your gaze rest on the floor.

Is it possible to turn your attention inwards for a moment? Can you move your attention to your feet and your contact with the floor, and the physical sensations in your feet.

You can then shift your attention to your breath. Without changing anything, you don't have to breathe in a particular way, but you can simply notice that you are breathing, following your breath for a moment with your awareness. Notice how the breathing is moving through your body.

Now I will invite you to remember a situation with a child, in which you felt, for instance; specially valuable, specially forthcoming, good, worth recognising, helpful, brilliant, lively, open, trustworthy, or wise.

When did you experience something like that? What kind of situation was it? Who was present? What was the atmosphere like?

Is it possible to recall body sensations? How did you sense your body? Did you sense some part of the body as being more significant than other parts?

And what about your breath? Did you recognise your breath at all, or the quality of the breath: was it fast, slow, superficial, deep or something different?

And what about your thoughts? Do you remember any thoughts? Maybe some thoughts are coming up now?

And your feelings? What feelings did you notice both in the situation, and afterwards?

Now move your attention, or use your ability of imagination, to the child, and how they look. What signals is the child sending you? What emotions are shown in these signals? What is the child's posture like – what does it communicate? What is their facial expression like? What do you see in the child's eyes?

Also, remain aware of yourself as seen through the eyes of the child. What's the expression on your face? What do your eyes communicate? Your posture?

Hold on to this, and stay in the experience for a while. Does it change as you consider it? Or is it permanent? And what is it like right now?

When you feel valuable in this way – are you able to give it a title, or a heading? A word or a sentence, perhaps a shape, or a colour?

Now turn your attention back to your breathing, and take a few deep breaths.



**Dialogue**

Make groups of three.

The dialogue has three roles: the speaker, the dialogue partner and an observer.

**The speaker** talks and reflects about the situation where they felt valuable. As always, the speaker says as much or as little as they want to.

**The dialogue partner** primarily listens and asks questions whenever something needs to be clarified or elaborated. We assume that our perception and understanding are the same. That we understand the meaning of the other person's words. But that is often not the case. The questions are meant to deepen understanding and to make explicit what is implicit who the person talking.

It is really important that B is not supposed to be solving a problem or giving advice to the speaker. The role contains the functions of listening and asking questions to open up the perspective on the situation.

Possible question: what do you mean by....? What does it mean to you that....?

The observer is just listening and keeping the time. After the dialogue between the speaker and the dialogue partner, the observer repeats any themes that resonate within them.

**What makes a good Dialogue?**

Before starting the group work it can be a good idea to state what is important for a good dialogue.

A good dialogue:

- Is a dialogue in which the participants gain knowledge
- Where they acquire a new truth
- Maybe a shared truth
- Maybe a different truth
- It does not necessarily lead to agreement
- Is not necessarily harmonious
- Is equal – although the participants are not in equal positions
- Is not meant to reveal a truth that already existed, but to create a new truth

**Three rounds of 15 minutes**

10 minutes for the dialogue and 3 minutes for the observer to repeat themes and 2 minutes preparing for the next round.

**Sum up in the big group**

Reflections and experiences from the dialogue exercises

How did it feel being in the different roles?

What was challenging?

What was easy?



**Reflections and or guidelines for the trainer**

In this exercise, it is really important that it does not focus on solutions and advice about how to solve a problem. Getting advice when you are talking about something that was difficult, can be a very bad experience. It can feel like a devaluation, or the person being advised can feel worthless or stupid, for not being able to follow the advice.

The point is to describe what happened, and to trust that bringing awareness to something does make a change.

It is also important that the observer does not interfere during the dialogue. The observer is only meant to be listening here. The observer only has their time to talk after the dialogue is over.

To prevent these things from happening, it can be a good idea to have a short timeout after the first round, to get feedback on how the structure is working out.

Exercise

Time used 45 minutes

Reflections on situations concerning aspects of diversity

Rationale and background

In this exercise, we continue to focus on our own view of diversity. It is about noticing how the participants think, act and would like to act in different situations where diversity awareness is tested.

Objective

- The exercise aims at discovering and developing awareness about our own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity and how those may have an impact on embracing diversity in the classroom.
- The exercise further aims to share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers, as well as to share and discuss concrete examples, ideas and tools to inspire and support teachers in their diversity work.

Material

The opportunity to sit in twos, and to sit in a big group.

No extra material is needed.

Procedure

Start the exercise by instructing the teachers that they are to be given some examples of situations in society, and from school, that can be challenging. This is a situation that the trainer presents to the participants. The participants are then encouraged to think about similar situations they themselves have experienced. These situations that the participants have experienced are then discussed, in pairs. The last step in the exercise is that the listener asks some empathetically curious questions to better understand the situation, and the way the other person has acted and reflected on it. The situations to be addressed touch on both the societal level, and the school level. Present the situations one by one. When the first situation has been discussed, you move on and give the next example. Depending on time, choose the number of examples to discuss.

Example 1

You're at a pizzeria. On the next table, two women are discussing. One of the women is drunk and is loudly expressing her dissatisfaction with immigration to your country. She believes that immigrants prefer not to work and that they have many children, who are also badly behaved. The man who owns the pizzeria is from Turkey and has lived in Sweden for many years. A few tables away there is a family with a lot of children who are speaking a different language.

Instruct the participants: think about a situation where you have experienced a similar situation that has to do with diversity in society. Tell us what you thought, what you did, and if there was anything you wished you had done differently. One of the participants in the discussion pair talks for about four minutes, while the other one listens. Afterwards, the listener asks some sincerely curious questions in order to increase their understanding, both of the situation and of how the other person acted, and what they think about the situation. Then you change roles.

2. Example of a situation in school

In the staff room, there is a lot of talk about a family that have recently arrived. Two of the family's children have started at your school. The staff have noticed that the children smell of smoke and are wearing dirty clothes. In addition, they now have clothes that are far too thin for the winter. Several of your colleagues think that it is no surprise, since they have understood what sort of family this is.

Instruct the participants: Now think about a situation where you have experienced a similar situation that has to do with diversity in school. Say what you thought, what you did, and if there was anything you wished you had done differently. One of the participants in the discussion pair talks for about four minutes, while the other one listens. Afterwards, the listener asks some sincerely curious questions in order to increase their understanding, both of the situation and of how the other person acted, and what they think about the situation. Then you change roles.

3. Example of a situation in the classroom: between students

It is break time for the year 3 students. Ella is standing in line and waiting for a swing. She has been waiting for a while and just when it's her turn, Simon from her class pushes in front of her and takes the swing over. Ella protests and says that it is really her turn. Simon takes no notice of Ella's objection and sits on the swing. So Ella goes up and grabs Simon's arm to make him let go of the swing, and after that Simon and Ella start arguing loudly.

**Instruct the participants:** Now think about a situation where you have experienced a similar situation that has to do with diversity in the classroom. Say what you thought, what you did, and if there was anything you wished you had done differently. One of the participants in the discussion pair talks for about four minutes, while the other one listens. Afterwards, the listener asks some sincerely curious questions in order to increase their understanding, both of the situation and of how the other person acted, and what they think about the situation. Then you change roles.



**4. Example of a situation in the classroom:**

Kim has difficulty shutting out all the impressions. Wearing a cap makes things feel easier, so Kim, his teachers and his parents have decided that it's best if Kim is always able to wear his cap. One day in the dining room, one of the dining staff takes Kim's cap off, saying "Everyone takes their caps off in the dining room" and "What would it look like if all the students wore caps or hats"? Kim throws her plate on the floor and rushes out.

**Instruct the participants:**

Now think about a situation where you have experienced a similar situation that has to do with diversity in the classroom. Say what you thought, what you did, and if there was anything you wished you had done differently. One of the participants in the discussion pair talks for about four minutes, while the other one listens. Afterwards, the listener asks some sincerely curious questions in order to increase their understanding, both of the situation and of how the other person acted, and what they think about the situation. Then you change roles.

**Reflections and guidelines for the trainer:**

This exercise can be adjusted in many ways according to the group of participants and according to the current state of your society and school system. You can choose to leave out the examples and only encourage the participants to make up examples out of their own experiences. You can also choose to make up examples that better suit your country and your school system. Depending on time, choose how many examples to discuss.

**Exercise**

*Time used 15 minutes*



**Reversed freeze dance**

**Rationale and background**

This exercise trains and develops the ability to be aware of impulses, without reacting. It is a way of focusing on the first part of the process shown in the model below. We are mostly unaware of this process. We get an impulse, and we react on autopilot.

This is also an example of an exercise that can be used by the teachers in their classrooms.

**Objective**

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to make more conscious choices
- To get to know different approaches on how to regulate ourselves when under pressure
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.

**Materials**

Enough space for moving around

Loudspeakers for playing music

A playlist of music that makes you want to dance

**Procedure**

In the freeze dance game, you dance to the music and whenever the music stops you have to freeze. No moving at all, if you move you are out of the game.

In this exercise, reversed freeze dance, you are not allowed to move when the music plays. You have to stand still and notice all of the impulses moving through your body and your mind, without reacting to them. When the music stops you can move just as you like. You don't have to move, but you can.

This is not a competition, which means that you can't be thrown out of the game if you are moving, or not moving.

It is about being aware, and noticing what impact not being allowed to dance when the music plays has on you.



**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

You decide how many songs you want to play, perhaps somewhere between 4 and 6.

Let the participants reflect afterwards on what they noticed in the exercise.

You can ask them questions such as:

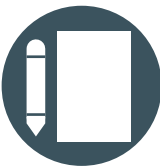
What was it like, not being allowed to move?

What was it like to move without music?

In their reflection participants sometimes point out the connection between this exercise and their classroom, with children who really need to move but are not allowed to. Then when they are allowed to move that impulse has gone. If it seems right you can include that reflection.

**Exercise**

*Time used 20 minutes*



**Tease, disturb get in contact**

**Rationale and background**

This exercise trains and develops the ability to share the attention between ourselves and the other person. The concept of 60:40 as described earlier, can be included.

**Objective**

To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making

- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between ourselves and others
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to make more conscious choices
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to have more options regarding one's choices to deal with/react to a situation regarding ourselves and in situations with other people
- To get to know different approaches about how to regulate ourselves when under pressure

**Materials**

Enough space for moving around.

