Diversity4Kids
Transcultural biography and creative writing workshop

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Diversity4Kids:

Learning intercultural dialogue and diversity at school through play, interaction and stories

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Contents

Introduction 5

1. The biographical working method 9

1a. Transcultural biographical work 9
(Annemarie Schweighofer-Brauer)

1b. Biographical/creative writing 11
(Hedwig Dejaco)

2. Biographical workshop:
transcultural biographical work 15
(Annemarie Schweighofer-Brauer)

2a. Warm-up exercises 15
- Biographical questionnaires 15
- Complete the sentences 17
- Groups with common characteristics 18
- Game of the four corners 19
- True or false 21

2b. Teaching units 22
- Inventing biographies 22
- The tree of life 24
- Family maps 28
- My shield 30

3. Biographical workshop: biographical/creative writing 35
(Hedwig Dejaco)

3a. Warm-up exercises 35
- Filling the vessel 35
- Detoxification 36

3b. Teaching units 38
- Imaginary visit to the home of my infancy 38
- My adventure in Fantasyland 41

4. Suggestions 45

The Diversity4Kids Team 49

Introduction

Today when we speak of a society of migration we mean a society characterized by diversity. We are surrounded by diversified styles and ways of life. Diversity has long become part of our daily lives and is not only found in the external world but also within ourselves. We all have the task of acquiring the skills for living together in this multicultural globalized society and of making sure that diversity is accepted as the norm, not as an exception.

In this context, the development and promotion of identity are very important. All of us "act" different roles in different groups (for example, a girl can simultaneously be a daughter, student, friend, flute player...). Our roles and the groups we belong to change constantly in the course of our lives and are subject to continuous transformation. This often leads us, consciously or unconsciously, to assign value to our group (or groups) and to give less value to those perceived as "other". This is more likely when we feel our identity is threatened and when we need to regain a positive identity.

When we speak of diversity, power also plays an essential role, because diversity is always part of a hierarchy. This is why, already at school level, it is important to create spaces and opportunities that promote the management of diversity through democratic participation. In this way diversity increases and is promoted by tolerance. Young people must be urged to regard diversity as a form of enrichment and to contribute to the creation of democratic and pluralistic societies.

If children are prepared for life, if they are able to be tolerant towards others, if they are accepted with their needs and characteristics, if they take an active part in group life, if they recognize their and others' limits and know how to say "no" (an important life skill), then the school, as a place of learning and living, can do much to promote living together and peaceful coexistence.

This is why in the project *InterregIV Italia – Austria "Diversity4Kids: Learning intercultural dialogue and diversity at school through play, interaction and stories"*, we included content designed especially for children of primary and lower secondary schools. Diversity4Kids is designed to give children from 8 to 14 years the opportunity to meet with intercultural differences and to understand and put into practice the benefits that diversity creates. Through play they learn to recognize and overcome prejudice and xenophobic attitudes. Through theatre, role playing, biographic workshops and stories, the concepts of tolerance, living together and diversity are transmitted and promoted in the form of games and interaction.

In autumn 2013, more than 100 interventions were conducted in Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino and in the Province of Udine. They consisted of games designed for the project and were conducted by facilitators. The teachers were active participants or observers. The interventions, each lasting two hours, were then assessed by the students and through interviews with the facilitators and teachers. The feedback received was collected in the three volumes of this manual. The many experiences reported together with the teaching units developed by experts are now available in Italian, German and English to anyone interested.

The first part of this manual provides some general explanations of the methods used. In the following pages we present the single modules in detail. The modules are practical examples and teaching units. Suggestions and advice for selecting, implementing and elaborating the units can be found under "Suggestions" and in the different units. In fact, attention should be paid to different aspects if the games and methods are put into practice by an outsider (facilitator) or by the teacher.

The texts published here, completed with audio files, printable material and extra content, are available on our website www.diversity4kids.eu, where it is also possible to find information about the project "Spacemigrants 2513" conducted by EURAC and ZeMiT between 2008 and 2011. This project produced a role game against discrimination for adolescents (14-18 years) (www.spacemigrants2513.eu).

In conclusion, we wish to thank the children and all the adults with whom we collaborated during the project Diversity4Kids. Thanks to them we were able to collect and develop new ideas. Only through cooperation and sincere interest, availability and commitment were we able to create Diversity4Kids, which we now present to you.
We hope that the models of Diversity4Kids become widely distributed and that each in his/her own way grasps the true meaning of diversity. If during play, students can suspend judgement of right and wrong, Diversity4Kids may be able to help us to live and enjoy diversity without prejudice.
We also thank the experts who helped develop Diversity4Kids and the facilitators who conducted the play units in the classes.
Our thanks also go to the funders of the project, the referents in the school administrations, the school directors, the teachers and all those who in different ways appreciated, sustained and broadcast our work.

