Adapting Learning in Inclusive Communities and Environment

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D3.1 TEACHING PROSOCIALITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOL - PROSOCIAL PEDAGOGICAL MANUAL

ADDENDUM ON DIVERSITY

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Content

Prosociality for promoting social inclusion and fighting discrimination

Swearer and Espalage (2011)[1] outline how bullying mechanisms and contexts are similar to discrimination and how research findings on bullying and discrimination find similar factors contributing to these phenomena. Both rely on power struggles and on exclusion of "others" who do not comply, or cannot comply to the community norm. Prosociality may be able to alter these exclusionary mechanisms.

The NEABS-model

GALE has developed a model to explain these mechanism in a visual way to teachers and principals. It describes the interaction between norms, emotions, attitudes, behavior and stereotyping, which is why it is nicknamed the NEABS-model.

Norms

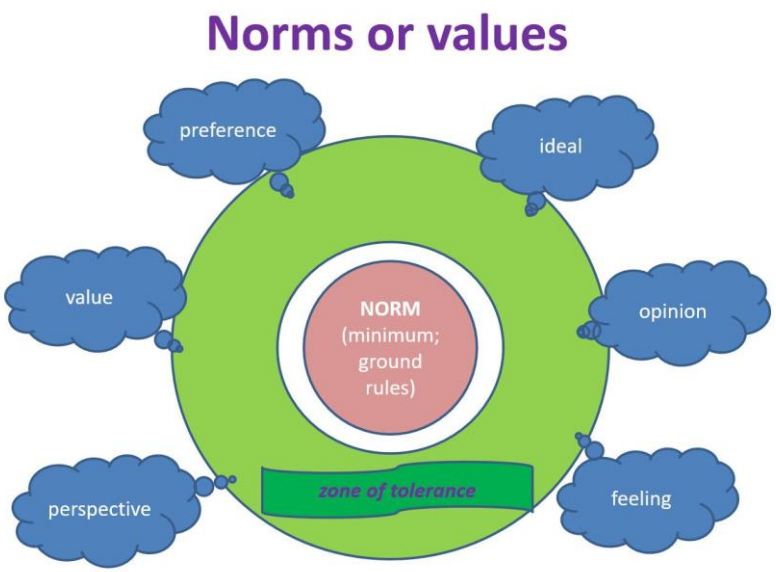
Teachers and students often confuse the concepts of "values" and "norms", and may use them interchangeably. However, it is important to be very clear about this because students may think their personal *values* are "the norm" and therefore it is "right" to condemn others who do not comply with these values.

The Cambridge Dictionary of English defines a norm as "an accepted standard or a way of behaving or doing things that most people agree with". In a wider sense, a norm is also used as "an authoritative standard" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). For pedagogical clarity, GALE explains norms as "minimum standards set by a group, community or society to function properly". Norms are, as it were, ground rules that everybody has to abide to.

In a (direct vote) democratic society, this means the majority decides about the norms as formulated in laws and policies. In addition, the majority sets social and cultural

[1] Swearer Napolitano, Susan; Espalage, Dorothy (2011). Expanding the Social-Ecological Framework of Bullying among Youth: Lessons Learned from the Past and Directions for the Future (Chapter 1). In: *Educational Psychology Papers and Publications*. 140. (http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/edpsychpapers/140)

ground rules or standards that members of the society of groups are expected to abide to. Transgressing such group or cultural rules may be sanctioned in a social or cultural way, primarily by disapproving, social exclusion and ascribing a lower social status. However, in any society there are always minorities and democratic constitutions always protect the human rights of minorities. This means the majority should not adopt laws or implement policies that are detrimental to minorities, in the sense that it would take away they basic human rights.



The same goes for individuals in social groups: if the majority does not agree with the opinion or behavior of an individual or of a minority in the group, it is morally reprehensible (in a society with democratic attitudes) to punish or exclude then just for being different.

Values differ across persons and groups. Values can be personal preferences or opinions, or they can be group ideals or visions, like religious or political ideologies. Because people always have different values based on their own background and preferences, values can never be the measuring stick of norms or of a society-wide morality. Values only become norms when they are sanctioned as ground rules by all members of society.

This of course creates tensions, because there are always majorities and minorities and they may not like each other's values. In a democratic society or group, these tensions continuously have to be renegotiated. In a dialogue, the involved persons and groups need to make clear to each other how they feel and why they can or cannot comply with ground rules, or adapt, or get some kind of special exemption status when this does not hurt the fabric of society or the group. This constant negotiation is only possible in the "zone of tolerance": the space an individual, group or society offers to

minorities to accept that others have different values and to not sanction this as long as the group or society is not threatened as a whole.

Emotions

Operating in the zone of tolerance requires an emotional effort, because when “others” challenge your values, you may feel threatened and annoyed, but you have to regulate your emotions to be able to enter the democratic dialogue.