**Procedure**

This exercise has two rounds

**First round**

Make groups of 3. One person is in focus and the others are “disturbers” or teasers.

The person in the middle is being disturbed by the other two, and their focus is on being in contact with themselves. The person in the middle tries to maintain contact to themselves and tries not to be disturbed or distracted, keeping the impulses out by anchoring in themselves.

The other two distract, disturb, tease or make contact with the focus person. Before starting the game, it’s a good idea to ask if there is anything that the focus person really doesn't like, something that the teasers should refrain from doing.

It can seem a little awkward to distract someone, or try to make contact without getting any reaction.

Switch roles so that everybody has the experience of being in the middle.

Reflections after first round

Was it difficult or easy? What was it like to tease? What was it like to be teased or distracted? And where was your attention? What is it like to seek attention and not get it? What strategy did the focus person have, to keep the disturbances out?

Second round

The exercise is done one more time, but this time the focus person explores if it is possible to divide their awareness between themselves and the others at a ratio of 60:40. This time the focus person can respond to the impulses and disturbances as naturally as possible, without losing contact with themselves.

Reflections after second round

Was it different now? How? Was it more difficult or easier? What did you notice? Did you notice any strategy, or a habit? How did it feel to disturb or try to make contact with the focus person this time?



Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

The degree of teasing depends on the group you are working with. You can introduce rules: you cannot touch each other; you must not tickle or whatever else you think is necessary. As always, is it important to ask the participants to be honest and aware of their own limits and borders. It is better to notice your limits and say no to an exercise, than it is to participate, and by doing that go beyond your own borders.

The trainer can also suggest that the teasers talk loudly, discuss something, or tell jokes next to the person in the middle. They are not interacting with them, they are just being loud and obtrusive.

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

An unpleasant experience

Rationale and background

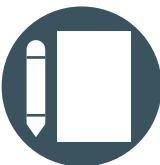
This exercise clarifies and embodies what is happening in a situation that is interpreted as being unpleasant. It brings awareness to what is happening when under pressure, emphasises and dwells on the signs, in order to become familiar with the responses. That makes it easier to recognise these signs in a similar situation, and perhaps create the possibility of new ways of reacting.

There is also a purpose in this exercise concerning the group: to discover that the response from the body when in an unpleasant, maybe even a stressful situation, is something we share. The same goes for our thoughts and feelings. We often individualise feelings and thoughts, and in consequence the individual gets the responsibility - frequently meaning that we blame ourselves. The purpose of the body's responses is to generate the best possible opportunities for our survival.



Objective

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To practice empathic curiosity through, dialogue and practical exercises
- To become familiar with the practice of speaking in a personal language
- To get a sense of the difference between a personal language and an analysing, evaluating language
- To explore different points of view through dialogue and practical exercises
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between ourselves and others.



Material

None.





**Procedure**

**Guidance**

We will now have a short reflection about how an unpleasant experience is perceived.

Sit comfortably on the chair. You can close your eyes or just let your gaze rest on the floor.

Feel the contact with the chair, between the seat and your thighs and perhaps between your back and the back of the chair.

I now invite you to think back to a situation from the last week, where you experienced something unpleasant. It doesn't have to be a big deal. It can be an unpleasant experience where things didn't go as you hoped, or where you didn't get what you wanted. Maybe you got what you wanted but didn't want it anyway. You may have been cheated, rejected, criticised or corrected. You might have experienced that you were overwhelmed. It may be that you have done something, or not done something and you now regret this.

Once you have chosen a situation, recall the situation in your mind. What happened? Were you alone, or together with someone?

How did you feel in your body that the situation was uncomfortable?

What did you feel on your face? Your shoulders? Your arms? Your chest? Your stomach? Your legs? And what was your breathing like?

What emotions or feelings were active, or arose in the situation? Were you scared, angry, disappointed, ashamed, annoyed, frustrated, hurt? Or something else?

And what did you think of the situation? What kind of thoughts, if any, went through your mind?

And what do you think right now when you remember the unpleasant experience? What do you notice and what are you thinking about it?

Now shift your attention to your breath and just sit without doing anything, simply noticing your breath.

Now, if it feels good, you can take a deeper breath, and open your eyes and stretch your body.

**Reflections in twos**

Find a partner.

Now you can share your experiences of an unpleasant situation with someone else.

When you share, it is important that you are aware of what, and how much, you want to share. You are not forced to say anything that you would rather keep for yourself. You don't even have to share what actually happened. We are investigating what is characteristic when we perceive something unpleasant, uncomfortable, bad or awful.

You can focus on how you sensed an unpleasant situation in your body, what thoughts and feelings occurred, and how it feels to tell someone about it.

A starts talking, and B listens. This means that only A speaks. B is present but says nothing. B listens without commenting or asking questions.

You get 3-4 minutes each to talk, and to listen.

The trainer keeps the time and says when to switch roles.

It could be that you find that there is no more to say during this period of time.

If you have nothing more to say, just sit in silence. You don't have to look at each other but can use the silence to contemplate the situation. It may be that something comes up after you have sat in silence for a little while.

After sharing, the trainer sums up the different experiences. This can be done by writing the different categories on a board, and asking the participants to add to them.

**Examples of what it could look like:**

Body sensations	Feelings/emotions	Thoughts	What are things like now?
Tensions in the face	Anxiety	"Why does it always happen to me"	"I ended up in a bad mood again"
Heaviness	Anger	"I am no good"	"Maybe my reaction was exaggerated, compared to what actually happened"
Stomach ache	Sorrow	"What an idiot"	"Maybe I wasn't that bad after all"
Contractions in the chest	Feeling of meaninglessness	"I need to leave"	
Lump in the throat		"I want to hit someone"	
Chest tightness		"It is so embarrassing"	
Palpitations			
Shortness of breath			
Frozen			
Collapsed body			
Tensions in the body			

Use the participants' reflections in connection with the next chapter on stress. In this way you are combining theory with the participants actual experiences.

**Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer**

In the sharing part of this exercise, the length of time needed may be a little different from group to group. There can be a point in challenging the participants a little, so that silence can arise as well as the opportunity for further reflections.





**Theory**

*Time used 30 minutes*

**What is stress?**

When talking about stress, it is really important to emphasise that stress is basically a healthy response. Stress is the body's response to a stimulus or to information that is perceived as a threat, or as danger. Like other animals, human beings have an instinctive survival function that is activated when we are exposed to dangers, or challenges. There are three different reactions: fight, flight or freeze.

1. To be able to fight, energy gets distributed to our muscles, so they get tense. We get angry, clasp our hands, bite our teeth together and are ready to fight and strike back.
2. To escape, we must be able to run as quickly as possible, and have as much air as possible in our lungs. We get scared, may have difficulty breathing, and get palpitations.
3. We can also completely collapse like an animal playing dead, this feels like discouragement and a loss of energy.

These reactions enable us to act quickly and wisely in life-threatening situations - without having to *think* wisely.

**The autonomic nervous system**

The autonomic nervous system controls processes in the body that are instinctive and outside our consciousness. It is a focal point in stress processes, and stress reactions. The autonomic nervous system is autonomous and functions beyond our conscious control. The activities in this system are rarely part of our consciousness. It controls our basic bodily functions, such as breathing and digesting.

The autonomic nervous system consists of two opposing nervous systems: the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. The sympathetic nervous system regulates reactions towards threatening situations and prepares the body for fight, flight or freeze or simply for situations that require action. The parasympathetic nervous system regulates processes that rebuild the body, and promotes a resting state.

In a healthy and well-functioning human being, there is an even alternation between the activation of the two nervous systems.

**Acute stress**

A stress response is triggered by the sympathetic nervous system turning on, and releasing the hormones adrenaline and cortisol. The hormones activate the body by increasing the heart's contractility and pumping speed, and in consequence increasing blood flow to the muscles, heart and lungs. The muscles in the neck and shoulders in particular become tense, and ready for action and struggle. The frequency of respiration increases, to provide more oxygen. Blood pressure rises, blood flow increases to the brain and muscles, and decreases to the digestive system. The liver releases glucose as energy for the muscles. Blood is redirected from the intestines to the arms and legs. We may need to urinate or empty our bowels, making us lighter so we can run faster. We improve our ability for maximum performance - that is, to fight physically, or take flight at great speed, or play dead.

We also start sweating which cools us down. The blood's coagulation ability increases, so that any bleeding from deep wounds becomes less risky. Our senses are sharpened. It can feel as if time passes slowly and that the present moment is intense. We may notice things we would not have discovered otherwise. Our attention increases and memory function and learning ability are both improved.

We need these stress hormones to accomplish anything, to perform - in fact just to get out of bed in the morning. People have comparatively high levels of stress hormones in their blood in the morning when they wake up, something that has been measured. If they were not there, we would not feel the impulse to get out of bed, or be able to do it. So, stress in itself is not a problem.

**How the brain works in a stressful situation**

The brain is an important part of our nervous system. It processes the sensory inputs we receive, controls the functions of the body, and initiates conscious cognition and will-controlled actions. That is, the brain gives impulses to both conscious and unconscious actions.

When we are in a safe state where we do not experience danger, the part of the brain called the prefrontal cortex has more available space to work. The prefrontal cortex allows us to concentrate, stay focused, pay attention, analyse, reflect, and make choices and decisions. It also helps to regulate our behaviour in relation to our surroundings and to cultural expectations. It controls our executive functions, which include various forms of self-control and self-regulation, especially in relation to attention and actions.

This part of the brain is highly developed in humans. The functions controlled in that area of the brain are what we identify with as human beings, and that differentiate us significantly from other animals.

When we are in a dangerous situation, it is not the prefrontal cortex that is activated. That would take too long. It would be life threatening to consider, reflect and analyse the best option, if we were in a situation where immediate action was needed. It's better to move quickly when you see a snake ready to attack, rather than analyse whether it is poisonous or not.

When we are in a situation that we perceive as dangerous, it is the amygdala that is activated. The amygdala is the oldest part of the brain, and it is designed to ensure our survival so that we can act fast when necessary. The amygdala quickly activates our instincts and our alertness: fight, flight, freeze. Once the amygdala is activated, what we experience is no longer filtered and processed through the prefrontal cortex.