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1. The biographical working method

1a. Transcultural biographical work

Annemarie Schweighofer-Brauer

Biographical work is based on an attitude or awareness that arises from the capacity to reflect: it is a way of taking this attitude on board and broadening this awareness. Biographical work adapted to age stimulates children to lay the foundations for their "biographical awareness". Although it is natural for them to make decisions regarding consumptions and in other fields as they grow up, this more reflective approach can probably help them to recognise and avoid the trap set for those who ask too much of themselves and the insecurity that it causes. Teachers and/or facilitators can be stimulated to include biographical elements in their lessons, for example establishing a personal link between students and the topic being taught through biographical questions. Among other things, knowing the biographical background of the children in the class helps to understand them better.
Biographical work promotes transcultural understanding by providing means that make a critical analysis of stereotypes possible. At the same time it helps bring out personal potential and develop it through becoming accustomed to diversity and encountering different needs and expectations in different settings. The term "transcultural" defines the change, mixing and reciprocal influences between cultures. Cultures are not fixed entities: what we call culture is simply a snapshot at any time of a long history of variations and mixing; culture is not a thing but a process that is fed by everything that humans do and learn and that can be defined using the well justified concept of "doing culture".
The expression "transcultural biographical work" forges a relation between the concepts of "biographicalness", "transculturalness" and biographical work. The purpose of biographicalness is to achieve the potential of opportunities to decide. Our perceptions and perspectives (i.e. the glasses through which we observe life), our mental habits and our emotional patterns greatly influence our way of living and feeling. Biographical work helps us to express and train our biographical capacity, i.e. the capacity to give meaning to our lives, and to become

aware of it. In biographical work or biographical storytelling the very modern need to self-responsibly give one's life meaning combines with the atavic need to recount and to listen. Biographical work becomes transcultural through the themes and problems that guide us in the biographical search for ourselves, through target groups and/or the context of biographical reflection and through biographical interaction between men and women of difference provenance and extraction. Biographical work is first and foremost oriented towards human potential; it embraces the dimensions of the past, present and future and its objective is to configure life in the present. Awareness of one's identity (indivisibility) makes it easier to interact with diversity and differences. Certainty of one's individuality and uniqueness favours openness to change and external influences and acceptance of what is not familiar. Practising and cultivating the art of storytelling can have an antidisciminatory and democratising effect since by telling we seek a way of understanding what is new and unknown, and of accepting it or giving it a place.

1b. Biographical/creative writing

Hedwig Dejaco

I. A word about concepts

Creativity is a cognitive process by which old conceptions come into contact with new ideas, giving rise to new knowledge. Creative writing is a collective noun defining a series of methods of personal, reflective and literary writing for amusement or play. These methods use free association of ideas that can allow access to the unconscious. Creative writing can be useful for different objectives:

- therapy
- self-reflection
- school lessons
- institutional writing groups.

Associative writing is spontaneous, without planning or meditation, simply “here and now”. What comes to mind is written down, allowing the pen to flow freely. The flow of writing is usually brief, lasting 3-5 minutes, maximum 8 minutes, depending on the initial stimulus. The result is a brief finished text, which often brings surprising material to light: memories and emotions, often of a very personal nature.

A special form of writing is free writing, which uses the same principle but with the aim of collecting much material – a sort of brainstorming.

The stimulus is a means by which associations are elicited. It may be a picture or a text (poetry, line of text, word...), music, an object, an odour... anything that triggers associations or awakens memories and sensations.
Flow is a phenomenon linked to this method of writing. It is associated with a strong sense of happiness that can invade the writer.

Flow can happen while writing something that is personally important and does not depend on the quality of what is written. An outsider often cannot find anything interesting in the texts produced. This is why biographical or creative texts should never be judged. Flow consolidates writer self-awareness and promotes personal development.

II. Psychological background

- Associative theory and the theory of dreams of Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung
- Jung's theories on complexes, the collective unconscious and archetypes
- The clustering technique of Gabriele Rico as access to the right "creative" hemisphere of the brain.

III. Associative writing in teaching

1) General considerations

Group writing must be conducted as a workshop with sufficient space for experimentation. As a method it offers many advantages. In first place, it is fun because it does not involve any judgement of right or wrong and the students can express themselves as they wish. There are always as many texts as the persons who write them.

Once the writing phase is complete, the texts are read and the group listens in a respectful manner. The person who writes is his/her own public.

If a text is too intimate or private, the student does not necessarily have to read it aloud. However, after hearing the others, almost everyone decides to read.

Important: only the writer can provide information about his/her text. Listeners are not allowed to interpret it but only to say whether they appreciated it; they can also ask questions. The facilitator can create a climate of protection by choosing the topics with sensitivity.

2) Evaluation

As already mentioned, the texts produced cannot be judged.
This method of writing has positive side-effects on interpersonal relationships and individual growth and calls for establishment of a trusting relationship among participants. It is always much appreciated if the teacher/facilitator also writes a text and reads it to the group: in that way, it is more readily understood why judgement is inappropriate.

3) Set up

For interviews and reading aloud, the ideal arrangement is to sit in a circle. Tables for writing are also needed. However, the arrangement is not usually ideal: the facilitator can organise the tables in a horseshoe disposition with chairs on the inside. The students turn their chairs towards the tables in order to write, and therefore have a degree of privacy. At the end of the work, the chairs are turned back towards the centre. This system also helps the facilitator to decide when to end the writing phase. The texts are usually short (G. Rico calls them miniatures). The text is finished once the writer needs to stop and think.

2. Biographical workshop: transcultural biographical work

Annemarie Schweighofer-Brauer

2a. Warm-up exercises

Here we describe a series of exercises that can be used at the beginning of a biographical teaching unit. The teacher or facilitator chooses an exercise suitable for the class, the time available, student ages and the objectives.

Biographical questionnaires

Preparation/materials: The teacher or facilitator prepares forms or sheets with questions having biographical content (one form per student) that have to be answered in a brief period of time. The chairs are placed in a circle with the forms in the centre, face down.

Place: the classroom with chairs in a circle
Time: 10-15 minutes

Procedure: the students sit on the chairs. The first chooses a form and answers the question. The second does the same and so forth.