When someone is different or actively opposes the values of someone else, this usually results in a negative emotions. This emotion is a primary instinct and a natural reaction to difference or unexpected events. Scientists call this “survival” instinct the “fight-or-flight response”. It is hard-wired in our brain. When we experience an image or an event that looks unusual to us, the first instinctive response of our brain is to decide whether we can fight it or if we have to flee. It is not useful to resist this instinct because it is the most basic part of our brains and it will overrule higher functions. Trying to restrain these primary emotions continuously has negative effects, such as self-oppression, which can lead to stress and on the long term to burn-out.

But we can learn how to deal with it.

Fight or flight emotional responses can be seen in students when they aggressively oppose each other or the teacher (fight) or when they avoid answering questions or getting involved in a discussion (flight). Traditional ways of teaching often fail to address situations of fight or flight properly. When students are aggressive of provocative, it is common to address this with a (sometimes derogative) put-down or with a reprimand or punishment. This does not work well and is not prosocial: it shows the student their natural emotion is “bad” and it does not teach them how to handle their emotions in a prosocial way. When students are emotionally withdrawing and not paying attention, the traditional pedagogic method is often to personally ask the student a direct question or again to reprimand or joke about the lack of attention. The result may that the insecure or angry student feels put-down or shown-down and withdraws even more.

GALE recommends that if a teacher wants to deal with a person who has an instinctive fight or flight emotion, you first have to allow them to show their feelings, then you describe what you see and you can ask what is happening. To be able to do this in class, you need to create a safe atmosphere which allows you to address students this way. When you ask students about their feelings, it is essential to do this without judgment. This creates space for the other person to reflect, while judging them will stimulate a new fight or flight response. A fight-or-flight emotion does not last long. As soon as you start discussing feelings, the students starts to reflect on their feelings, which in essence is not an emotional but a cognitive process. The teacher knows that the fight or flight response is over when the student shifts from emotion to this cognitive level of explanation.

It is worthy to note that not only students, but also teachers are prone to have fight or flight emotions in class. Like students, they have to learn to not deny these, but to recognize them and handle them properly. This is the deeper level of the teacher being a true role-model for students, a function a machine could never take over. However, there are still many teachers that think it is “unprofessional” to show any emotion in school. Of course in reality they show emotions, but with this attitude they attempt to deny that. If they do that they both deny students emotional role-modeling and run the risk of burn-out when their school or class is not safe enough.

Attitudes

If negative emotions are accepted or even stimulated (for example in socially “acceptable” forms of discrimination), people will eventually develop a negative attitude. A negative attitude consists of both cognitive and emotional elements. The cognitive aspects of the negative attitude are displayed through arguments used in order to reject values, behaviors or identities of others.

For example, student could say that “immigrants take our jobs”, or that “homosexuality is forbidden by my religious beliefs”. These are cognitive arguments covering up their negative emotions of fear and anger.

Teachers can try to change this cognitive reasoning by giving people “correct” information, but this is almost never effective. GALE calls this the “Magnum” effect. In a Magnum ice-cream, the ice-cream is covered by a thin layer of chocolate. We view the cognitive arguments to be the thin of chocolate covering the emotional part of the attitude. This emotional part is frozen, which shows because people with a negative attitude are often not volatile in expressing their opinion: their mind speaks, not their heart or belly. As soon as the teacher has clarified one of the misunderstandings or prejudices, a person with a negative attitude will jump to the next argument rather than engage is a real dialogue. To “protect” the negative emotions, persons with negative attitudes will avoid discussion about their true feelings and keep repeating different kinds of cognitive arguments to prove their attitude/value is “right”. Exchanging such arguments is not effective education because nobody learns anything (except maybe getting better in defending negative attitudes).

To be effective, teachers need to deal with the Magnum effect in non-cognitive ways. GALE advises teachers to engage students in a dialogue about the feelings *underlying* the superficial opinions and prejudices. You can only deal on the cognitive level of arguments *after* students are open and ask earnest and curious questions. This openness only occurs after you have dealt with the negative emotions and attitudes. To be more concrete: when students propose that their value should be a norm or express a negative attitude, the teacher should ask not *why* they think so (cognitive) but *how the student feels about this*. With youth that is more streetwise and where it is taboo to discuss feelings (especially boys with extreme masculine posturing), it may be helpful to ask for what they *would do*, rather than how they feel. By expressing what they would do, they implicitly show how they feel but in terms of actions rather than feelings.

Behavior

According to health promotion theory, attitudes are strong predictors of behavior. If negative attitudes are transformed into practice, they results in social exclusion, unequal treatment (discrimination) and/or violence. When we think of the opposite of prosocial behavior, we tend to think about bullying and explicit violence. But in daily

life, the most common form of negative behavior is social distance. We tend to avoid people with different values or identities and choose our friends and colleagues from the same or from similar social bubbles. When “others” are too different from us, we may even feel like shunning, “defriending” or attacking them. This “social distance” creates a type of low-level stress for minorities that is called “minority stress”. Everyone needs (pro)social supportive contact to survive. Excluded students sometimes do not suffer immediately by social distance of others, but in the longer term it leads to more severe stress, depression, burn-out and even suicide.