The amygdala is the alarm centre of the brain. It triggers processes in the body that lead to quick and effective actions. At the same time, it prevents us from thinking and seeing clearly, and it prevents us from making decisions based on reason and rationality. So, the body is prepared to be able to react, for action. It is prepared for fast physical activity, which is made possible by stress hormones, which are effective fuel for the engine, and which are quickly burned off in physical activity. The built-in survival mechanisms are designed to provide fuel for physical actions, by increasing the heart rate, pumping blood out to the large muscles, and so on.

In such situations, it is the sympathetic part of the autonomic nervous system that is activated. In a normally functioning system, the parasympathetic part will take over once we are out of the situation. We calm down and the body rebuilds. To speed up this process, the body sometimes begins to shake, and some animals, for instance cats, begin to lick themselves. These are actions that activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps the body to calm down again. Once we have regained calm, and we perceive safety, the prefrontal cortex is able to function once more.

**Remember to pause**

Our bodies need to regain balance, after being exposed to stress.

Mindfulness is a pause. It is practicing the art of doing nothing.

**When stress becomes a problem**

Chronic stress is an extension of acute stress. This happens when the acute stress does not cease, and the parasympathetic nervous system is not reactivated.

Chronic stress affects the brain negatively. On DAY 3 the idea that the brain is plastic and can change was introduced. This depends on how the brain is affected, and on what is being trained mentally. The brain can change so that there is more joy and meaning in our life, but it can also change in the opposite direction.

As described above, the prefrontal cortex is responsible for our ability to think and regulate ourselves. It is also responsible for controlling the limbic system. In stressful situations, the activity of the prefrontal cortex decreases, and if it persists in a chronic state of stress, this also becomes important for the areas that are controlled by the prefrontal cortex.

The amygdala and hippocampus are precisely the parts of the limbic system that change during a period of chronic stress.

**Hippocampus**

The hippocampus is the part of the brain that normally regulates our ability to orient ourselves and to memorise. It also helps to enable sensible stress management. When we are stressed and busy, the hippocampus is a master at seeing opportunities and finding solutions. However, if we are under too much pressure, the hippocampus becomes overloaded and trapped in a vicious circle. The stress hormones that it normally uses for regulating the system, begin to break down nerve cells in the hippocampus. This is unfortunate because then the hippocampus can no longer regulate stress. Stress not only affects the cells, but also affects the mental level. We become less able to remember, and we can lose the ability to orient ourselves. The way in which the hippocampus shrinks when exposed to stress hormones for a longer period is visible in brain scans.

**Amygdala**

At the same time as the hippocampus shrinks, the amygdala grows. As mentioned earlier, it is the brain's alarm centre, which means it is responsible for detecting fear and anxiety. The amygdala also stores events that have to do with danger and fear. So, the amygdala is usually able to recognise similar situations in future, and respond appropriately to them. With prolonged or chronic stress, the amygdala is over-activated. Then we will be in a constant state of alarm and may have difficulty spotting anything other than challenges and danger around us. Everything is seen as being dangerous - and we get more and more stressed out. It is a vicious circle.

**The power of thoughts**

One problem in modern society is that the situations which trigger danger signals, do not necessarily require a physical response in order for us to survive. Often, the situations that we perceive as dangerous are not actually life-threatening. Deadlines, giving a lecture, giving a presentation, chaos in the classroom and so on, don't kill us if we fail. Starting a new job, or assuming a new function at work are not really life threatening either. However, all of these situations can still trigger stress responses, even though extraordinary physical action is rarely necessary to survive in those situations.

Modern stressors such as the above, trigger a far greater degree of mental rather than physical activity. One particular feature of us human beings, is that our stress system can be initiated without our being threatened. This can be done, simply by thinking of something that could be potentially dangerous. We human beings are able to keep our stress system active with the power of our thoughts. We often misinterpret situations as dangerous, situations that are not actually dangerous, or life-threatening.

The imagination makes a situation dangerous long before it actually happens. Or we think about something unpleasant that we experienced, again and again. The problem is that the body responds as if physical action were necessary. It still triggers stress hormones, but when we don't act physically in a specific fight or flight situation, the hormones that are activated are not burned out. This means that the stress hormones end up staying in our bodies instead of disappearing. They accumulate over time, increasing our basic level of physical stress. This means that we may end up living our lives in a permanent state of stress.

In many people's everyday lives there is no time to relax and take a break to do nothing. We are always moving forward. As soon as something is achieved, a new task is waiting for us. The parasympathetic system does not get activated regularly.

By turning your awareness away from your thoughts about a past situation, to the here and now and to your senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling, in most cases it will become apparent that there are no life-threatening dangers present.

**The story of the two arrows**

Other than recalling and foreseeing situations, thoughts are powerful in another sense.

When we experience something unpleasant, the experience of discomfort is often amplified by our thoughts. When we become angry, scared, or discouraged, it is uncomfortable. But when we think that we are the worst person in the world, and the only person in the world who could be this foolish, it makes everything significantly worse.

The first arrow is the unpleasant, uncomfortable, fearful or stressful situation itself. It hurts, it is stressful and uncomfortable. That is simply part of life, it happens to all of us and it is impossible to live a life without pain and discomfort. The other arrow is our thoughts and our evaluation of the situation, and that is the more toxic one. We automatically look for someone, or something, to blame when we are hurt or find ourselves in an unpleasant situation. This voice is called the inner judge or the inner voice, and it can be very busy constantly assessing, comparing and scolding. If we listen to the inner judge, we can quickly imagine that we are feeling bad is all our own fault.

Frequently, we blame and criticise ourselves. We cannot avoid being hit by arrows, but we can stop shooting them at ourselves (and others). Unpleasant situations hurt, but we do not have to make them worse by shooting at ourselves.

We have a basic resistance to uncomfortable feelings, which actually just makes the situation worse. We want to move away from the pain and discomfort, to make it go away, to plan a life where we never encounter pain. But that is not possible, we think we are in control but really, we aren't. We cannot plan for a life without pain, the covid 19 pandemic being a clear example of this. No one could have planned a life without covid 19 or, for that matter, anticipated it in detail.

In wanting to get away from the pain, we actually just amplify it even more. It is there anyway, and by talking down to ourselves or scolding ourselves for being in a particular situation, or by trying to control the world to avoid pain, it just gets worse.

**Mindfulness and stress**

With mindfulness, we train ourselves to accept the inevitable discomfort and pain. There is nothing wrong with us because we feel pain or discomfort. We train ourselves to relate to the discomfort in a neutral, curious way, by noticing and exploring the physical sensations, the emotions and the thoughts. How are things really, right now? Is it possible to accept that this is how things are?

Acceptance of the state of things often helps to absorb discomfort and pain. Acceptance implies being able to accommodate the reality that there is pain and discomfort in the world. It makes it easier to bear pain when you share your vulnerability with others and discover that others are also vulnerable, anxious and doubtful.

**Group Work.**

*Time used 20 minutes*



**How do I recognise stress, as a professional**

**Procedure**

Make groups of 3-4 people to discuss the following questions:

Do you recognise some of the reactions mentioned in the lecture?

How do you react when it becomes difficult or challenging for you?

Is it possible to understand the reactions and behaviour of students, using the theory about stress?

**Reflections or guidelines for the trainer**

The purpose of the group work is to work with the theory, and to let the participants share impacts from the day.

The time frame is not that important, you can adjust it depending on how long you have available. From 15 - 30 minutes.

After the group work you can gather reflections and input from the group, in the big group.

Trainers notes



# Online meeting 4

**Lesson flow**

This schedule is the same for all online meetings even though the exercises can vary within the themes. For example, the mindfulness exercises will not be exactly the same on all occasions. Remember to have a break within the two hours.

Time	Content
15 min	Yoga
15 min	Mindfulness practice
5 min	Self reflection. Journaling
20 min	Sharing. Check in
30 min	Exercise. Dialogue: A situation where I felt valuable in my profession
30 min	Teachers’ reflections

**Exercise**

*Time used 15 minutes*

## Yoga

You can choose to do standing yoga (page 65) as described in DAY 2 or sitting yoga (page 108) as described in DAY 3 or you can do lying yoga (page 147) as described in DAY 4

**Virtual room**

All together

**Exercise**

*Time used 15 minutes*

## Mindfulness practice

You can choose to do a body scan (page 57) as described in DAY 1, a sitting meditation on body and breath (page 79) as described in DAY 2, or sitting meditation including someone I care about (page 111) as described in DAY 3.

**Virtual room**

All together



Exercise

Time used 5 minutes

Journaling

What did you notice in the mindfulness practice? In your body, in your mind, in your emotional life? Reflect individually and write your reflections in a notebook. The written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

Sharing: Check in

Checking in means all the participants can be present, by saying a few words about how they are and what’s going on in their lives. Not a long speech but just a few sentences describing their current situation in life. As always, nobody is forced to share anything they don’t want to share, but everybody saying something is preferable because it’s one way of participating and actually making the group.

By sharing and listening we are training to speak in a personal language and to use active, empathic listening.

In these online settings, this check in session is also an opportunity to ask questions about the programme, or the exercises.

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

Dialogue exercises.  
A situation where I felt valuable in my profession

Dialogue exercise. A situation where I felt valuable in my profession (page 152), as described in DAY 4 but in groups of two without the observer.

The trainer makes breakout rooms with groups of two.

**The speaker** talks and reflects about the situation where they felt valuable. As always, the speaker says as much or as little as they want to.

**The dialogue partner** primarily listens, and asks questions whenever something needs to be clarified or elaborated. We assume that our perception and understanding are the same, and that we understand the meaning of the other person’s words. But that is often not the case. The questions are meant to deepen understanding and to make explicit what is implicit for the person talking.

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

It is really important to keep in mind that B is not supposed to be solving a problem or giving advice to the speaker. The B role has the function of listening and asking questions to open up the perspective on the situation.

Possible questions: what do you mean by....? What does it mean to you that....?