Examples of questions

- What is your place of birth? Were you born at home or in hospital?
- Have you ever moved house? If so, from where to where? If not, where would you like to move?
- What was your favourite game at kindergarten/when you were small?
- What was your favourite food when you were small?
- Have you ever eaten a food you had never tasted before? What was it?

- Do your grandparents live in the same place/town?
- What was your favourite toy when you were small?
- Do you know anyone who comes from another country or whose parents come from another country? If so, what country? If not, would you like to know a boy or girl from a certain country?
- Have you ever heard people speaking other languages? Which languages?
- Which languages would you like to learn?
- What place do you like best among those you have known? Why?
- Do you watch television programmes filmed in other countries? Which countries?
- Did you like the idea of going to school before you started school?
- What would you like to do when you grow up?
- Do you remember a nice trip or experience with your parents or grandparents?
- Do your parents have brothers and sisters? How many?
- Do your parents talk about their past? About what in particular?
- What period of history interests you most?
- In what period of history would you like to live?
- Where did you like to play when you were little?
- Have you ever travelled? Where did you go?
- What is the best present you have ever had?
- Do you have relatives living in another country? If so, where? If not, in what country would you like to have relatives?
- What was your favourite TV programme or DVD when you were little?
- What was your favourite music when you were little?
- Who were your neighbours when you were little?
- Who did you play with in the playground or in the street?
- Have you ever been to a party/celebration/festivity of people from other countries? If not, what sort of party/celebration/festivity of people from other countries would you like to go to?

Suggestions for the facilitator

Questions that almost all the children can answer should be chosen. To identify them, clues can be gleaned from preliminary information gathered regarding the students. Certain questions must contain explicit transcultural aspects, e.g. reference to different places, but overall not too many questions on migration should be included. Questions about the present and future should also be included: biographical work considers the effects of memories on the present to promote a biographical understanding of the present and future. The students are stimulated to take an interest in the story of their life. In that way the teacher or facilitator obtains information about the children that can help in the biographical work and also for teaching in general.

Complete the sentences

Preparation/materials: the teacher or facilitator prepares a sheet with sentences to complete and makes a copy for each student; panel to post the sheets with drawing pins.

Place: the classroom with chairs in a circle; tables for writing
Time: about 10 minutes

Procedure: the students write their name on the sheet and complete the sentences. The sheets are posted on the panel or a suitable wall. The students have a few minutes to read the sheets of their classmates.

Sentences to complete
I like my ...
I hate it when ...
I'm afraid of ...
It makes me smile when ...
I hate eating ...
I hope that ...

Observations
The children are guided via thoughts/contingent sensations to think about themselves and their feelings and perceptions, in preparation for reflecting about their personal memories. They have a space where they can introduce themselves personally. The sheets remain posted for some time and the students can read those of their classmates and see how they can be simultaneously the same and different.

Groups with common characteristics

Preparation/materials: The teacher or facilitator identifies some characteristics to use for the formation of groups (see below), a CD player or the like, a lively piece of music.

Place: the classroom, provided the furniture can be moved aside, otherwise a room with sufficient free space.
Time: about 10 minutes

Procedure: the students move about the room to the cheerful notes of the music. The teacher or facilitator stops the music at short intervals and provides instructions for the formation of groups. The students find themselves in groups according to their characteristics; the groups break up when the music continues.

Examples of group formation
Form a group everyone:

- with eyes of the same colour
- with socks of the same colour
- who likes the same food
- with the same zodiac sign
- with the same colour hair
- ...

Observations: this exercise allows a relaxed, cheerful approach to the topic of transculturality and similarities/differences. The children can find themselves in different groups. A variant of the exercise envisages short consultation processes (e.g. to ask about zodiac signs). In this way the students learn to know themselves in other terms.

Variant: the students sit on chairs arranged in a circle. There is one chair less than the number of players. One student stands in the centre of the circle and invites those who have certain exterior characteristics to change places. For example, "everyone wearing tennis shoes" or "everyone with blue eyes" must stand up. While those who stood up are changing places, the student in the centre tries to steal a free chair. The player left without a chair goes in the middle and the game continues.

Game of the four corners

Preparation/materials: The teacher or facilitator prepare forms with the alternatives that the children can choose and place in one corner or another.

Place: a room in which the students can easily reach the four corners
Time: 10-15 minutes

Procedure: the students are initially in the centre of the room. The teacher or facilitator poses the first question and indicates four possible answers and the corresponding corner. He then posts or leaves the answers in the four corners. The students choose an answer and go to the corresponding corner. Now the teacher can ask (time permitting) why a student chose a certain corner and why another corner has many or no players.
The players return to the centre and another question is read. The game continues as before. The children have to decide for a corner: no-one can remain in the centre and they cannot talk or change places as they choose a corner. All opinions must be equally respected.

Examples of questions and their four answers:

My life and future

1. The story of my life so far is: ...
   black, colourful, pink, grey.
2. I felt especially good: ...
   at home, at kindergarten, at school, somewhere else.
3. My friends should: ...
   always be available, have the same interests as me, know how to entertain me, know how to help me.
4. I like travel because: ...
   I meet new people, I like places with many attractions, it is relaxing, I don't like travel.
5. Regarding people I don't know, I like to discover: ...
   where they come from, what they like to eat, how they speak, completely different things.
6. My future is: ...
7. black, colourful, pink, grey.