Schools traditionally focus on stopping extremely negative behavior by reproaching bullies and by punishing behavior that clearly crosses the line in public. But most negative behavior starts with social exclusion and much more privately, and it only sometimes escalates in public violence. This is why discrimination and exclusion often escapes the attention of teachers, and some teachers think it is not the responsibility of schools to do something about is. We suggest that a good learning environment is safe, warm, welcoming and prosocial. Helping, sharing and comforting are essential elements of the school prosocial environment and schools can foster this by explicitly introducing supportive peer groups, structural cooperation during lessons and extracurricular activities and role-modelling prosocial and supportive behavior.

Stereotypes

If people maintain social distance, they deny themselves the opportunity to meet “different” people in reality. As a consequence, the only image they have of “others” is

an image that struck them because it was different from their expectations and of the norm. "Black or white" crude images that are used as a negative representation of an entire group of people are called stereotypes. Be aware that "stereotypes" are not "extreme role models" that are self-created by “other” people, but images created by observing/presenting only partial characteristics. For example, we “see” a black person and associate it with crime. We may see a refugee getting a job you would have wanted. Or we “see” a gay person, and we associate it with a focus on sex. Stereotypes may be completely untrue, but often they are partly based in reality. Many black people are forced to poverty by social mechanisms and some poor people may revert to crime to survive. We accept some refugees and they also need jobs. Many gay people have suppressed their sexuality for years and some may celebrate their coming-out by enjoying sex openly or even provocatively. Stereotypes are often, unconsciously or on purpose, projecting the aspects that feel uncomfortable on the entire group and become an argument to reject entire social groups. It is prosocial to avoid stereotyping.

Since stereotypes usually result from a deviation of existing norms, they can lead to a fight-or-flight reaction.

The NEABS-model explains how norms, emotions, attitudes, behavior and stereotyping interact to create a downward spiral of fear, fear/anger, exclusion and stereotyping.

But it can also be used to imagine how this vicious spiral can be turning the other way: by setting positive and democratic ground rules and norms, by supporting a healthy

way to deal with (natural) emotions of fear and anger, by creating a constructive dialogue on values and feelings, by diminishing social, distance and creating social cooperation and by dismantling the force of stereotypes. This cannot be done in a single antibullying lesson or a short curriculum on prosociality. It needs to be embedded in a coherent prosocial school community culture.

School culture as a key aspect of prosocial policy to combat discrimination

Lekunze and Storm (2017) did an interesting in-depth study of how teachers view and deal with bullying in New Jersey (US) high schools. They found that teacher tend to see “bullying” as more or less synonymous with all kinds of violence, both physical and emotional, but they don’t recognize the underlying processes and mechanisms and therefore have few ideas how to systematically stop bullying or to promote prosociality. Instead, they tend to handle bullying “incidents” in more or less standard ways: they reproach the bully and in serious cases report and punish them.

There are a lot of bullying situations that are outside their direct control and they often state that this bullying might be reduced by more strict monitoring and control. Arguably, their wish for stricter control of students is not in line with their teaching goals to promote self-esteem, citizenship and 21st Century skills to their students. The Jersey teachers also would like to see more lessons about bullying, but the implementation of such lessons is limited and often not very effective because single lessons without a supportive context just provide hollow or double messages. At the same time, many teachers think that “bullying has always be part of school culture and will always be”.

This sketch of a US high school culture may be quite prevalent in other countries. Lekunze and Storm note that teachers see bullying incidents as both a “normal part of school culture” but at the same time as separate incidents. They don’t link the school culture to causes of bullying, nor do they see or believe how a more prosocial school culture could function as a driver to not only to reduce, but completely eradicate bullying.

The NEABS-model can be used to develop a more multifaceted and coherent policy towards prosociality which takes the typical high school elements into account. Such a coherent prosocial school policy requires a consciousness of the students, teachers and school principals of how these social, bullying and exclusion mechanisms work. Interventions on only one of the 5 domains of the model cannot work on their own. In line with the socio-ecological model, the school needs to develop a holistic and coherent policy for prosociality that contain coordinated elements on all domains.

The school needs to set and show prosocial norms as key values; the school should be clear how its fosters the need for growing autonomy of adolescents, but also how it provides a safe environment in which their insecurity and fears do not lead to extreme normative attitudes an d behavior.

The teachers and students need to be able to recognize their fears and anger and to be able to deal with them in a prosocial way. Here again the enlarged insecurities of puberty and adolescence play a role, and the role of the teachers as role-models, facilitators of self-development but also of setting limits is essential. Teachers are also fallible emotional beings and schools need to support, protect, guide their staff in this and make clear where the limitations of teachers are.