Virtual room

Breakout rooms

Teachers’ reflections

Teachers' reflections are a recurring activity for the online meetings. This activity should be done in steps:

- Virtual room: All together. Reflect individually and write the reflections in a notebook. The written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.
- Virtual room: breakout rooms. Talk in pairs - participants share reflections
- Virtual room: All together. Write again individually, if anything new came up when reflecting in pairs
- Virtual room: All together. The last step is to reflect in the big group

The questions to reflect upon are:

1. Please write whatever comes to mind concerning participation in this programme so far.
2. Describe if, and how, you as a person have been affected by the programme so far?
3. Describe if, and how, your participation in this programme has had an impact on your professional role as a teacher so far.
4. Describe how you think that the exercises done so far could be used with students in your classroom.

Trainers notes

Day 5

Text of the day

What We Don’t Talk About

*There are a few, very few, things worth talking about  
—and we don’t talk about them. We can’t talk about them.*

*For instance life, death, and love. We give them big, expensive names, something like a dress so good that we’re not comfortable wearing it. We’re shy. We’re afraid. So we don’t mention it. That kind of word is left hanging in the closet, while we use all the nice, ordinary, and undeniably practical words in our daily dealings with each other. We’re afraid. But we manage. We’re afraid to be alone and afraid to be with others; afraid of what’s finished, at a standstill, too orderly; and afraid of what’s unfinished, messy, and disorderly—and we’re afraid of sex, afraid of death. But we manage. Or do we? Could it be that the reason we’re still having wars is that we’re afraid to tell each other that we’re afraid of each other, and of everything else? To me it’s as if we keep going out in the rain—and keep refusing to invent raincoats and galoshes.*

The Condition of Secrecy: Essays by Inger Christensen



Lesson flow

Time	Content
10 min	Welcome and presentation of the day
30 min	Mindfulness practice Yoga - sitting or standing or lying Body scan, sitting meditation
30 min	Sharing. Check in
30 min	Theory. The diversity aspect of ethnicity and cultural background
1 hour	Exercise. The Societal Ladder (Who has power)
	Lunch
15 min	Exercise. Adapting to Another Culture - knowing the pattern
30 min	Theory. Polyvagal theory
20 min	Group work: What are my reactions
20 min	Exercise. Stress inducing exercise
45 min	Dialogue. What happens when I am under pressure in my profession

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

Yoga

You can choose to do standing yoga (page 65) as described in DAY 2 or sitting yoga (page 108) as described in DAY 3 or you can do lying yoga (page 147) as described in DAY 4

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

Mindfulness practice

You can choose to do a body scan (page 57) as described in DAY 1, a sitting meditation on body and breath (page 79) as described in DAY 2, or sitting meditation including someone I care about (page 111) as described in DAY 3.

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

Sharing: Check in

To check in is for all the participants to be present by saying a few words on how they are and what they are occupied with in their lives. It is not a long speech but just a few sentences describing the current life situation. As always, nobody is forced to share anything they don't want to share, but it is preferable that everybody say something because it is a way of participating in the group and to make it a group.

By sharing and listening we are training to speak in a personal language and active, empathic listening.



Theory

Time used 30 minutes

The diversity aspect of ethnicity and cultural background

Increasing globalisation, where large numbers of people have moved across national borders, has meant that, to a great extent, societies consist of people with different cultures and backgrounds. According to UNESCO (2012), cultural and ethnical diversity as a source of exchange, new ideas and creativity is as important to humanity as biological diversity is to nature. However, societies do not always embrace cultural and ethnic diversity. Instead, people are perceived as different, and treated differently due to their ethical and cultural background.

One example of how people are perceived and treated differently because of these aspects, is that people's surnames have been shown to make a difference to their job opportunities in Europe (Carlsson, et. Al, 2018).

Ethnicity as a concept is founded on a dualism between "us" and "the others". Ethnicity can be defined as people's identification with, and sense of belonging to, a group that defines itself as a people in contrast to other peoples (Wickström, 2011). The sense of belonging is often based on collective notions of a common origin, history, the connections to a geographical area, language, culture and religion (Smith, 2009).

The concept of culture can mean a way of living or a lifestyle that shapes a person through living and adapting to it. When people are shaped by a culture, their world is formed to reflect the principles and norms of the culture. In this way their world becomes a way of seeing and living life. Here, areas such as religion, diet, outlook on life, family and social relationships can be a significant part of the culture. UNESCO (2001) believes that culture takes on different expressions over time and space.

Making conscious the cultural similarities and differences between people in a society can be called cultural diversity awareness. Cultural diversity awareness is about awareness of our own culturally formed behaviour, the values which allow us to understand and recognise similarities and differences between other people’s culturally formed behaviour, values and each other’s beliefs (Burchum, 2002).

Like other diversity aspects, ethnicity concerns social classification and group relationships. However, ethnic and cultural affiliation are seldom the sole basis of a person's identity. From an intersectional perspective, other aspects such as gender, class, sexuality, age and place of residence are seen as intertwined in the identity-building of a person. So, ethnicity and cultural background should primarily be perceived as changing, social constructions that have either arisen spontaneously in a given population, or that have been deliberately created for political purposes.

### Ethnicity and cultural background in the classroom

Schools have been assigned a key role in society's diversity work since today's classrooms mirror societies that consist of people with different cultures and backgrounds. Conversations about ethnicity and cultural background may be relevant in school, for example in discussions about cultural differences regarding both school and societal values. Cultural clashes, social barriers and language barriers are issues that can be discussed in ethnic and cultural terms, keeping in mind the risk that discussions about pedagogy in terms of ethnicity and different cultures, risks consolidating stereotypes and ignoring individual variations.

Teaching that promotes diversity strives to encourage students and teachers, from both majority and minority groups in society, to value and investigate the complex connections and the gaps that emerge between, and within, their own and others' ethnic, cultural and social identities. This kind of teaching also encourages the creation of an understanding of how ethnic and cultural identities differ from individual to individual, and to look beyond notions and stereotypes about certain groups of people. Teachers are crucial role models in the diversity work of schools and should be given opportunities to reflect on their own norms and values and how this relates to a professional role, and to everyday work in school (Hällgren et al., 2006). Research has shown the importance of teachers for the way in which cultural and ethnic diversity is treated, and is being included in schools. Furthermore, teachers' conscious diversity work is important for how students with different cultural and ethnic affiliations are included in their own community (Bohman & Miklikowska, 2020; Geerlings et al, 2017; Serdiouk et al, 2019; Miklikowska, 2018). Research has also shown that teachers treat, perceive and have different expectations of students' school performance, based on cultural and ethnic diversity (Gruber, 2007).

#### Possible questions to discuss after presenting the theory:

- Discuss what ethnic and cultural diversity looks like in your classroom.
- What benefits can you see from having a group of students that represent diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds? And what do you see as challenging?

#### Exercise

*Time used 1 hour*



### The Societal Ladder (Who has power)

#### Rationale and background

As the trainer you begin the exercise by saying some words concerning power in society, and you can also remind the teachers about the theory presented on diversity.

As human beings we are all different. Society values some people more highly than others. This may not be openly expressed, but this fact can be seen in those who hold positions of power and influence being so similar. For example, it is most common to find men on boards of directors, and white people in European parliaments.

Power can also be an expression of the type of person that is viewed as normal, who is allowed to influence and make important societal decisions. It can concern which applicants tend to be best positioned in employment situations, which people are grouped together and according to which attributes, and which people are never grouped or categorised at all.

#### Objective

The purpose of the Societal Ladder exercise is to discover, discuss and develop understanding concerning power, privilege and personal prejudices in society, as well in school. The exercise further considers how positions of power and influence in society are related to dimensions of diversity such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, functionality and class.

#### Materials

For this exercise you need to prepare copies of the pictures provided on the webpage for trainers. Each group will need a set of pictures.

#### Procedure

1. Divide the big group into smaller groups with approximately 4-5 participants. Instruct the groups to spread the pictures out on a large table, or on the floor. Have the group arrange the pictures into a hierarchy, placing those that they think have most power at the top and those with the least at the bottom. The group members may choose to discuss their thinking, or remain silent during the exercise. Specifically point out that the group should focus on the current state of your own society. (20 min)
2. Reflections in the small group  
Discuss in the group what it was in each picture that caused you to position the person higher or lower in the hierarchy. Next, change the focus from your society in general, to other places and other societies. How would these people be placed in a small village in the country? On the beach in the summer? In parliament or the government? Lastly, discuss in the group what the hierarchy in their school is like and then, in their classrooms (20 min)

3. Guided reflections in the big group. You can ask the following questions:
- What did you find? Which people obtain the highest positions?
  - Was it the same people that ended up highest and lowest in the different groups, or did you rank them differently?
  - Did any of the groups miss a photo of a person that wasn't represented? (20 minutes)
- End the exercise by reflecting back to the objective of the exercise, and point out that classrooms mirror society. Which people have power in society can be connected to whose voices are heard in the classroom.



**Reflections and guidelines for the trainer**

Remind the teachers that the focus is meant to be on society at large, rather than on individual cases.

This exercise can be adjusted according to the current state of your own society. For example, if you as a trainer find some of the photos irrelevant for your society, don't use them. If photos of people more relevant for discussions about power in your society are missing, add an activity that includes finding photographs of certain people on the internet or in newspapers. An additional alternative is that you as a trainer find and print out photos of people that better suit the current state of your own society, than those provided in this program.

**Photographs**

The photographs are available as a pdf resource on the webpage, [www.handinhand.si](http://www.handinhand.si).

The photographs in this programme are published with permission of the photographer Hanna Goldstein/RFSL youth, Sweden.

**Exercise**  
*Time used 15 minutes*



**Adapting to Another Culture - knowing the pattern**

**Rationale**

Diversity awareness is exemplified in a “simple” ball game where the participants in groups of 4-6 people throw the ball to each other in a particular pattern, and after a while let one of the group members enter another group. The exercise illustrates how difficult it can be to integrate into a group where you don't know “the rules of the game”.

**Objective**

The aim of this exercise is to make the participants aware of how difficult it is to integrate into a group where you do not know the rules of the game And on the other hand how difficult it can be to integrate into your group a person who doesn't know your rules,.