Observations: the children work on evaluations, perceptions, images of their life: this is an approach to biographical work. The game also allows an approach to transcultural questions (e.g. through the question about travel and strangers). The teacher or facilitator gets to know more about the life and thoughts of the children. A discussion can be elicited with certain values and rules; different behaviour and points of view can be explained.

True or false

Preparation/materials: none
Place: a room with chairs arranged in a circle
Time: about 10 minutes

Procedure: the first child shows a detail of his/her biography (e.g. I was born in hospital in Rome) in a chosen space and chooses another child who decides whether the detail is true or invented and then in turn shows a detail of his/her biography.
This continues until all have taken part. In the end a conclusion is drawn: what was true and what was false?

Observations: this game stimulates biographical thought in a relaxed and amusing way by recalling or inventing details of one's past. This invites the players to perceive each other, what they already know and what they don't know. In this way, biographical exchange takes place. In the end this game also makes the players think about the fact that biographical memory does not contain objective truths but only subjective memories.

2b. Teaching units

Inventing biographies

Preparation/materials: the teacher or facilitator collects pictures of children from all over the world (e.g. from magazines). The chairs are placed in a circle with the images scattered in the centre. If the class has to be divided for the biographical work, another adult is needed.

Place: a classroom with chairs arranged in a circle and a second space if the group is divided in two.

Time: about 2 hours
Age: 8-12 years

Procedure:

1. The teacher says: "All the children in the world are wonderful and equal. Find a picture that you particularly like. Take your time in choosing it".
2. The children circle around the pictures and each chooses one and takes it.
3. Each child, working alone, invents a biography for the picture chosen. To help, the teacher or facilitator can write questions on the board as prompts (see below). The questions are chosen according to the children's capacity to associate them freely with their pictures. The students can note down key words regarding their ideas on the picture, or simply rely on their memory.
4. The students walk around the room carrying their chosen pictures. They introduce themselves to those they meet: "Hello, I am ... and I come from ... Who are you?"
5. Depending on class size and the time available for the game, it may be necessary to divide the group. Each subgroup will need a teacher or other adult as guide. The class and/or subgroups sit in a circle. One after another, they tell detailed stories of the children depicted in the photographs, using the first person: "I am .... I come from ... My parents are .... and .... I am ... years old. I go to school/kindergarten etc."

6. The students stop impersonating the “invented child”. This transition must be made effective by an action, such as crawling through a tyre as a symbol of leaving the imaginary world and becoming oneself again. They think about this experience and share their reflections in a group session: if I met this person, where could it happen? What would we talk about? What could we do together? What could we learn from each other?

Cues:
I am ...
I come from ...
My parents are called ... and ...
I have .... brothers/sisters.
I live in a city/town in a house/flat.
I am ... years old.
I go to school/kindergarten...
I like eating ...
I am interested in ...
Most of all I would like ...

Observations
The key word transmitted with this game is that we are all strangers to most of the world and as citizens of the world we are equal. Every child in the world has a story that is not only his; a story that helps to overcome many prejudices if we listen to it.
If time is available, children in the age group 12-14 years could continue on the topic of racism or do biographical work on the topic “When I felt like a stranger...” A sensation barometer (e.g. made of cardboard) could be used, a strip with the values 0 and 100 at opposite ends, and in the middle intermediate values. Along the edges there are clothes pegs to indicate the level of the sensations elicited by the question: “How did I fare?” (100 = very well). Then a discussion of the following type could be held: “I felt good because... I felt bad because...” How did the situation happen? When could something similar happen again? What would I do in that case? How do people who feel strangers here among us manage? What sort of experiences do they have? What do they think? What do they feel?

The tree of life

The first of the teaching units described here can also be conducted on its own. In the proposed combination, work with one's own biography and that of one's companions in the first unit leads to biographical attention towards persons one does not know well in the second unit.

1. My tree of life

Preparation/materials: A sheet of A3 paper for each child; pencils. The teacher or facilitator prepares a poster (see below).
Several days before, the students can be invited to bring photographs of themselves (as babies or infants) to paste on their tree of life, and if they have them, also photos of their parents, grandparents...

Place: the schoolroom with chairs arranged in a circle, tables and chairs for drawing (otherwise the students can draw on the floor).
Time: 3-4 hours
Age: 8-14 years

Procedure
1. Conversation with the students: "Imagine your life as if it were a tree: what is in the roots? in the trunk? in the branches?" The teacher can write key words, drawn from this conversation, on the board.
2. The comments are hung on the poster (see below).
3. The students draw their trees of life on the A3 sheet of paper and enrich it with words, photos and images.
4. The students sit in a circle with the coordinator and place their sheets in front of themselves, exchanging opinions regarding the trees.

Examples of cues could be:
What so you think is the most important thing that your tree should contain? Are there similarities, and where, between your tree and that of your companion? What does your tree have that is very different from the trees of the others? In what aspect is your tree truly original?

Poster
An example of a tree is drawn on the poster. On the roots, trunk and branches (or near them), the corresponding questions are written. Above the tree are the words: “There are visible and hidden things in the tree of life”.

Roots: where do they come from, what to they feed on to grow? Here photos could be pasted, little drawings added or key words on grandparents, me as a baby, me as an infant...

Trunk: what sustains me? Here current photos can be pasted, as well as drawings, comments on the question and on the present.

Branches: what are the flowers and fruits of my life? What is my harvest? What successes can I celebrate? What birds come to roost in the branches of my tree? Hopes and plans for the future can also eventually be indicated (the questions come from Klingenberger 2003, page 51).