The school needs to have a spiral curriculum and linked pedagogy to develop positive and democratic attitudes in students; schools need to be clear that actively promoting tolerance and democracy is paramount and it is unacceptable to label this “leftist indoctrination” or “just an opinion”. The organization of the schools needs to reflect this; you cannot teach students democracy and at the same time treat them as products or voiceless subjects; this will create resistance rather than prosociality.

The schools needs to coach and encourage autonomous positive prosocial behavior; punishment and excessive control are counterproductive to foster 21st century skills and responsibility. Here again coaching students to learn responsible autonomy will support true prosociality rather than superficial politeness.

Schools need to explain how stereotypes work and encourage to make own choices rather than to follow or reject stereotyped role-models based on fear that you will not be accepted. Here again, this is not only relevant for the explicit curriculum, but also for the hidden curriculum: images often stereotypes or stereotypes embedded in

school routines will tend to contradict messages in lessons that contradict common practice.

Deep diversity and prosociality

In the previous paragraphs we discussed how bullying, exclusion mechanisms and discrimination are intrinsically related to each other. The suggestions we offered point to ways on how negative attitudes and behaviours can be shifted towards supportive attitudes and prosocial behavior. These suggestions are still generic. Although they are useful as a general framework, in practice they need translation and transformation to specific situations and groups.

This is especially relevant when a school wants to develop their prosocial policy to be sensitive to diversity. Or rather, to different forms of diversity, because many forms of diversity are different from each other and research shows there is a clear hierarchy of discriminations in Europe. All European States accept (at least formally) that discrimination on sex and race is forbidden. The is a European directive forbidding discrimination on these topics and all EU countries have transposed this directive in their national legislation. However, other grounds of discrimination, like religion, marital status, disability, Roma, sexual orientation and gender identity are sometimes protected European-wide only in the area of employment or only in some national legislations. Potential ground of discrimination like religion, culture and marital status are still quite widely accepted, but protection of some disabilities and of immigration/residence status are contested, while the rights or Roma and LGBTI people are still quite broadly denied in Europe. If a school would do a survey on different types of discrimination and social exclusion, such differences would show in any students population and some teachers may also support some types of discrimination. It is clear that (only) a generic approach to prosociality and diversity is not adequate enough to get deeper effects. “Deep diversity” requires specific attention to specific risks and opportunities. In the next paragraphs we give some (not exhaustive) pointers on how “deep diversity prosociality” can be practically implemented in school policies and lessons.

Ability

Research on bullying shows that “to be able to do something as well as others” is one of the main reasons for negative behaviour of students. Discrimination on ability covers a wide range of issues. In classes or schools where all students are expected to have more or less the same level of capability, while all students are different in this, it is obvious that some people will fall outside the mid-range – which may be the “norm” in school. This goes both for students who sometimes fall behind, as for students who systematically fall behind because of a mental of physical disability, and as well for students who have a higher level of ability and who find average lessons boring but are not allowed to work on more challenging tasks.

The basis for prosociality in the context of ability is to not condemn but appreciate differences in ability, and to create as much space as possible to allow the students to work at their own pace. When this is part of school culture, there is less reason for students (and teachers) to treat students that are slower or faster than average as irritating. Some concrete suggestions:

- Work a lot with levelled work packages
- Allow students to work at their own pace, partly digital work can facilitate this
- Focus not only on academic but also on emotional and social skills
- Have more attention for students who need help
- Organize that academically faster or better performing students help others; this will promote group cohesion and helps intelligent students to develop social skills
- Study how to assist disabled students, possibly ask expert advice, secure that the school has adequate resources to enable learning by disabled students

Body image

Next to ability, body image is the most mentioned reasons for bullying and exclusion by students. Especially overweight students may be targeted. But also students with

other unusual body parts, like wearing glasses, having big ears or red hair can become victims of negative behaviour.

Some suggestions on how to deal with this:

- Make sure that the students get to know each other and form a supportive group in class. Body image differences tend to fall away or will be treated more sensitively when students know each other.
- If students have a diet problem or when their body image is shaped because of a biological problem, discuss this in class and jointly decide how the group can deal with it.
- If some body image aspects are labelled as “bad”, the teacher can relabel them as “good” or “cute”.

Gender

Gender is perhaps the form of diversity that is most pervasive in schools and influences almost every process. First, there is evidence that the way girls and boys learn is different, partly because of their biological differences, and part because there are such different social expectations of boys and girls. Especially in puberty boys and girls experience new surges of hormones that changes their bodies and encourage them to become more active and alert. Social expectations tell them that boys should cope with this mainly in corporal ways (active) and girls mainly in mental ways (passive). The experiments with this, both socially, erotically and sexually, may lead to crossing lines of others, and some social values even encourage boys to cross such lines on purpose to prove their masculinity and status.