**Materials**  
(4-6 tennis balls)

**Procedure**

The trainer divides the teachers into 4-5 groups and asks the group to throw the ball together, making sure that everybody gets the ball.

The teachers are asked to repeat a particular pattern several times. They decide about the pattern themselves, as a group.

The trainer picks out one member of each group, and asks them to join a new group. That group is asked to continue with their own pattern.

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Switch members several times.

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Reflect on how it felt to be in the different positions, and ask if the teachers can relate the game to the challenges we face when we meet new or different cultures.



**Reflections and guidelines to the trainer**

This exercise focuses on diversity awareness. It shows how we see things differently, how our reality cannot be defined as a singular truth, because we see reality from different perspectives. In this exercise, the participants can experience that the new group member might have a different perception of what it feels like to be in the group, than the group members who have been there longer. This example is meant to reflect society and sensitise us to our own perception of reality, and our encounters with others.

Among other things, diversity awareness is about being aware of your own reality, making it conscious, but it is also understanding that we are different, to take the other person's perspective for a moment, and to acknowledge the differences. According to Hildebrandt and Stubberup (2012) this requires the ability to inform and communicate, and the ability to sense the other person. Mental models are constructed, which means that they are not solid. They can change.

**Theory**

*Time used 30 minutes*

## The Polyvagal theory

In the last module we talked about how stress is a natural biological response to situations that are perceived as being dangerous. The problem is that our responses often do not match the situation, they turn on as if we were in a life threatening situation, even when we are not. The question is, what can we do when those stress responses do not match? What can we do when the stress responses don't match what we actually need at that moment?

Amongst other things in this programme, we are training to become familiar with our stress responses, through the development of an embodied awareness of our own stress and relaxation cycles. And we are developing ways to regulate ourselves, and find responses that match different situations.

What we learned about stress in the last module, and the addition of a new framework called the polyvagal theory, makes it possible to map our stress responses, and in that context use mindfulness practices as a way of working with stress responses.

**Polyvagal theory**

Steven Porges developed polyvagal theory as a way to understand the stress response and the recovery from stress. The dorsal branch of the vagal nerve receives all the information from the body to the brain. This is outside our conscious awareness. If the brain perceives danger the dorsal branch of the vagal nerve shuts us down, and we freeze. Only when the brain perceives that we are safe are we able to act once more. Depending on the level of safety, we act with fear or aggression or we interact socially. What is so interesting about the theory is that regulation (stress, emotions and attention) is something we learn in our interactions with one another; it's not something we do as individuals. Freeze, fight and flight are mechanisms designed to protect us. We need to feel safe before we can let go of our inherent impulse towards self-defence. Being with another person who is calm, enables us to feel safe and to connect socially. We communicate with and through our bodies, our emotions are expressed through the ventral branch of the vagal nerve in the tone of our voice, in our face, and in our heart. We must first learn to feel safe in the body, in order to act and interact and that is something that we do together. The polyvagal theory and experience from trauma recovery, make the case for beginning this work by establishing safety within the body.

**The polyvagal map**

The training consists of mapping the stress responses. To begin that work, two questions must be asked:

What is my stress response like at this moment?

How do I know? If I say that my stress response is really high or it's medium, or it's low, how do I know that is what it actually is? What I am feeling in my mind, in my body and in my emotions, as well as the way I am with other people, are the components that reveal the level of stress.

To answer these questions, we need a map showing what level our stress is, and which direction it is moving in. The way we do this is by looking at a scale, a three-tier system.

**Social nervous system**

The bottom tier is where we feel either low stress, no stress or we feel relaxed. This is called our social nervous system. In this state three key words help to understand what it feels like to be here: spacious, settled and connected.

This means that in this state there is a sense of rightness, there is room to move and room to breathe, a feeling of being physically and mentally flexible. In this state there is spaciousness and the creativity to think of big ideas, new ideas. In this state you have the capacity to see the big picture, and the long-range overview, and there is hope. Being in this state makes you a great problem solver. You can think about a problem and you can think about all of the options for ways of approaching this problem.

Being here means being settled in every way: settled thoughts in that they are clear and open. Settled in the emotions as they are not in turbulence nor moving rapidly up and down, nor stuck in one emotion. They are just there. You might even feel happiness and joy. In the body the immune system is working, your hormones are working as they should. Your digestion is primed and working well, you are able to sleep. And when you sleep, you wake up feeling restored.

Spacious, and settled and finally, connected.

We are connected to ourselves and to others. We are connected to our mind and to our emotions. We are connected within our body. And we are connected to the outside, to other people, to a community. We can even feel the connection with humanity. We can have empathy, and boundaries, at the same time. Being ourselves, and being with others.

**Fight or flight**

The next tier is called the fight or flight. This occurs when the stress response goes up. The three key words to describe this state are pressured, mobilised, and reactive.

What is seen here is pressure, hurrying, and movement. You've got to do something, to react, perform, defend, protect and to move. Adrenaline is pumping through the body, and

everything in the body speeds up. The heart rate goes up, the breathing gets faster and shallower, our eyes start darting, our speech races along. At the same time as these things start speeding up in the body, the digestion begins to shut down.

The movement into this state goes from wide open to narrowing down.

In the lowest tier there was an openness to all kinds of problem-solving possibilities. In this tier it starts to narrow until there is only one option left. If presented with a problem, there will only be one option to solve this problem. We are not thinking about the future. It is all about finding a solution to the problem at hand. This solution is my only option, if you don't want to do it my way, I am going to fight with you, or argue with you until you agree with me that it's the right - and only - way to solve the problem.

In this state we become controlling and rigid, things narrow down and we develop a negative focus. We get tunnel vision. We can only see what is ahead of us, our ears start to tune out the sound of the human voice. When we get into this state, we literally cannot hear each other. Our ears are being tuned away, to hear low, rumbling, dangerous noises.

The pressures of this state mobilise reactivity, and the responses turn up in our bodies. The body speeds up, there is tightness and tension, the feeling that you have to move, you have to do something.

Emotions are angry, frustrated, irritable, sometimes even rage, or there is a feeling of fear, panic, terror, or anxiety. The emotions are turbulent and intense. The feeling that I have to protect and perform can create a sense of urgency and turbulence, that can even be experienced as chaotic sometimes. In this state we are moving away from connection, we are moving away from being connected to humanity to only thinking about our own country, and our group or tribe. We move away from connection with the world to only caring about my own country, or my own tribe.

In this tier we see nationalism.

**Freeze**

The next tier is the highest tier, we are at the top of this three-tier scale, and this is the highest stress response. The state of freeze response.

In this state everything narrows down even further into a sense of not caring for other people at all. You only care about yourself, or maybe your own family. This is the state in which none of the earlier reactions are happening. The movement from state of fight or flight, all of that mobilisation, all of that reactivity, no longer serves any purpose, or is of any use.

This is the highest level of stress, where we feel disconnected, shut down and numb. Everything starts to slow down here. The heart rate slows down, the breathing slows down, sometimes speech slows and becomes slurred, and the eyes become unfocused. The digestion was already slowing down and that continues to happen.

The body reacts with either excess tension that affects the muscles, making them overly rigid, or sometimes the opposite happens and the body has no tension at all.

This is the sensation of not being able to move or act. Thoughts go blank or space out. Sometimes it can lead to dissociation, sometimes it is disconnection and a sense of hopelessness.

In the settled state that is the social nervous system, we were open to all of the different options for whatever problem was presented. When our stress levels go up, we get into fight or flight which starts to narrow things down and we only see one option, there is only one possible way to solve this problem. When we get into this top tier of freeze, our bodies and our brains are telling us that even that one option is just not going to work. We shut everything down. This brings with it a sense of hopelessness, numbness and apathy.

We are disconnected from ourselves and from other people.

The Stress-Relaxation Cycle

	Mental	Emotional	Physical	Social
Social Nervous System	Curious Clear mind Creative Flexible Focus and concentration Positive outlook Peaceful Ease	Happy Joy Love Even mood	Vibrant Relaxed muscles Even breathing Moderate heart rate Easy digestion and elimination Expressive facial movements Fluid rhythm and tone in voice	Attuned Responsive Interactive Patient
Fight/Flight	Over-focused or unfocused Difficult to con-centrate Negative outlook Rigid Repetitive thoughts Rapid thoughts Impatient	Irritable Annoyed Angry Rage Worried Anxious Afraid Terror Panic	Tight muscles Fast, shallow breathing Fast heart rate Cold hands and feet Sweaty and hot Dry mouth Poor digestion Constipation Restless Agitated Shaky Fast speech Eyes darting Poor sleep	Self-focused Confrontational Avoidant
Freeze	Hopeless Stuck Trapped Overwhelmed Scattered Spacey Dreamy Confused Blank mind Forgetful	Numb Apathy Shame	Very tight or overly soft muscles Slow heart rate Slow, shallow breathing Numbness Dizziness Pale Unfocused eyes Blurred vision Flat facial expres-sion Monotone voice Clumsy	Disconnected Non-responsive Shut down Checked out

This is the map and the framework for the questions: what is my stress response like at this moment? And how do I know that?



Groupwork  
Time used 20 minutes

What are my reactions?

Do you have an embodied knowledge of the three tiers?  
How would you describe that according to your own experiences, and in your own words?  
How do you deal with a stress response, when you notice it?

Stress cannot be planned away

The next step is how to respond in a more appropriate way when we feel that pressure or arousal are increasing. Frequently, we think that we can organise, plan and evaluate in such a way that we will not end up in uncomfortable and stressful situations.

It is important to emphasise that the whole point is how we relate to stress, and how we think about. It is not about avoiding stress. By thinking that we are able to think away the stress, we can easily get very stuck in our own heads. However, the truth is that our stress responses are actually very deep biological survival responses. That means that they come through our bodies first. So first they come through our bodies, and then they come into our emotions, and finally they come into our thoughts. The idea that we can use our thoughts to control our stress is unrealistic. Actually, our thoughts are the weakest point of defence against those stress responses. As we learned in the last module, thoughts are actually capable of making things worse, and increasing the stress levels.