Observations
With the help of the symbol of the tree, the students are invited to work on the story of their lives and to practise biographical thinking. The stories of their lives become visible in the group and they all become aware of the stories of their companions through practising the art of biographical storytelling and listening. The students are guided to notice and compare similarities and differences between their growth paths, their experiences: what is similar? What is different?

Suggestions for the facilitator

It is useful if the teacher or facilitator brings pictures from magazines for the children to use. An approach to the topic of diversity can start with pictures of different types of trees. Another possibility is an imaginary journey with the students in which each is a seed planted in the earth and later becomes a plant.
Smaller children need a lot of time to create their tree of life. Ideally, this work should occupy half a day (3-4 hours of school) so that everyone who wishes can present his/her tree and thoughts can be shared on the topic.

2. Questions to “another” person about the tree of life

Preparation/materials:

In the time available before the start of this second teaching unit, the students have the task of approaching someone they do not know very well (or not at all) and asking questions about his/her tree of life. The teacher or facilitator could for example contact a migrant organisation asking for volunteers. The interviews could take place in student/migrant pairs. The students could bring their own trees of life to the interview to explain to their interlocutors, asking them to describe the roots, trunk and branches of their tree. It is worthwhile investing some lesson time beforehand to prepare the children for these interviews, discuss the type of questions to ask and how to ask them.
During the interviews, the students ask for their interlocutor’s permission to take notes. If they obtain this permission, they can get their interlocutor to draw his/her tree of life.

Place: the schoolroom with chairs arranged in a circle
Time: 3-4 hours

Procedure
The students sit in a circle with the teacher or facilitator and exchange information about how the interviews went. What did I learn? What did the interviewee tell me? What in particular impressed me? What struck or amazed me? What is similar to what happens here? What is completely different?

Observations
This exercise gives the students the possibility of coming into contact with a completely new and unknown person and of asking questions that would otherwise never be asked. The students learn that the “strangers” have experiences, hopes and desires similar to their own, and that they have a

solid and quite particular life story. In this way they are led to question stereotypes or at least discover that they are not completely true. In subsequent meetings with people they do not know this experience will have weight: although stereotypes exist, it now seems a good idea to look closer at individual cases.

Family maps

Preparation/materials: The teacher or leader prepares a sheet of paper (A4) with a map of the world (or of Europe, if appropriate) for each child and a large poster with the same outline (see example below).
The students have previously had the task of asking their parents and grandparents if they had ever lived in other places, where that place was, how it was and why they decided to leave it. They also investigated whether other members of the family moved or once lived in other places, where that place was, how it was and why they decided to leave it.
If the family has always lived in the same place, the children could ask their parents and grandparents if they ever wanted to move elsewhere, where they would have liked (or would like) to live and what would change in the new place.

Place: the schoolroom with chairs arranged in a circle
Time: 2 hours (plus preparation at home)
Age: 12-14 years

Procedure

The teacher or leader sits in the circle with the students.

1. Introduction: going back many generations in our family histories we discover that our ancestors emigrated or moved at some stage and that they come from all over the world; nobody is truly indigenous.

2. Interview: what do you know about this aspect of your family history? What did your parents and grandparents tell you?

3. The students draw the migration routes of their family as told to them by their parents and grandparents, as well as those they discovered by other means, as well as their own. They use the maps of the world or Europe that the teacher gave them, depending on the countries involved in the migrations. They mark the points of departure and arrival, joined by a line, possibly with different colours for each person. Migrations that never happened can also be indicated: those that parents and grandparents would like to have made.

4. The children use a colour they choose to draw their family migrations on the poster map.

5. The poster is placed in the centre of the circle of chairs and the children discuss the result. What does the poster suggest to them?

Observations
The children entertain a biographical discourse with their parents and grandparents, practising and broadening their family biographical memory. By tracing the migration routes of the family, they understand that all families have an immediate or distant migratory background and therefore had to face the problem of organising their lives in a new place and of getting to know a foreign world.

My shield

A. My shield

Preparation/materials: an A4 or A3 sheet of paper with the outline of a shield or coat of arms on it (see example below) for each child; pencils; panels for posting with drawing pins; wool.

Place: the schoolroom with chairs arranged in a circle; tables and chairs for individual work
Time: 2-3 hours
Age: 10-14 years

Procedure
1. Introduction: the teacher or leader asks the students if they know shields or coats of arms, if they know their meaning, how they originated and evolved and where they are displayed.

2. Introduction to the exercise: “you have a historical date, you come from a certain family, in your life there are persons, things and skills that play an important role. Draw your shield choosing symbols and colours that describe you well”.
   The students design their shields on an A4 or preferably A3 sheet of paper with the outline already printed on it and the label “My shield”. The shield is divided in four parts:

- upper right: my family
- upper left: my skills
- lower right: my interests
- •lower left: what I would like to do in 10 years time.

Suggestions for the facilitators

The students should do their drawings with great care. Under the shield they can write its motto. The four parts can be adapted because sometimes “my skills” and “my interests” coincide.

3. The shields are placed in the centre of the circle of chairs and the students guess which belongs to whom (if they do not already know). Each explains what she meant to represent.

4. A further phase could be that each student fixes his shield to a panel with drawing pins and uses wool to link parts of his shield to strongly related parts of other shields. Thus a network expressing individuality as well as membership of a group is created.

5. The following questions can be asked: What is surprising about the shields? Which shields are similar? Which are very different?

Observations: the children have to reflect on themselves, their families, their origin and their biographical extraction. They present themselves, learn new things about each other and perceive things that unite them.