A dilemma is how to deal with this. Should we try to eradicate the differences to facilitate better understanding and prosocial cooperation, or should we base our prosocial pedagogy on the differences and teach boys and girls on how to adequately deal with them? Neither choice is ideal. Eradicating differences is probably not possible and may not be desirable when we aim to appreciate differences. Teaching how to deal with differences may fall into the trap of strengthening stereotypes and allowing non-social “sexist” practices to be maintained.

An additional issue coming up in Europe is how to be prosocial towards transgender students and students with an intersexual condition. Transgender means that a student discovers that their biological sex does not match their feelings and they consider or decide to change their gender. Some other may be born with an intersexual condition, which means that their sex was neither fully male or female at birth. They may have had corrective surgery, or they may not have. Most teachers never heard about intersexuality. For some people, the very concept of transgender my be contentious because it falls outside their values. But is becomes more accepted that even in elementary school, children can discover they are transgender and in some countries trans children can get puberty inhibitors to delay puberty. This does not harm them but makes a sex reassignments surgery at 18 much easier. Trans students may want to dress and behave like their desired sex in high school and schools need to decide how to deal with this.

A prosocial approach to this could be to recognize the gendered practices that are non-functional and detrimental to (some of) the students, and adapting them in order to maximize prosociality. This of course highly depends on what a school feels is "functional" because those expectations are also "gendered".

Here we give a number of suggestions a school could consider for dealing with traditional gender relations:

- School uniforms, sportswear and daily clothing are often gendered and nongendered clothing may be ridiculed. The school should consider what is functional and how students feel wearing particular sets of clothes. A prosocial approach would favour as much space as possible for students to express their identities, and discussion and dialogue on when students seek the limits of what seems socially "the norm".
- The school should be careful in how to advise about career choices to students. These are often "gendered" of stereotyped. By giving examples of non-stereotypical career choices, the school gives students more options to make a choice that fits them. This can also be done by choosing alternative resources of by (for example) inviting women engineers or male nurses to speak in class.
- By the time they are in high school, boys and girls have develop differently, and this has to be accepted, but extreme forms of masculine and feminine behavior

should be questioned if they are prosocial and functional.

- Because boys and girls behave differently and like different things, it is good to do some activities separately so they feel safe and comfortable, but at the same time there is intensive interest in the other sex and it helps if the school of teacher also organizes activities where boys and girls can get to know each other better beyond stereotypical expectations.
- A good sexual education which is not only focused on hygiene, pregnancy and STI's could focus also on friendships and relationships between boys, between girls and between boys and girls. The different phases of dating and erotic experimentation can be discussed and it can be role-modelled how this discovery can be done in a prosocial way, and how young people can avoid transgressing each others limits.
- The commercial world is full of extreme and unrealistic stereotypes of men and women. Teacher can engage with students to research and discuss this, with the ultimate aim to be critical towards stereotypes and to behave functional and prosocial to each other.

And here are some additional suggestions for dealing with transgender students and students with intersex conditions:

- Forcing a trans student to wear a school uniform that does not match their desired gender will feel offensive to the student. We advise the allow them to wear the uniform of the desired gender or to have nongendered uniforms available.
- The school can consider to have (some) gender neutral toilets, if this is not possible, an arrangement should be made to allow a trans student to go safely and without ridicule to a toilet.
- Many countries require schools to register a student as male or female, with no trans option. Schools need to think about how to solve this. A solution can be to register a student according to their biological sex when it comes to formal reporting to the ministry, but to change the registration during the year temporarily to the desired gender.
- Make appropriate arrangements for sports classes. You could have closed

shower cabins, or allow a trans student to change and shower outside the communal dressing rooms.

- If students change gender and other student may knows this because they know the student from elementary school or the student changes gender during high school, the school needs to think about education for students and possibly for parents. This can contain information about the transition process but foremost it should be about how the school wants others to behave prosocially towards the trans student.
- Due to hormonal treatment, the trans student can experience mood swings and desire to behave extremely according the to desired sex. The schools needs to counsel these processes in a sensitive way.
- Some students with intersex conditions may need repeated surgery. Because of same, this often happens in vacations, robbing the student of the relaxing time they need. This may result in tiredness and other les functional behaviour in school. A school needs to be sensitive to this and discus with the student and parents what the student needs.

Sexual orientation

The discrimination of people with a homosexual, bisexual or lesbian sexual orientation is (in schools) closely related to gender. The most important reason is that students get most upset about lesbians and especially about gay people when they behave not according to expected (heterosexual) gender stereotypes. Research shows that effeminate boys expected to be gay and discriminated, which is worse when they actually are gay. To some extend this is also true for lesbian girls. Another relation with gender is that many students confuse gender with sexual orientation: non-masculine boys “must” be gay and strong-willed girls “must” be lesbian. Many offensive phrases and name-calling relate to this: a non-masculine boy is often name-called “sissy” (as synonymous with “weak” and “gay”) or a local version of this.