Stress responses are biological survival responses which come through our bodies and therefore we must work with our body, not with our thoughts. We need to make responses that match a stressful situation, and to create connection to ourselves, to the world around us, and to other people. Practising mindfulness is a way of training that kind of embodiment.

Exercise

Time used 20 minutes

Stress inducing exercise

Rationale and background

The point is to introduce something that will activate the stress system just a little, so that the participants are in contact with some real sensations regarding the stress responses and impulses of fight, flight or freeze. The theory presented above could be used as a framework connected to the three tiers, as a way of mapping the stress responses.

This exercise is an example. There might also be something else that creates the same responses. Tasting something blindfolded, putting your hands into a box without knowing what’s in it, or something else.

Objective

- To enhance and develop the SEDA competences. Self-awareness, self-management
- To enhance and develop relational competence
- To notice what is present in the body and the mind
- To use that knowledge or awareness in an understanding of the connection between ourselves and others
- To use the information from awareness of the present state to make more conscious choices
- To learn different approaches on how to regulate ourselves when under pressure

Materials

None

Procedure

Everybody closes their eyes. If you are sitting at a table, you can lean forward and relax your upper body on the table. If you are sitting in a circle, turn your backs to the middle of the circle and face away from each other.

Now the participants are told that the trainer will pick one of the participants, by tapping that person on the back. The person who was picked has been chosen to sing a song.



Reflections and/or guidelines for the trainer

The trainer is in the middle of the circle and is walking around in the inner circle, making noises, being silent, coming close to some participants, moving away again.

The purpose is to create tension, and to induce some stress responses in the participants. Try different things out, take your time before you tap someone, so that the tension increases.

Take small breaks and ask: What do you feel in your body now? Any signs of stress responses? Sweaty hands, tightening up the body, breathing faster? Or something else? Do you notice any signals or impulses towards fight, flight or freeze? That could be thoughts or impulses to act: “No problem I’m just preparing now, sitting here” or “I won’t do it, you just try to force me!” Or maybe there is an impulse to leave the room, or try to make yourself very small, or sit very quietly so that the trainer won’t see you, or notice you.

You, the trainer, have to decide if you are going to tap someone or not. Of course, the purpose is not to make someone sing, but to create tension and produce stress responses. You can also choose to pick more than one person, or even the whole group or you can do more rounds doing them differently.

The important thing to point out is that by making what is happening in the participants during the exercise clearer, gives an example of what happens when we are under pressure. For some people this exercise can be too overwhelming. It is possible to participate in different ways. You can say that it is always possible to open your eyes, or if you really don’t want to be picked you can make a small sign such as raising your hand. This is simply to give the participants the opportunity of regulating themselves, if it gets too much. They don’t know that you might not be picking anyone at all.

Exercise

Time used 45 minutes

What happens when I am under pressure in my profession?

Rationale and background

This exercise is both a reflection and a dialogue. The purpose is to enhance self-awareness when you feel under pressure professionally. It is meant to direct your focus towards yourself, to explore what happened in a specific situation with curiosity and kindness, as well as the consequences your own state and interpretations might have had on the situation, and the impact you might have had on the relation with the child involved. By doing this we are also training self-esteem, talking about a difficult situation using a personal language and normalising that everybody experiences difficult situations in their professions, and everybody is doing the best they can.

By doing this we are creating awareness and more clarity which gives us the chance to see new ways of reacting when under pressure.

The exercise also trains the ability to listen and to ask questions without solving a problem or giving advice.

Guidance

Sit as comfortably possible on the chair.

You can close your eyes if you like, or let your gaze rest on the floor.

Is it possible to turn your attention inward for a moment? To shift the attention to your feet and their contact with the floor, and the physical sensations in your feet.

You can then move your attention to your breath. Without changing anything, you do not have to breathe in a particular way, you can simply notice that you are breathing, following the breath for a moment with your awareness. Noticing how the breath is moving through your body.

Now I will invite you to think of a situation or an encounter with a child that you found particularly challenging, in which it was hard for you to be as open and empathic as you would like, in order to give the encounter the quality you really want it to have.

When was it like that? What kind of situation was it? Who was present? What was the atmosphere like?

Is it possible to recall bodily sensations? How did you sense your body? Did you sense one part of the body as being more significant than others?

And what about your breath. Did you recognise your breath at all, or the quality of your breath: fast, slow, superficial, deep or something else?

And what about thoughts? Do you remember any thoughts? Maybe some are coming up now?

And what about feelings? What feelings did you notice both in the situation, and afterwards?

Now move your attention, or use your ability of imagination, to the child, and how they look. What signals is the child sending you? What emotions are shown in these signals? What is the child's posture like – what does that communicate? What is their facial expression like? What do you see in the child's eyes?

Also, remain aware of yourself as seen through the eyes of the child. What's the expression on your face? What do your eyes communicate? Your posture?

Hold on to this, and stay in the experience for a while. Does it change as you consider it? Or is it permanent? And what is it like right now?

When you feel vulnerable in this way – are you able to give it a title, or a heading? A word or a sentence, perhaps a shape, or a colour?

Now turn your attention back to your breathing, and take a few deep breaths.

Dialogue

Make groups of three.

The dialogue has three roles: the speaker, the dialogue partner and an observer.

The speaker talks and reflects about the situation where they were under pressure. As always, the speaker says as much or as little as they want to.

The dialogue partner primarily listens and asks questions whenever something needs to be clarified or elaborated. We assume that our perception and understanding are the same. That we understand the meaning of the other person's words. But that is often not the case. The questions are meant to deepen the understanding and to make explicit what is implicit to the person talking.

It is really important that B is not supposed to be solving a problem or giving advice to the speaker. The role contains the functions of listening and asking questions to open up the perspective on the situation.

Possible question: what do you mean by....? What does it mean to you that....?

The observer is just listening and keeping the time. After the dialogue between the speaker and the dialogue partner, the observer repeats any themes that resonate within them.

Three rounds of 15 minutes

10 minutes for the dialogue and 3 minutes for the observer to repeat themes, and 2 minutes preparing for the next round.

Sum up in the big group

Reflections and experiences with the dialogue exercises

How did it feel to be in the different roles?

What was challenging?

What was easy?







**Reflections and or guidelines for the trainer**

In this exercise, it is really important that it does not focus on solutions and advice about how to solve a problem. Getting advice when you are talking about something that was difficult, can be a very bad experience. It can feel like a devaluation, or the person being advised can feel worthless or stupid, for not being able to follow the advice.

The point is to describe what happened, and to trust that bringing awareness to something does make a change.

It is also important that the observer does not interfere during the dialogue. The observer is only meant to be listening here. The observer only has time to talk, after the dialogue is over.

To prevent these unwanted things from happening, it can be a good idea to have a short time-out after the first round, to get feedback on how the structure is working out.



Trainers notes



# Online meeting 5

Lesson flow

This schedule is the same for all online meetings even though the exercises can vary within the themes. For example, the mindfulness exercises will not be exactly the same on all occasions. Remember to have a break within the two hours.

Time	Content
15 min	Yoga
15 min	Sitting mindfulness practice
5 min	Self reflection. Journaling
20 min	Sharing. Check in
30 min	Exercise. Dialogue: What happens when I am under pressure in my profession?
30 min	Teachers’ reflections

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

## Yoga

You can choose to do standing yoga (page 65) as described in DAY 2 or sitting yoga (page 108) as described in DAY 3 or you can do lying yoga (page 147) as described in DAY 4

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

## Sitting mindfulness practice on the body and the breath

You can choose to do a body scan (page 57) as described in DAY 1, a sitting meditation on body and breath (page 79) as described in DAY 2, or sitting meditation including someone I care about (page 111) as described in DAY 3.

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 5 minutes

Journaling

What did you notice in the mindfulness practice? In your body, in your mind, in your emotional life? Reflect individually and write your reflections in a notebook. The written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

Sharing: Check in

Checking in means all the participants can be present, by saying a few words about how they are and what’s going on in their lives. Not a long speech but just a few sentences describing their current situation in life. As always, nobody is forced to share anything they don’t want to share, but everybody saying something is preferable because it’s one way of participating and actually making the group.

By sharing and listening we are training to speak in a personal language and to use active, empathic listening.

In these online settings, this check in session is also an opportunity to ask questions about the programme, or the exercises.

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

Dialogue:

What happens when I am under pressure in my profession?

Dialogue exercise, What happens when I am under pressure in my profession? As described in DAY 5 but in groups of two instead of three, meaning without the observer.

The trainer makes breakout rooms with groups of two.

**The speaker** talks and reflects about the situation where they were under pressure. As always, the speaker says as much or as little as they want to.

**The dialogue partner** primarily listens and asks questions whenever something needs to be clarified or elaborated. We assume that our perception and understanding are the same. That we understand the meaning of the other person’s words. But that is often not the case. The questions are meant to deepen the understanding and to make explicit what is implicit who the person talking.

Exercise

Time used 30 minutes

It is really important that B is not supposed to be solving a problem or giving advice to the speaker. The role contains the functions of listening and asking questions to open up the perspective on the situation.

Possible question: what do you mean by....? What does it mean to you that....?

It is really important to keep in mind that B is not supposed to be solving a problem or giving advice to the speaker. The B role has the function of listening and asking questions to open up the perspective on the situation.

Possible questions: what do you mean by....? What does it mean to you that....?

Virtual room

Breakout rooms

Teachers’ reflections

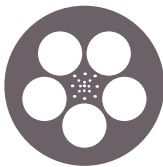
Teachers' reflections are a recurring activity for the online meetings. This activity should be done in steps:

- Virtual room: All together. Reflect individually and write the reflections in a notebook. The written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.
- Virtual room: breakout rooms. Talk in pairs - participants share reflections
- Virtual room: All together. Write again individually, if anything new came up when reflecting in pairs
- Virtual room: All together. The last step is to reflect in the big group

The questions to reflect upon are:

1. Please write whatever comes to mind concerning participation in this programme so far.
2. Describe if, and how, you as a person have been affected by the programme so far?
3. Describe if, and how, your participation in this programme has had an impact on your professional role as a teacher so far.
4. Describe how you think that the exercises done so far could be used with students in your classroom.