Suggestions for the facilitators

To facilitate the students in creating their shields, images (e.g. from magazines) can be used.

Variant for presentation of shields: everyone thinks of the name of a king or queen, stands on a chair with his/her shield and presents it to the others. (The facilitator says: "Now King X or Queen Y will make a speech".) This type of presentation motivates many children to describe their shields. At the end of each presentation the others applaud.

B. I take my shield into the world

Preparation/materials: an A4 or A3 sheet of paper with the outline of a shield or coat of arms on it (see example below) for each child; pencils; panels for posting with drawing pins; wool.

Place: the schoolroom with chairs arranged in a circle; tables and chairs for individual work
Time: 2 hours
Age: 10-14 years

Procedure

1. The children sit in a circle with their shields. The teacher or leader asks leading questions such as: Where have you been in the world? What in particular struck you? Who did you know in those places? Where would you like to take a trip? What attracts you about that destination? What do you expect to discover there?

2. The students draw a shield linked to the experience of the trip they took or would like to take, describing the following things:
    - upper right: who were you before the trip?
    - upper left: what experiences did you have during the trip?
    - lower right: what did you learn from the people you met on your trip?
    - lower left: who are you now?

3. The shields are placed in the centre of the circle and the students guess which belongs to whom, voicing their thoughts, ideas and sensations regarding the shields.

4. The shields are posted on the panel and single parts that resemble those on other shields are linked by threads of red wool.

Observations

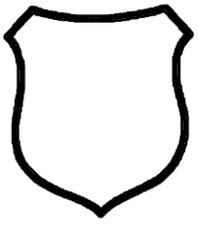
The students reflect on how experience of other places and peoples influences and changes one. The network that links the shields of the students now also embraces the world.

We can widen our network with events that we experience and people we meet; this broadens our individuality and intensifies our sense of union and belonging.

A series of stimuli for the above exercises were obtained from the following documents:

Christoph Sievers: Mach 15 Methodenbörse
www.lagjungenarbeit.de/downloads/2008/2008-10_mach-15-methodenmappe.pdf
Klingenberger, Hubert (2003): Lebensmutig, Don Bosco: München
Realize ProjektpartnerInnen (Hg.): Transkulturelle Biographiearbeit. Ein Handbuch, Roma 2012
www.uibk.ac.at/fbi/download/Manual_AT.pdf

Example of shield:
www.abload.de/img/0003_vorlage_e95low_qu25cf.png



Example of outline of Europe:
media.4teachers.de/images/thumbs/image_thumb.2740.png

An example of the outline of a world map can be found at:
http://www.pixmac. de/ (no. 44038753)
Alternatively a search engine for free content can be used:
http://search.creativecommons.org

3. Biographical workshop: biographical/creative writing

Hedwig Dejaco

3a. Warm-up exercises

At the beginning, one of the following exercises can be done, depending on the group.

Filling the vessel

At the start of the lesson, it may be necessary to focus the students' attention. This little experiment is useful for "energising" the participants.

Place: the students sit in a circle or make themselves comfortable wherever they wish in the room. However, since only chairs and benches are usually available, the ideal solution is to sit in a circle.

Time: about 10 minutes
Age: 12-14 years

Introduction
"Let me guide you in a breathing exercise that will give you energy. Sit as comfortably as possible. Place your feet firmly on the floor and push your lower back against the back of the chair. Your hands rest loosely on your thighs, your head is relaxed (in old Westerns the coachman often sits in this way on his box as the stagecoach hurtles across the prairie...)
Close your eyes and imagine you are a vessel. Breathe in normally and imagine that the vessel fills from the bottom up. When you are full to the top with air, suspend breathing for a moment and feel that the

vessel is full. Then breathe out slowly, imagining that the vessel is emptying.
Begin the in-breath again and repeat the exercise for several minutes: if you continue for long enough, you will clear your mind and feel a pleasant tingling throughout the body. You have enough time... (3 minutes).
Now interrupt the exercise, open your eyes and bring your attention back to the circle."

Feedback

- Did you like this experiment?
- How do you feel now?

Detoxification

Sometimes children bring frustrations and anger from home or from the previous lesson. When the atmosphere is tense, the following experiment can be useful.

Preparation/materials: some large sheets of brown paper and felt pens for everyone
Place: the students sit in on chairs or make themselves comfortable wherever they wish in the room.
Time: about 10 minutes
Age: 12-14 years

Introduction
"This experiment will enable you to break free of whatever is worrying you or making you angry, so that afterwards you can work together well.
Begin by asking yourselves what thoughts are worrying, irritating or agitating you lately... (15 seconds). Concentrate on these thoughts while you take a felt pen and tear off a piece of paper. Now write a word or phrase on the paper, or draw a face or an object. Now you have various possibilities. You can tear up the paper, screw it up into a ball, throw it against the wall, stomp on it...

and in the end throw it in the wastepaper basket. Do whatever you think useful to break free from your annoying thoughts.
When you have finished, you can do the same for other similar thoughts. There is enough paper!

Suggestion for facilitators

It is a good idea to discreetly collect the balls of paper so that nobody gets too worked up about his personal problems, whatever their cause. It is good for the facilitator and the teacher to take part as well.

Reflection

- Did you like this experiment?
- How do you feel now?

3b. Teaching units

Imaginary visit to the home of my infancy

Objectives:

- Reappropriation of the spatial/material environment of infancy; remember our first house and ponder its importance
- Analyse social/cultural influences
- Getting to know each other in the group.

Material: paper and pens to use after the imaginary journey

Place: a big room with carpet/s or a library.
Time: 2 hours
Age: 12-14 years

Procedure
The facilitator begins with a brief relaxation exercise (4 minutes) in sitting or lying position. Make sure that nobody chooses a position that cannot be maintained for say 14 minutes, e.g. with crossed legs or the hands clasped behind the head.

Introduction
"Take a comfortable position and close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths. (Repeat a few times)

Feel the breath flow through your body (1 minute).

Let your thoughts flow without holding on to them. If you hear noises, note the fact but return your attention to yourselves (30 seconds).

Let your thoughts flow along your body from head to feet, without holding on to them. Where you feel tension, amplify it and then let it go. Breathe deeply again and regularly (2 minutes).

Imagine that you are in the first house you can remember. Let the images surface (30 seconds).

Don't think about what there should be but only what you see. Look around. What do you see? Walls, furniture, colours, forms, doors, windows?

Give yourself time to explore the house (2 minutes). Is there anyone in the house? Let the pictures rise to the surface.

Observe faces, attitudes, clothes. What are they doing? (1 minute)

Now leave the house and return to reality. Open your eyes, stretch and make fists for a moment to wake up. Think for a moment about the images you saw.

If you did not see anything, invent something, it will be fine."

Suggestion for the facilitator

The possibility of inventing something will help children in difficulty e because of inner opposition or who are feeling lost. Visualising images is not so easy and improves with exercise. Invented images are fine because in any case they are recalled by an unconscious associative mechanism.

Now take the writing material and make a simple note of what you saw and how you saw it. There are no rules. You don't have to write a long text; just note down what comes to mind. Don't worry about spelling, there is no right or wrong. You have 8 minutes.

Suggestion for the facilitator

The students can list things, a kind of inventory. This should not be said at the beginning, but if somebody does it, any manner of description is fine!
Important: whatever form the notes take, they should be appreciated for what they represent: a personal note that contains information that the students decide to share with the others. The notes must not be corrected or classified: this is not the point.

Reading the notes and discussion

When the students have finished writing, the class pauses.
Then the texts are read in a circle; the first to read is asked to give the floor to another. If a student has difficulty starting, do not insist. Perhaps he will be happy to read at the end, once he has seen that the others have not written works of art and do not write any better or differently from him. Sometimes students only want to be coaxed a little.
The teacher or facilitator can underline the occasional interesting difference, and finally asks questions and summarises impressions. When the reading is over, there is applause and acknowledgement for everyone.

My adventure in Fantasyland

"Strangers in their own land" is the subtitle of this exercise. The children have to tackle many challenges, as in various children's films and books, like Alice in Wonderland, Endless story, Winnetou and Avatar. These stories are helpful, but it can be healthy, in the true sense of the word, to create a story with one's own personal monsters, envisaging rescuers and tackling the classical hero's journey in the shoes of an alter ego.

Objectives

- to offer the possibility of expressing personal difficulties and feelings of being different, misunderstood or not appreciated, in symbols, without exposing oneself personally, by means of an "invented" story
- to freely imagine or invent a story
- mutual esteem as listeners.

Preparation/material: pictures from calendars or postcards (Salvador Dalì, René Magritte)

Suggestions for facilitators

The pictures provide input for stories that arise from one's inner world and are often loaded with emotion. At the end of the work, it is a good idea to let the students keep the pictures

Place: the students sit at their desks or find a place they like anywhere in the classroom.
Time: 2 hours
Age: 12-14 years

Procedure

a) Choose a picture for inspiration

There must be more pictures than students so that all can have some choice. Selection usually happens quickly. If two students choose the same picture they should sit near each other while writing. If someone cannot decide, she can be helped by proposing a picture. The picture chosen cannot be changed if the student decides she does not like it. The challenge lies here: in that case the story will be tragic or unpleasant. The plot can be invented freely: fables and stories of fantasy are often based on a struggle between good and evil and contain unpleasant and confusing situations.

Suggestions for the facilitator

If a student wishes to work without a picture, this is fine.

b) Write a story using fantasy

Questions that help students to write the text

Where is the hero/heroine? What are his/her surroundings like? What happened? What could happen?

Are there other living creatures in the vicinity? Are they dangerous? How dangerous? Invent your own story!
Make sure there is silence and calm and give the students 15 minutes.
If some students are still busy writing after that time, another 5 minutes can be assigned.

Suggestions for the facilitator

If the students begin to think about the text or distract others, the urge to write and concentration are reduced. Some students will not be able to finish their story but an unfinished story is fine!
Younger children who are not yet able to write quickly and fluidly should begin by drawing their story and only then begin to tell it. Writing a text can be a big obstacle.

c) Reading circle

All the texts must be appreciated (good idea, beautiful description, exciting scene...). For unfinished texts, one can comment that such a good start makes one curious about what happens next.

Suggestions for the facilitator

If students do not want to read their stories themselves, the facilitator or a friend can offer to do so. The reward is the great quantity and variety of ideas produced and the climate of trust created in the group.

Reading is in itself a form of publication. In this context, spelling does not play a role. Creative writing is a process in which experiences are made and errors are admissible. The texts can be collected if the students agree.

4. Suggestions

Choice and preparation of games

- For some games, the age range is indicated as a guide for the facilitator

- Facilitators should consider their role and capacity (how many experiments, how much noise, how much improvisation can I manage?) and define the objectives of the game. The objectives can vary from group to group.

- Games are not lessons, so different rules apply.

- A room suitable for games should be chosen. For acting and role-playing there should be enough space for movement. For acting, a stage is useful, but if not available, a virtual stage can be marked out with a cord on the floor.

- Games should be chosen on the basis of available or necessary resources. What is on site? What is available? What can I bring with me? What (e.g. pictures and photographs) can the students bring?

- The group should preferably not exceed 25 persons. The games can be conducted by two facilitators, but they must agree on procedure.

- If the facilitator does not know the class, it is possible to obtain information beforehand on how best to conduct the exercises and possibly how to divide the class into groups. This makes it easier to solve any problems that may arise during the exercises.

- The programme should be organised to leave enough time to finish the unit and comment on it together.

Conducting the activities

- At the beginning the facilitator should introduce herself briefly and can say something about her reasons for doing this work and about her training. She should also agree on and explain the rules of communication (participate and contribute, accept companions' comments without negative judgements, there is no right and wrong) and say that the topic of the day is diversity.

- If the units are conducted by a person external to the class, it is important to previously exchange information and precisely define the roles of the facilitator and the teacher. The teacher can observe the games passively or can take an active part. In any case he must not interfere with the content of the unit. An alternative is to leave the facilitator alone with the class.

- Each game should be explained clearly. The students should have time to ask questions.

- Everyone can take part and all answers are equally acceptable.

- The students should listen to their companions. They should also listen to the facilitator's instructions. Only then does the game begin.

- To avoid excessive noise and excitement, a signal (e.g. STOP or a physical sign) can be decided with the students. On the signal, everyone has to freeze.

- Before starting a unit it can be useful to make a general introduction of the topic (e.g. brainstorming in small groups "Where do we meet diversity?" "For example in nature, culture, free time and imaginary journeys"; warm-up exercises).

- The ideal time to dedicated to a unit of Diversity4Kids is 2-3 hours

- Depending on the number of students in a class, their age and group dynamics, a game can be shortened or lengthened.

- It is important to tell the children at the start and during play, that there is no right and wrong in this work. In this way the students are more open and can contribute without fear or pressures (judgement-free zone).

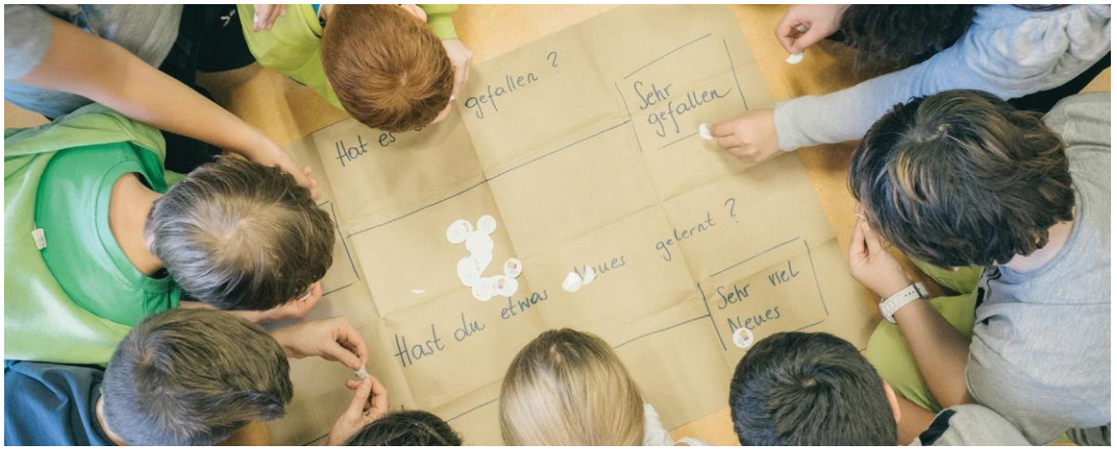
- Everyone should be able to take part as much as they wish. Students can refuse and do not necessarily have to take part in every phase of an exercise.

- Units of Diversity4Kids can proceed in a flexible manner. The proposals can be supplemented with personal ideas and exercises can be combined.

- All students should be equally encouraged to take part.

- For some exercises it may be appropriate to divide the class into small groups.

- It is important to distinguish between games and reality. At the end of a role-playing game, a specific conscious phase for coming out of a role is necessary; for example, the students can crawl through a tyre or physically shake off the role.



After the game

- After the game or after single exercises, it is advisable to allow a brief moment for reflection.

- Sitting in a circle, ask the children for feedback about the game. Did they like it? What aspects did they consider positive and negative? What did they learn or understand? These questions can be written on a poster and the replies attached with adhesive tape. A concise evaluation should be made after each Diversity4Kids item.

- Sometimes a calming exercise is advisable to mark a conscious return to daily life or to a pause.

- The topic of diversity can be integrated into almost any school subject.

- All the games should give students input that they remember and can draw on.

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Today when we speak of a society of migration we mean a society characterised by diversity. Diversity has long become part of our daily lives. We all have the task of acquiring the skills for living together in this multicultural globalised society and of making sure that diversity is accepted as the norm, not as an exception.

This second volume of the kit “Diversity4Kids” is for teachers and everyone working with children and adolescents in the 8-14-year age group.
The volume contains two methods of biographical work: a transcultural biography workshop and a biographical/creative writing workshop.
www.diversity4kids.eu

A joint project of:

Project partners

Center for migrants in Tyrol (ZeMiT - Zentrum für MigrantInnen in Tirol)
European Academy of Bolzano (EURAC) - Institute of Minority Rights
EGTC “European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino”
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