Another aspect of discrimination of sexual orientation is the expectation that everyone is heterosexual. This shows itself in taking it for granted that someone has, or is looking for a opposite gender relationship, while gay and lesbian people have to explain their

“different” preference. This explaining is called coming-out. Heterosexual students may feel “betrayed” when a fellow student comes out, but they don’t realize that their own “gender-policing” behaviour created an environment in which lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students don’t feel safe enough to come out.

Bisexual students have to deal with the expectation that you have to choose: to feel attracted to a man or a women. If you feel attracted to both, this may be difficult to understand for students who identify as heterosexual or “normal” (behaving in accordance with the norm).

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students go through the same developmental stages as heterosexual students (UNESCO, “International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach”, 2018). That is: in puberty they discover their sexual feelings and in adolescence they experiment with dating, kissing, and eventually with sex. A large part of this experimentation falls within the high school period. However, because the environment is quite unsafe for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students, they often try to deny they own feelings in the first years. Or, if they recognize their feelings, they may hide them. The more “out” student may label themselves with a variety of labels: gay, lesbian bi, but also pansexual, demisexual or queer (see also https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/ for a comprehensive list). Research shows how hiding leads to stress, truancy and even suicide, but the alternative: coming-out, may increase the risk of overt discrimination or social exclusion, which also leads to stress, truancy and in cases of severe bullying to suicide. In unsafe schools, LGBT cannot make a healthy choice.

Here are a few suggestions what a school can to promote prosociality of lesbian, gay and bisexual students:

- Homosexual or bisexual orientation may be a sensitive subject in some communities. Major religions condemn homosexual behaviour and social exclusion may therefore supporting by churches, mosques and public institutions. The school needs to discuss how to relate to this and how to negotiate the risks involved. A prosocial school does not see itself only as a passive partner in this but as an active pedagogic actor who promotes prosociality, full citizenship and democracy for all people in the community,

including students.

- Because the default expectation is that being LGBT is rejected, the school needs to make clear that is welcomes all students and that this includes LGBT students.
- Homophobic name-calling is one of the most prevalent forms of negative behaviour in schools. Even if the school already has a policy on name-calling, it needs to be specific in how to combat this. Many students and even teacher will claim calling each other “sissy” is “normal” or is not meant as discriminating. However, it is definitely not prosocial behaviour and the school needs to takes measures to stop it.
- Coming-out can be easy, but also risky and problematic in schools. Counsellors need to be prepared and supportive for the choices of LGBT students and help them cope with the risks. By extension, this also goes for teachers. If teachers can not come out in school, this is a clear signal to students that they certainly will not be accepted.
- In some countries, students work with teachers to create school clubs called “Gay/Straight Alliances” or “Gender & Sexuality Alliances” in which both LGBT and heterosexual students work on providing a safe space for LGBT students and on making the school culture more welcoming.
- Beyond stopping negative behaviour and providing safe spaces in an unsafe school, the school needs to consider how the school climate can be made more structurally safe. This is an effort that broader that just sexual orientation, but a broader effort will fail when it is not specifically sensitive to sexual orientation. For example, good sexuality education is essential in a safer school for LGBT students, but it does not work when it is only about heterosexual relationships, or if it treats the topic “homosexuality” as something separate and problematic.

Race

Discrimination based on race is widespread, even to the extent (in Western societies) that the colour white is not considered a colour and black is commonly associated with “bad” or scary things. Research shows that both overt and implicit racism is happening in almost all schools and societies. Racism is deeply built in Western societies and co-formed by our colonial history. Public institutions and churches are complicit in this, and racism is sometimes still defended with religious quotes. But there are also attempts to “proof” that black, or browner people are less intelligent and less hard-working than “white” people.

Some suggestions to combat explicit or implicit racism in schools:

- Acknowledge that racism may exist in your school, even though you may not intend it and you are against racism.
- Explore how racism is shaped by the history and current situation of non-white coloured people in your community; for example, are they poorer than average and why? What are their social and career opportunities? How are your students influenced by this?
- Note if there is racist name-calling or social exclusion of non-white coloured people and discuss (with them) how to make this more prosocial.
- Reconsider your history lessons and think how you can correct possibly (neo)colonial history by giving the context of colonialism. Also consider to what extent your history lessons are Eurocentric by leaving out the equally interesting histories of Asia, Africa and the Latin Americas.

Culture

Students can get upset or irritated by other cultures. In a school or class with a lot of different cultures, each group may feel uncomfortable with other groups or even get into conflict because of irritation or cultural misunderstandings. In a school or class with on dominant culture and other minority cultures, there is a risk that the minority groups are excluded or maltreated.