Trainers notes



# Day 6

## Text of the day

### There's a Hole in My Sidewalk

*I walk down the street.*  
*There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.*  
*I fall in.*  
*I am lost... I am helpless.*  
*It isn't my fault.*  
*It takes forever to find a way out.*

*I walk down the same street.*  
*There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.*  
*I pretend I don't see it.*  
*I fall in again.*  
*I can't believe I am in the same place.*  
*But, it isn't my fault.*  
*It still takes me a long time to get out.*

*I walk down the same street.*  
*There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.*  
*I see it is there.*  
*I still fall in. It's a habit.*  
*My eyes are open.*  
*I know where I am.*  
*It is my fault. I get out immediately.*

*I walk down the same street.*  
*There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.*  
*I walk around it.*

*I walk down another street.*

Portia Nelson



Time	Content
10 min	Welcome and presentation of the day
30 min	Mindfulness practice Yoga - sitting or standing or lying Body scan, sitting meditation
30 min	Theory. The diversity aspects of socio economic background(class)
45 min	Exercise. Norm critical analyses
	Lunch
1,5 hour	Repetitions: Favourites - which exercises would you continue to use with yourself - in school 60:40 exercise Dialogue exercise
1,5 hour	Evaluation - what have I learned

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

Yoga

You can choose to do standing yoga (page 65) as described in DAY 2 or sitting yoga (page 108) as described in DAY 3 or you can do lying yoga (page 147) as described in DAY 4.

Virtual room

All together

Exercise

Time used 15 minutes

Mindfulness practice

You can choose to do a body scan (page 57) as described in DAY 1, a sitting meditation on body and breath (page 79) as described in DAY 2, or sitting meditation including someone I care about (page 111) as described in DAY 3.

Virtual room

All together



Theory

Time used 30 minutes

The diversity aspect of socio-economic background

This section describes how social class and the student’s social-economical background affects their opportunities in school. It concludes with a discussion about how to design work in the classroom for all students.

Social class affiliation still affects numerous aspects of our lives in a modern society. Class affects the resources that we have at our disposal, and the particular risks we are exposed to. For the working class, physical risks in working life are still an issue, in addition to the lack of self-determination and autonomy. Despite improved finances and the establishment of welfare states in many countries, there is a significant difference both in morbidity and life expectancy between the working class and the other social classes, which in this text we describe as middle class. (Fazio, Launius & Strangleman, 2020). The processes that generate this situation are ongoing, from the cradle to the grave. We will look at how the school is affected, and at the opportunities students from different class backgrounds have in school.

Socio-economic background in the classroom

The socioeconomic status (SES) is a measure of a person's current social and economic situation, which is a reflection of their social class. It is used as a concept when we talk about students' opportunities in School, because it is easy to measure, and it is easy to compare different students.

SES of a student is the most significant factor of all background factors that is measured for a student's opportunity in school (Mitchell, 2017). Material conditions for the student, such as their own room or computer are part of SES. Other elements could be the parents' level of education or the number of books in the home. The average difference in how students perform how students commit to school tasks due to different SES increases throughout their school years. This is despite many countries having goals aimed at compensating for these different student conditions (Carnevale, Fasules, Quinn &

The Programme for International Assessment (PISA) measures how much the social, economic and cultural background of a student affects the results of the PISA test for a fifteen-year-old student (OECD, 2019). In general, the impact of these factors is less in countries with a unitary school system, where students with different backgrounds mix. Sweden is an interesting example. Just over 20 years ago, private schools were allowed, and voucher system that follows the pupil was introduced. Since then, the differences between different students' results have increased, at the same time as the student's background has become increasingly important. Despite the fact that on paper Sweden has a unitary school system, the country now resembles countries that have a more segregated school system such as Germany and Austria, where students is separated into different types of schools at the age of ten.

The final grade for grade nine (16-year-olds) in Sweden differs on average more than 80 credit points between a student with two college-educated parents, as compared to a student with parents with a high school education, at most. This corresponds to the favoured student having an average grade B, while the disadvantaged student has an average grade D.



The mechanisms behind differences in results between children from different social classes could be due to parental behaviour. Many middle-class parents see their children as projects, and their children engage in activities aimed at developing a range of skills, interests and abilities in the child (Vincent & Ball, 2007). Working class children often organise their leisure time themselves, and their parents give instructions, rather than negotiate with the child (Lareau, 2007).

Other factors are language and access to cultural stimuli, where middle-class children are better prepared for what they encounter in school. Middle-class children are better equipped to understand the school code, and often perceived by the teacher as being willing to learn, while working-class children are more silent (girls) or outspoken (boys). Several studies show how schools reproduce an unequal social system, and transfer one generation's advantages (or disadvantages) to the next (Reay, 2020; Brantlinger, 2003; Willis 2017). Jober (2012) shows how teachers often have an arsenal of different methods for teaching children who are perceived as being willing to learn, while children with lower social-economical background are more often deemed to have learning difficulties.

At the same time, there is a wide spread of school performance between different students, and between different schools, which is not explained by the student's social background. There are many examples of teachers and schools who approach students in an equal way, and organise the learning environment in the classroom so that it suits more students. For example, this could concern teacher expectations, and providing structure and challenges at appropriate levels for different students.

**Possible questions to discuss after presenting the theory:**

- Discuss what social-economical diversity looks like in your classroom.
- What benefits can you see in having a group of students that are represented by diverse socio-economical backgrounds? And what do you see as challenging?

**Exercise**

*Time approximately  
45 minutes*



**Norm-critical analysis - Newspaper and textbook search**

**Rationale and background**

This exercise is linked to the theory section on intersectionality and diversity. Who in society is represented in the media and in school context is important for how individuals perceive themselves. With an increased awareness of who is represented and how this is done, we can take greater responsibility for a society that is more diversity aware, and builds on equity.

**Objective**

- To discover, discuss and develop understanding concerning power, privilege and personal prejudices in society as well in school;
- To discover and develop awareness about own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity and how those may have an impact on embracing diversity in the classroom
- To share good practices and discuss challenges with fellow teachers and the programme trainers.

**Materials**

Enough newspapers and textbooks for pair work, print outs of appendix 1 for each pair.

The structure of this exercise

1. Search, in pairs, work materials: daily newspaper and textbook
2. Joint reflection
  - a. Statistics: How many of each category did you find?
  - b. Hierarchies: What did you find first? What was hard to find? What did not exist at all? Did the people get to speak? If so, how?
  - c. What does it look like in your own school concerning representation of diversity in school?



**Procedure**

**1. Newspaper and textbook search**

Tell the group that they will be divided into pairs to make a search. Participants should flip through the daily newspaper and textbook and note which individuals they seen in them, and categorise them based on the diversity aspects in Appendix 1. Each person can be categorised on the basis of several aspects, such as gender, age, body and socio-economic background. Make notes about what you have found on the printed appendix, so you can remember and can present for the whole group. There are no “right answers”, some things are explicit or visible in a picture, others are not as clear but can be interpreted. The point is not to have as many “right answers” as possible, but to talk about norms and what they look like in the media. The participants have 15-20 minutes to make their search. It is also possible to remove one or more of the diversity aspects, to adapt the exercise.

**2a. Reflection: Statistics**

When the groups come back, the first step is to create "statistics" based on what the groups have collected. What aspects of "gender" have you found and to what extent? What aspects of "body" have you found and to what extent? And so on. Write down the statistics and repeat them, so everyone can see and hear them.

Proceed by asking the participants about the criteria for what was found. How did you decide who was a person from your country? Who was a person with a foreign background? Who was heterosexual? Could heterosexuals just as easily be bisexual, but have a partner of the opposite sex? What does it mean to be masculine? And so on. Enable different approaches and solutions to emerge, letting the participants think aloud about their own ideas, and the difficulties of putting people into groups.

**2b. Reflection: Hierarchy**

Then continue, letting the participants reflect on norms and hierarchies.

Ask, amongst other things:

- Which ones did you find first? Why was that? What was hard to find?
- Which ones did you not find at all? Is the reason why some are difficult to find because they barely exist, that they are not really "allowed to be seen" or that you just do not see certain people and phenomena, even though they are there?
- Were the people allowed to express themselves in articles, or were they just pictured?

**Concluding reflections**

If necessary, a summary of the search and the conversations might be appropriate:

- On what grounds do we judge people?
- Which visible and invisible criteria exist?
- Which groups have the best positions in our society?

**2c. Reflection: Your own school**

To clarify what might be meant by a good and a bad position, you can show that it concerns everything from being seen as normal, to being able to make your voice heard in debates, or holding high managerial or political positions. Then, ask the participants to think about what it looks like in their own school.

Divide the group into smaller groups and ask them to reflect on the diversity aspects in Appendix 1:

- Who is within the school?
- Who can be seen in the school’s materials?
- Which people have high positions within the school, and who have low ones?
- What are the invisible rules?
- Which people are made invisible, and which people are the norm?

**3. Conclude the whole exercise by summing up the discussions and have a collective reflection.**

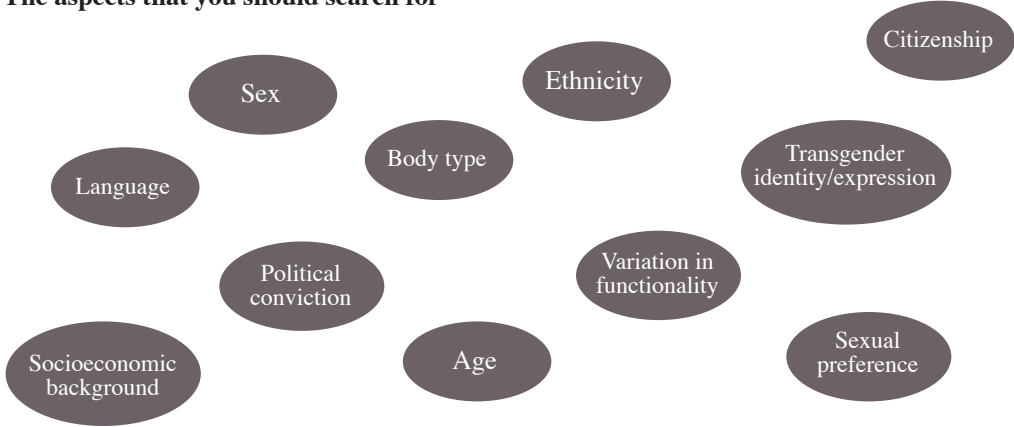
One suggestion for how to do this summing up is that you as a trainer remind the participants that who in society that is represented in the media and in school context is important for how individuals perceive themselves. Talk about what this might mean for students and teachers that are less represented in learning materials for example. Invite reflections from the group.

**Reflections**

This exercise contains many different steps and a variety of discussion questions. Adjust the exercise to suit your current diversity aspects. The questions should be seen as suggestions and can be reformulated to better suit your target group. One proposed adjustment is to include textbooks from different school subjects to make visible differences in who are represented in different school subjects.

*Appendix 1 (This material is also available as an pdf as a resource on the webpage)*

**The aspects that you should search for**



**Reflections what have I learned? Is there anything I want to change?**

Reflections about how to create a classroom environment built on empathic curiosity.

Exercise or theory

Time used  
1 hour - 1,5 hour



Repetitions

Procedure

The next sequence is a repetition sequence. We have done a lot of exercises and met a lot of theories. Now it is time to remember and repeat.

Group work

Groups of 4 – 15 minutes

What do you remember of the exercises and the theory, and do you have any wishes regarding repetition?

Open space

Room for requests from the participants.

Reflections and guidelines for the trainer

If there are no requests from the participants, you can repeat one or more of the following exercises:

60:40 exercises:

Follow the hand

Walk and see

Tease and disturb

Tell a story: yes... and...

Gearshift

Espresso (page 49)

Jump from a chair (page 82)

Dialogue exercises

Empathic listening 1 or 2

Or you can choose any other exercise you would like to repeat. Maybe you can do exercises that you had to skip or do very briefly. What is needed here is really up to the trainer and the group.

You can also repeat some of the theories if you find that necessary.



Reflection. What have I learned?

Procedure

Guiding

Get yourself in a comfortable position. Know that you are here, by being attentive to your senses. What can you see? Look around the room and notice your place in the room, and what the room looks like from this perspective.

You can note that you are not alone. You are here in a group that you have been together with for the last year.

What can you hear? The sounds inside the room, and from the outside. Simply notice. You don't have to change anything right now. You can simply become aware of how things are.

You can close your eyes or keep them open, lowering your gaze to the floor and relaxing your gaze.

What do you sense in your body as it sits here? Feet on the floor, buttocks on the chair.

You can rest your attention on the lower part of your body.

Your feet, contact with the floor, the shins and the calves, knees, thighs and pelvis and the contact with the chair.

You can move your attention to the upper part of your body, the spine rising up, arms, shoulders and the head on the top.

Now you can move your attention to your breath. Follow the rhythm of your breathing – inhaling and exhaling.

We will now do a reflection on this training the HAND:ET programme, developing SEDA competences.

We started last year and we have met for 6 days on site and 5 times online. You have been introduced to different theories concerning:

- Social and emotional competences
- Diversity awareness
- Mindfulness
- Relational competence
- Stress

And you have actively taken part in a lot of exercises, with the purpose of embodying the theory and gaining personal experiences of the subject.

You have been part of a training course, developing the SEDA competences in order to empower your personal and professional life as a teacher.

Now recall, and reflect...

What were your expectations like? What did you learn? Were there any sacrifices or any costs regarding this training? What was challenging? What was easy? How did you work with the challenges?

What is it important to remember? Personally, and professionally?

What will you take with you from this training?

Now direct your attention to your breath once more. We can simply sit here for a moment noticing the breath, and focusing our attention on the breath.

And if it feels good, you can take a couple of deeper inhalations and exhalations, open your eyes and stretch your body.

**Reflection in twos**

Find a partner. Now each person gets 5 minutes to reflect on the training. The other person listens. The trainer watches the time and tells them when to switch roles

**Reflections in groups of 4**

Make new groups of 4. Each person gets 3-4 minutes to reflect while the others listen.

**Reflection in the big group**

Everybody gets a chance to share some of their reflections and experiences of the training.

**Evaluation - questionnaires 45 min**

Extra Material

Below we offer a few extra exercises for you to use when you want to adjust something in the program. We also recommend that you choose among extra exercises that were developed in the earlier Hand In Hand Program:

<https://2017-20.handinhand.si/?lang=sv>

**Extra: 1.**

*Time used 20 minutes*



Different Paces

**Rationale**

This exercise is about reflecting and making visible the pace participants have in their everyday life.

Objective: To raise awareness of your pace in everyday life, and thereby increase understanding of how you and your surroundings interact with each other.

**Procedure**

1. The exercise involves the participants trying out moving at different paces, and then reflecting on their experience. Ask participants to move around the room. The leader then says the numbers 1-5 in any random order. Participants are to change their pace, according to the number.

**Extra: 2.**

*Time used 30 minutes*



- Walk as slowly as you can
- Stroll around and take plenty of time
- Walk at your usual speed
- You are hurrying, without running
- Walk as fast as you can in the room, without running and colliding with anything

2. Next step of the exercise is to reflect in groups of 4-5

**Reflection questions:**

- What pace do you usually have in everyday life?
- Do you want to change your everyday life pace?
- Which paces were most challenging for you?
- What happened to your breathing, heart rate and attention at the different paces?

Inclusion and exclusion in the classroom

**Rationale**

This exercise is about reflecting and discussing how to make exercises and situations in school as inclusive as possible for all students.

**Objective**

The purpose of the exercise is to illustrate how exclusion mechanisms work, and how they can be up and running even when we have no intention to exclude. The exercise also aims to shed light on how we can create greater openness and find new paths when creating activities in school.

**Procedure**

This exercise is performed in small groups. You decide, as a group, on a teaching situation or a routine in the school that you can use as a starting point. Discuss the situation or routine from two different perspectives (inclusion/exclusion) for about 10 minutes on each perspective. The exercise ends with a joint discussion.

1. Focus on excluding: Start by writing down all the suggestions you can think of for ways in which the teaching situation or routine can be designed so that as many of the students as possible will feel excluded and unwelcome. Review your results.
2. Focus on including: Now turn the exercise around. How can you make the teaching/routine as inclusive as possible? Write down and review your results.
3. Reassemble the groups, some groups are given the opportunity to share their reasoning.

# HAND:ET

– A training programme to develop SEDA competences in School leaders



Time	Content	Side page
20 min	Introduction of the trainers and the program	10
10 min	Exercise. Being here now	28
20 min	Presentation of the school leaders	31
60 min	Theory. Relational competence combined with CASEL five competencies	40
30 min	Exercise. Empathic listening	46
	Lunch	
5 min	Exercise. Espresso	49
30 min	Theory. Diversity awareness – an introduction	50
1 hour	Exercise. Who has power	181
15-20 min	Exercise. Body scan	57



# Online meeting for School leaders

Time	Content	Side page
15 min	Sitting yoga	108
15 min	Body scan	57
5 min	Self-reflection. Journaling	100
20 min	Sharing: Check in	100
30 min	Dialogue exercise: Emphatic listening: What is important in my work at the moment?	100
30 min	School leaders reflections	

## School leaders reflections

### This activity should be done in steps:

- Reflect individually and write the reflections in a notebook. The written reflections are not going to be shown to other people.
- Talk in pairs - participants share their reflections.
- Write again individually, if anything new came up when reflecting in pairs.
- The last step is to reflect in the big group.

### The questions and statements to reflect upon are:

1. Please write whatever comes to your mind concerning participating in this programme so far.
2. Describe if and how your participation in this programme had an impact on your professional role as a school leader, so far?
3. Reflect upon how you think that teachers in your school could benefit from this program.
4. Describe how you think that the exercises done so far could be used in classrooms in your school.

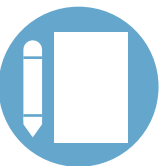


# On site meeting 2 for school leaders



Time	Content	Side page
15 min	Mindfulness practice on body and breath	79
30 min	Theory. Attention	71
10 min	Film on empathic curiosity	74
10 min	Theory. Empathic curiosity	75
30 min	Questions to discuss on empathic curiosity	75
30 min	Empathic listening 2	77
30 min	Diversity in School	215
	Lunch	
10 min	Exercise. Espresso	49
20 min	Exercise. An unpleasant experience	163
30 min	Theory. What is stress?	166
20 min	Group work. How do I recognise stress as a professional?	171
20 min	Theory. The pentagon. and Concept. 60:40.	90
30 min	Exercise. 60:40 exercises	93
45 min	Evaluation - what have I learned	209

Exercise or theory  
Time used 30 minutes



## Diversity in school for school leaders

Objective

- To discover and develop awareness about our own attitudes, values and prejudices concerning diversity and how those may have impact on embracing diversity in the classroom
- To share good practises and discuss challenges with fellow school leaders and the programme trainers.
- To become acquainted with the concept of empathic curiosity
- To practice empathic curiosity through dialogue, and practical exercises

Materials

Something to write the reflections on.

Rationale and background

Begin the exercise by talking about diversity both as statutory grounds for discrimination, but also other aspects of diversity that can appear in school.

Diversity aspects are often defined on the basis of the statutory grounds for discrimination, as covered by the laws of different countries. The grounds for discrimination covered by laws vary in different European countries. Examples of existing statutory grounds for discrimination are: gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or other belief, age and sexual orientation. In addition to these grounds for discrimination as defined in law, there are other aspects of diversity in our society, and in our classrooms.

Examples of other aspects are: class, body type, citizenship, language, political beliefs and clothing culture.



Procedure

Begin the procedure by letting the participants reflect individually on the questions below (10 minutes).

1. What does diversity look like in my school?
2. Which aspects of diversity are “noticed” most in my school? In what ways are they noticeable?
3. What do you find most challenging about yourself when it comes to diversity work?

The next step is to reflect in pairs. One person describes what diversity looks like in their school. The other half of the pair is practising empathic listening and asking empathic questions with the aim of understanding the other person, as well as the context. After 5 minutes change roles (10 minutes).

Discuss all together. Ask each pair to share the essence of their dialogue (10 minutes).

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