In prosocial schools, it is needed to bridge the differences between different cultures. A lot of traditional programs about “multiculturality” attempt to do this by teaching about differences between cultures, in the hope that this will create more understanding. Research show that this type of program have ambiguous results. The level of information goes up, but the tolerance sometimes goes down. Information does not equal acceptance. Other programs focus on the similarities between cultures, for example on how cultures try to create prosociality. This approach is sometimes called “interculturality”. Differences are explored but the focus is on what joins us.

Some suggestions to become more intercultural in schools:

- Focus on interculturality rather than multiculturality.
- Learn to have a proper dialogue. A dialogue is an exchange of experiences and views among equals, with respect for each other, with the aim to explore common ground. It is not the same as a discussion (which is exchanging opinions, for various goals) , and certainly not a debate (which is more political and focussed on winning the favour of the public).
- Organize activities to get to know other cultures. Go to a mosque, a cultural centre, different types of churches or communities. Talk with the people there about what they value and get in dialogue about each other.
- Some issues may be difficult to debate. It is OK to stay silent and polite on these. However, it should be clear that such silence is allowing the people who feel uncomfortable to stay polite and prosocial, because open discussion would be difficult for them. It is not meant to respect disrespect.

Immigrant status and populism

In current day Europe, there is a lot to do about immigration. While Europe invited a lot of immigrants in the sixties and seventies to be able to sustain the expending economy, nowadays many people see immigration – and refugees as threats to jobs and to national cultures. This takes place in a European context of less immigration than a decade ago, with the exception of the Mediterranean countries, where refugees are stuck because Northern states do not want to accept them).

The context of this situation is that in the past two decades, the income differences between the upper and middle and lower classes in Europe have become larger. Middle and lower classes have more difficulty sustaining their way of life and start to feel threatened in their well-being. Populist parties play into this sense of discomfort and insecurity by blaming these feelings on immigration. They pretend that if there were no or less immigrants or refugees, European states could return to an imagined better time, in which we could be prosocial “among ourselves”. This makes it a nationalist and exclusive vision that is at odds with the basic values of democracy and respect for minorities. The populist rhetoric touches existing fight-or-flight responses and links them with a political movement which aims to restrict citizenship rights and democracy, which makes it a volatile and dangerous movement.

For schools and teachers it can be very difficult to deal with such forces and return to a more prosocial school culture. In countries where populist parties already have won elections and are part of the government, or can influence media, this becomes even more difficult. Schools may even be at risk for promoting “radical leftist” (democratic) values and may be urged to stay “objective” or “loyal to the state” (the populist government). Students may adopt their parents opinions on this or may be influenced by populists themselves.

Some suggestions to combat xenophobia and populist anti-immigrant rhetoric in schools:

- The school should develop a clear vision on how they want to position themselves in relation to citizenship, democracy and tolerance. Fostering prosociality in a democratic society is a powerful driver to guide such a vision.
- Offering students an environment, school culture and a curriculum in which critical thinking is promoted and supported will strengthen their own choices and will lessen the risk that they are swept along with superficial or false arguments immigrants taking away jobs and our well-being.
- Rather than shying away from politics, the school can offer the students courses and space to research, analyse and discuss politics.
- The school can allow all political viewpoints, but request that these must be defended in a proper way, based on objective facts, a sound analysis and to be debated in respectful discussions.

- The school needs to acknowledge that populist movements rely on “playing” emotions and fight-or-fight responses. This shows again how necessary it is that schools teach not only academic subjects but also how to deal with emotions and to form democratic attitudes.
- Students with populist attitudes who express such opinions in ways that are not prosocial, should be engaged in a discussion about prosociality and if they are not willing to do that, what is blocking them to be prosocial. Students who cross the lines of set ground rules on prosociality should be corrected, preferably by restorative methods.

Prosociality in a context of polarization

In the current globalized world, we are confronted with images of people and groups with radical ideas and actions, that we were not confronted with before because we did not have social media. Although radical ideas and communities have always existed, before the rapid dissemination of news across the globe by social media, we were rarely confronted with it and much radicalism remained localized to “real life” physical communities with the same ideology or religion.

Social media

One characteristic of social media is that it is nether seen as a medium for personal communication, nor as a formal publication. In personal communication, people tend to be prosocial or at least polite; social norms usually prohibit offensive behaviour. Written of filmed publications are even monitored more strongly and considered to be less volatile than daily communication. Social media lack the real personal contact, and profiles can be faked, masked or taken online and offline like taking of masks. This limits the social control that is prevalent in daily communication and many people feel that they can or even should express their emotions directly and without care for how others may feel or be affected. The impersonality of online communication makes it easier to polarize feelings and opinions.

The monitoring of social media as “publications” is in development. The sheer magnitude of online comments currently makes it difficult to monitor or control offensive posts, but because of the development of advanced algorithms, this may change quickly in the next few years. In some more dictatorial states, intensive monitoring of all online communication is already taking place. Democratic states are hesitant to implement such control, but the principle of freedom of speech is increasingly being limited in attempts to curb radicalization and to prevent terrorism and sexual abuse. This is contested and the democratic discussion on how to balance freedom and ground rules control is ongoing.

Radicalization?

In a digitalized and globalized world, some radical groups use media to spread their word, to recruit members and to get support for their visions. There are two aspects in this that are important in the context of prosociality. First and foremost, we need to learn how to deal with the fight-or-fight instincts these “strange” and “threatening” visions can evoke. Secondly, some of these ideologies aim to destroy the democratic fabric of societies and their representatives rather than to work within it to negotiate adequate rights. Democratic communities, states and federations need to develop strategies to defend their democratic fabric and attempts to build prosocial communities.

Both aspects are relevant for high schools. Students need to learn the skills to deal with negative emotions that are bound to emerge when they are confronted with radical ideas that make them uncomfortable. They should learn to neither stereotype such ideas and fight them without thinking, nor should they be swept away by radical visions without considering then properly. At the same time, we need to be aware that some minorities in our societies are or feel systematically marginalized, and it may be a survival mechanism for them to harken back to a mythical past “in which everything was better” or to radical religious guidelines that seem to offer clarity and safety from globalization. The marginalization of such groups and the possible correction of that situation is something that may be out of reach of the school itself. This is a matter that needs to be solved at larger levels of organization, notably the community. In the vision of prosociality, the school is not a neutral institute to transfer knowledge, but an active partner in the community to shape a prosocial and democratic society, notably by its pedagogic role and collaboration on this with the community.

It is useful for schools to consider the context of the current political debate about “radicalization”. In the current political and media language, “radicalization” is associated with (Islamic) religious extremism, and some sources link this with immigration of Muslim immigrants. Note that radical Christian ideas or nationalist violence are much less considered to be “radicalization”. It should also be noted that in Europe the term “radical ideas” has also been used in the nineteenth century for the movements for workers’ rights in France and the United Kingdom, black activists movement in the United States, or the radical feminism and radical pacifism. Some current populist parties in the US and Europe call progressive teachers “radical leftists” that indoctrinate children. If we ignore the offensive connotation of

“radicalization” as limited to Muslim immigrants, we could conclude that radicalisation is a process, initiated by desperate groups, who aim for transformation of views, convictions, beliefs and commitments which threatens the status quo. The use of violence of the amount of violence does not seem to be a crucial issue here, it seems to be a gradual development. The more desperation and sense of not being able to bring about change by common and peaceful (prosocial) means, the more violence is used.

In this manual we use the following working definition: “radicalisation is understood as a process of personal transformation in response to contextual grievances, which may eventually lead to supporting the use of violence to bring about ideologically-defined social and political change”.

Violent extremism is “a behaviour promoting, supporting or committing acts which may lead to terrorism and which are aimed at defending an ideology advocating racial, national, ethnic or religious supremacy”. This may include the violent opposition to core democratic principles or values. In schools, violent extremism is usually anonymous. Extremist students may post messages online or write texts on walls. In isolated cases, small groups of extremist youth can become violent to minorities in unmonitored spaces.

Far-right extremism encompasses a diverse range of groups with different ideologies, making it inherently difficult to define. They range from less ideological youth street gangs to neo-Nazi terrorist cells, to anti-Islam activists and registered parties seeking to affect change through the political system, and to informal groups gathering and mobilising around music and sports events. Right-wing radicalisation is often associated with an extremist “political ideology revolving around the myth of a homogenous nation – a romantic and populist ultra-nationalism hostile to liberal, pluralistic democracy, with its underlying principles of individualism and universalism.” This kind of right-wing extremism is evidenced in the current radical right that advocates the expulsion of foreigners and generally highly restrictive policies towards them. Racism, xenophobia, ultra-nationalism, homophobia and glorification of the “one father one mother family” and opposition to liberal democracy are commonly defining features of contemporary right-wing extremism. Some students link to right-wing movements and express this by their hair and clothing style and online communication. In some countries, right-wing parties call for “reporting” progressive teachers “who indoctrinate students with left wing ideas”. Right-wing students may function as reporters.

Religious extremism also encompasses a diverse range of groups with different ideologies. These are characterised as believing their interpretation of their religious texts and their plan for implementation of religious morals and legislation is the “true” road. Religious extremism occur in all major religions, and are both targeting other religions and their members and other

denominations of the same religion. In schools, extremist groups may implement a stricter normative control of members of their groups. For example, in some countries, extreme Muslim students (and sometimes teachers) attempt to force fellow-Muslims to behave to strict extremist religious codes and to keep a social distance to non-believers. Non-compliant Muslims may be ostracized or punished. Another example is that the Jehovah's Witnesses Church released a training video that encourages their children to accuse children of lesbian families in class of being sinners.

Hate speech is one of the many manifestations of far-right extremism. It is defined by the Council of Europe as "all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed through aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin."