

Media literacy program and material for adult educators

THEME 2: MORAL DILEMMAS



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Chapter 3: Theme 2: Moral Dilemmas in the Contemporary World

3.1 Introduction to the theme

The aim of this theme is to discuss moral dilemmas that people face in the contemporary world – to name, analyse and reflect upon them.

AE will learn:

- the main concepts of the theme how to apply them in practical tasks;
- to present and discuss moral dilemmas with adult learners;
- to use framework methodology for teaching target groups in practice;
- to reflect upon content and learning process;
- to plan their own teaching-learning process, while introducing the course material for specific target groups

How it works:

- The learning is based on CEA approach and ERR framework (evocation/realization of meaning/reflection);
- The learning employs an interactive lecture, individual, pair and group work, and a variety of strategies and methods;
- The duration of delivery for this theme is 4 hours

Table 4. Overview of the theme

| Learning objectives | Content | Activities/methods | Material | Time | Learning outcomes |
|---|--|---|--|-----------|--|
| To present & discuss main concepts of the theme | Introduction to theme: Being human in controversial, conflicting, critical situations | Interactive lecture and group discussions | Multimedia | 1,5 hours | Acquaintance with main concepts |
| | Sub-theme 1 Fair personal decisions: self-awareness & self-effectivity; self-correctness | Reading & writing, watching film & talking. Brainstorm, double diary | Handouts, multimedia Flipchart, markers | 1,5 hours | Awareness of importance of fair personal decisions; ability to reflect upon them |

| Learning objectives | Content | Activities/methods | Material | Time | Learning outcomes |
|---------------------|--|---|--|-----------|---|
| | Sub-theme 2 Fair interpersonal decisions: ability to listen & hear; willingness & readiness to help, care for others in personal & professional settings | creating film scenario | Multimedia (Projector) Flipchart, markers | 1,5 hours | Awareness of importance of fair interpersonal decisions; ability to reflect upon them |
| | Sub-theme 3 Fair social decisions: responsible & critical decisions; individuality & sociality; personal freedom & social responsibility | Reading, talking & writing <i>I.N.S.E.R.T</i> Unfinished sentences; essay | Handout, multimedia Flipchart, markers | 1,5 hour | Awareness of importance of fair social decisions; ability to reflect upon them |

Being human in controversial, conflicting, critical situations

The world is full of situations that may be challenging and difficult to navigate – a situation could be of critical importance, or filled with controversy and conflict. It can be hard to interpret these situations clearly – to understand the behaviour and intentions of others, as well as the role we ourselves play in them. When faced with these uncertain situations, people need to possess the skills, knowledge and practical experience to make sound personal decisions.

Controversial situation means a situation which does not have a single agreed upon solution. This term has synonymous meanings – uncertain/ disputed/ polemic/ debatable situation and very well known saying “hot potato” – neither to take it, nor to drop; I am neither hung up, nor released.

Controversial issues are those that produce strong emotions, feelings and divide opinion in communities

Conflicting situations means some kind of contradiction that has to be resolved. This term has synonymous meanings – clashing/ contradictory/ paradoxical/ inconsistent/ incompatible situation and saying “in-between”: we are here, but still feeling like balancing between earth and sky

Critical situation means a dangerous situation in which one needs to make quick and appropriate decisions. This term has synonymous meanings - crucial/pressing/urgent/vital, etc.: *The epidemic situation is critical in our country; not taking critical decisions, we will lose our competitive advantage.*

These sort of situations require us to make a judgement about the fair and appropriate response in the given context, and we can find ourselves faced with a moral dilemma, perhaps including making a decision that would mean placing ourselves at a disadvantage. For example, a job vacancy we would like to apply for, but know a colleague is better suited for; a neighbour we see stealing food but whom we know has recently lost their job. Sometimes controversial, conflicting and critical situations that we appear in, call us to make honest, fair decisions not simply for personal favor. And even the opposite. For example, I want and can take this job position, but I know that my colleague is also eager to take it. She is more qualified and can serve the company better. Shall I pretend that I am competent enough or shall I step aside? I saw my neighbor and close friend stealing goods from the supermarket. I know he has lost his job. Should I report on him?

There is never just one possible solution in these complex situations and their existence necessitates a discussion on the need to cultivate fair mindedness. Being human in controversial, conflicting, critical situations means being able to make wise, unharmed and wise decisions that sometimes are simple, sometimes – complex. But never one-sided. In such cases we talk about the need to cultivate fair mindedness.

Fair mindedness is a disposition of mind that enables the thinker to treat all perspectives relevant to an issue in an objective manner, without privileging one's own views, or the views of one's group (L. Elder, R. Paul).

Fair mindedness is opposite to egocentrism, sociocentrism (specific group, based on common interests), exceptional ethnocentricity, etc. Fair mindedness is not easy to cultivate as it has to fight our natural instincts, beliefs, habits.

9 reasons for teaching controversial issues

1. *Controversial issues* are by their very nature highly significant issues in society - learning about these should be part of every young person's social and political education.
2. *Debating controversial issues* is part of the democratic process – it helps young people to develop some of the essential competences of democratic citizenship, such as open-mindedness, curiosity, willingness to understand the other, tolerance, and the skills of democratic debate and peaceful conflict resolution.
3. *Young people are bombarded* by information on controversial issues on a daily basis through their use of modern communication technologies, such as mobile phones,

- Twitter, Facebook, etc., - they need help to be able to make sense of and deal with these.
4. *The media often present* controversial issues in partial and misleading ways - in the absence of help elsewhere, it is the duty of the school to make sure young people gain a balanced understanding of issues which have the potential to make such a difference to their lives.
 5. *There are new controversies* arising all the time – by learning how to deal with controversial issues now young people will be better prepared to deal with them in the future.
 6. *Investigating controversial issues* demands a range of critical thinking and analytical skills – it helps young people to learn how to weigh up evidence, detect bias and make judgments on the basis of reason and evidence.
 7. *Engaging with controversial issues* can make a positive contribution to young peoples' personal and emotional development – it helps them to understand their emotions and clarify their values, become better learners and more confident individuals.
 8. *Teaching about controversial issues* involves real-life, up-to-date issues – they help to bring citizenship and human rights education to life.
 9. *Students very often raise controversial issues* themselves regardless of the topic of the lesson – it is better for the teacher to be prepared in advance for how to deal with such events than to have to respond 'off the cuff'.

(Berg, W., Graeffe, L. & Holden, C, 2003, p.35)

Example of sub-theme structure

Part I. Presentation of Model Activity

Step 1. WARM-UP: GUESS WHAT IS IT?

The session leader imitates any object (thing, phenomenon) present in the room, without words. Course participants are asked to guess what it is. Participants can be invited to take part and encouraged to take turns. This warm-up helps to focus attention and prepare for the session ahead.

Step 2

Task 1: The course participants are asked to remember any controversial situation and/or a situation that created mixed feelings for them (e.g. being unsure of how to react or what

to say). Each group member is given short guidelines on how to present this personal experience.

It happened (when, where, with whom)

I was (description of action/position...)

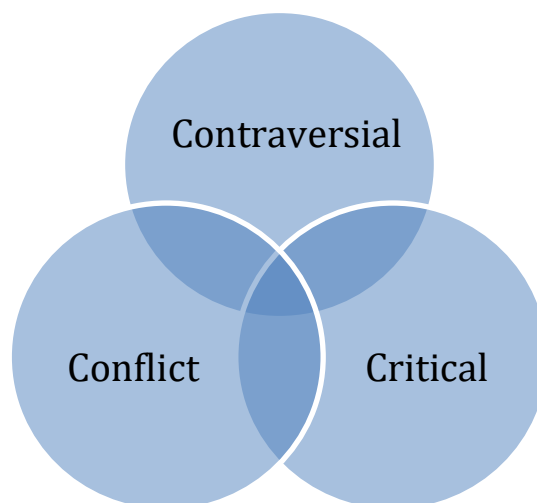
I experienced... (description of discomfort, confusion, uncertainty...)

Finally, I.... (resolution of situation)

I remember this situation, because.... (why it is remarkable, not forgettable)

The lead of the session makes notes during each presentation and later categorises them, according to type of controversy/conflict/critical issue and/or experience/reaction/etc. The experiences will be used later, discussing the subtheme “Fair personal decisions”.

The lead of the session asks participants to conceptualise personal experiences by placing them in the Venn diagram:



Participants have to explain their choices and give their own definitions to “controversial situation”, “conflict situation”, “critical situation”.

Step 3

Personal definitions can be compared with those from online dictionaries. Participants are asked to reflect upon this small introductory activity – what they have learned and experienced.

Part II. Analysis of the Process

1. Recalling the learning process - what, when, how.
2. Reflection upon the learning process – what learners felt, experienced, learned.

Part III. Planning for Implementation

1. Discussions about how & to whom this lesson/activity can be applied at local contexts.
2. Development of a draft plan for implementation.

3.2 Fair personal decisions

Definition

Fair personal decisions mean good, adequate decisions made in accordance with one's beliefs and values. Fair personal decisions are not biased decisions - a person acknowledges his / her limitations, lack of knowledge, skills. He/she, before making any decision, asks the following questions:

- Are my thinking and actions based on reliable and not one sided information? (not on outdated and/or one source of information)
- Are my actions based on wishful thinking? (to see/to get what I want)
- Are my aims fair in a given situation? (to take account contextual peculiarities)

Fair personal decisions are based on ethical norms (universal and particular), written and unwritten code of conduct. Fairness at a personal level has to do with personal integrity. He/she tries to be equally fair in all situations, not only in those that are more comfortable, safe, profitable. Fair minded people are: a) aware of their strong and weak points, bias and limitations; b) willing to correct themselves, to improve; c) sensitive to a context; d) use effective self-improvement strategies.

Part I. Presentation of Model Activity

Step 1. WARM-UP

Ask course participants to read the following statements and say which decision looks fair and which does not. Why?

To write this English essay, I am just going to copy and paste from a similar task I did last year.

I do not feel like going to school today. I will ask my mom to call my class teacher and say that I have a bad headache.

I have read enough about global warming. I am pretty sure that consumption is the main reason for it. So I am not going to search for any other reasons.

I am not going to learn any more. I have been at school for 12 years, and I know what teaching and learning is about.

I am too old for any kind of crazy activities. People at my age have to model appropriate behaviour.

I have known my teenage neighbours for some time – I think all teenagers have very complicated characters

Discuss briefly how judgments were made. If it was easy/difficult / complicated and why.

Step 2

Personal decisions are based on many internal and external factors that sometimes complicate our judgments. See short film by Pepe Danquart “Schwarzfahren” / “Black rider” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFQXcv1k9OM&t=30s>

While watching, course participants should be asked to complete an individual task - fill in the Double Diary. The left side of the Double Diary is for the description of the fair/not fair decision that was noticed, the right side is for reactions and decisions - why does one consider actions as fair/not fair.

It is recommended to watch the film in 4 parts. The first part: 0:00-2:17; the second part: 2:18- 5:03; the third part: 5:04- 7:30; the fourth part: 7:31- 9:59. The pause between each part should be used to fill in the Double Diary. It should take around 7-10 minutes.

Table 5. Double Diary

| Fair/not fair decisions (who did & what) | Reactions/comments |
|---|--------------------|
| 1st stop: | |
| 2nd stop: | |
| 3rd stop: | |
| 4th stop: | |

At the end of the activity, put participants into groups of 3-5 and ask them to discuss what they have noted in their diaries. Ask for justification - whose decisions were fair and whose not fair? why?; which information/facts/evidence support participants' judgements?

Step 3

Ask participants to reflect upon the activity:

- What do they think about the resolution of the situation?
- Is it fair / not fair?
- For whom?

Part II. Analysis of the Process

1. Recalling the learning process - what, when, how.
2. Reflection upon the learning process – what learners felt, experienced, learned.

Part III. Planning for Implementation

1. Discussions about how & to whom this lesson/activity can be applied at local contexts.
2. Development of a draft plan for implementation.

3.3 Fair interpersonal decisions

Definition

Fair interpersonal decisions are those based on mutual respect not limited by differences of age, social status, ethnicity, religion, personal beliefs. Interpersonal fairness can be recognized by: 1) ability to listen & hear; 2) willingness & readiness to help; 3) suspension of personal desires for the sake of others (for example, those who need support).

Part I. Presentation of Model Activity

Step 1. WARM-UP

Group participants by giving them the number 1 or 2. Participants who are a number 1 pair with someone who is a number 2 and then they stand back to back. Number 1's – the “teachers” – are asked to make a movement and number 2's – the “students” – are asked to mimic it at the same time. The roles are then reversed, with numbers 2's becoming the “teachers” and number 1's becoming the “students”.

After this exercise, ask participants how it felt to demonstrate the movements and how it felt to try to replicate them. What was difficult and what was easy and why?

In other similar cases participants in the “teachers” role, often report that they feel responsible for helping their partner (students) to repeat movements as well as possible. “Teacher's” /”leader's” sense of responsibility for the accuracy of the repeated movement appears stronger than “student's”/”follower's”.

Step 2

It looks like some characters in the film are able to listen and hear what happens between the old lady and the young man. But they do not show any willingness or readiness to step in. How might the situation be different if some characters intervene?

Divide participants into pairs or small groups and ask them to rewrite the scene that they have just watched. Propose several options of fair interpersonal behaviour for the resolution of the conflict:

1st option - pair of young girls or boys intervene

2nd option - the young woman (with the boy) intervenes

3rd option - the old man (with the glasses) intervenes

4th option - the motorcyclist intervenes

5th option - the young man (with headphones) intervenes

The different scenarios may be presented visually (performed) or read out. Discuss which scenario looks most reliable and why?

An alternative task may be to retell the story/the accident from the perspective of different characters.

Step 3

The course leader may ask participants:

- a. to share their real life examples of fair interpersonal behaviour in conflicting situations (either personal or professional);
- b. to present examples of active, supportive mediation in the conflicting situations, they have read / heard about (from secondary sources).

Part II. Analysis of the Process

1. Recalling the learning process - what, when, how.
2. Reflection upon the learning process – what learners felt, experienced, learned.

Part III. Planning for Implementation

1. Discussions about how & to whom this lesson/activity can be applied at local contexts.
2. Development of a draft plan for implementation.

3.4 Fair social decisions

Definition

The film by Pepe Danquart “ Schwarzfahren” / ”Black rider” revealed silent, but evident interpersonal conflict between old/white and young/black persons. In fact the conflict is not only between personalities, but between past and present; narrow mindness and open mindness; between homogeneous and heterogeneous society. The tram itself represents the society of a certain time. Therefore, it is good to have more explicit discussion about the wider context - where and in what year the action takes place; from what details one can assume that the action takes place at such a time; what social processes took place at that time and so on.

Personal and interpersonal behaviour is highly influenced by particular contextual factors. Be mindful of people's behaviour during different historical periods, and more recently with the COVID-19 situation. Did we become more accurate, attentive, sympathetic, more responsible, more critical?

Part I. Presentation of Model Activity

Step 1. WARM-UP

The course participants may be asked to share recent personal examples of fair/not fair social behaviour/decisions in the context of COVID 19 situation: what particular situations, or actions to/by whom were considered fair/not fair and why?

Step 2

Give the course participants text - a relevant example of social behaviour at community / society / in-country level. Ask them to read it using the I.N.S.E.R.T method (Interactive Noting System for Effective Reading and Thinking, Vaughn & Estes, 1986). The participants should be asked to mark the text with the following notes while reading it:

- v - already known information
- - information contradicts one's opinion or is different from what one knew or thought that he/she knew
- + - new information
- ? - confusing information

The participants put different marks in the margins or another convenient place on the text according to current their knowledge and understanding. It is not required to mark each line or each idea presented, but to do it thoughtfully and reflectively. There is no requirement for the particular number of marks.

Afterwards, the participants can be asked to reflect on what they have read in pairs/small groups.. What knowledge was confirmed? What beliefs were disconfirmed? What was new? What is still unclear/questionable/confusing? One may look over his/her marked text, revise it.

Then pairs/small groups make charts/tables of fair/not fair behaviour/ solutions/decisions and prepare to justify their choices.

| FAIR | NOT FAIR |
|------|----------|
| | |

After the task is completed, the leader of the session moderates the whole group discussion on the topic.

Step 3

For the reflection stage, the participants may be asked:

- a) to write (5-10 minutes) reflective essay on the whole theme;
- b) to use the “unfinished sentences” method of the group reflection (*I have understood.....; I have felt.....; I am still....., etc.*);
- c) to draw any symbol illustrating their feelings at the end of training.

Part II. Analysis of the Process

1. Recalling the learning process - what, when, how.
2. Reflection upon the learning process – what learners felt, experienced, learned.

Part III. Planning for Implementation

3. Discussions about how & to whom this lesson/activity can be applied at local contexts.
4. Development of a draft plan for implementation.

Possible adaptations and recommendations for adult educators

1. Any content that is relevant to the current theme can be used for the teaching-learning activities (short films/documentary films/photos/pictures/stories/reports/press release. etc.). Use any material that speaks for your target groups, and is meaningful. It is necessary to evaluate proposed content before its delivery - is it not biased, not insulting, too sensitive, too superficial.
2. Other teaching-learning methods can be used to get into the theme. The most important thing is to allocate time for individual/pair/group work, and provide inviting space for discussions and reflections.
3. The content and the method of delivery will also depend on the profile of the target audience. If the group consists of struggling readers for example, it is better to use visual material; if the audience is multi-ethnic it is not advisable to use very sensitive topics. It might be difficult to get active involvement, to manage discussions.

References

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@ MORAL DILEMMAS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: FAIR PERSONAL DECISIONS

(for distance teaching & learning)



The objective of this learning activity is to analyse and reflect upon the concept of “fair personal decisions” as learners and as adult educators.

AE will learn how:

- to present and discuss the concepts with adult learners
- to use framework methodology for teaching target groups in practice
- to reflect upon content and learning process
- to plan their own teaching-learning process, while introducing the course material for specific target groups

How it works:

- The learning is based on CEA approach and ERR framework (evocation/realization of meaning/reflection)
- The learning employs small cases, double diary, individual and group work, discussions
- The duration of delivery for this theme is 1- 1,5 hours

Part I Presentation of Model Activity

Evocation task for course participants:

Read the following statements and decide which decisions seem fair and which do not. Why?

- *To write this English essay, I am just going to copy and paste from a similar task I did last year*
- *I do not feel like going to school today. I will ask my mom to call my class teacher and say that I have a bad headache.*
- *I have read enough about global warming. I am pretty sure that consumption is the main reason for it. So, I am not going to search for any other reasons.*
- *I am not going to study. I have been at school for 12 years, and I know what teaching and learning is about.*
- *I am too old for any kind of crazy activities. People at my age must model appropriate behaviour.*

- *I have known my teenage neighbours for some time – I think all teenagers have very complicated characters*

Course participants think for themselves for 3-5 minutes, then present and justify their decisions. Groups may be involved in a short discussion, for a maximum of 10 minutes.

Realization of meaning/comprehension task.

Individual task

- See short film by Pepe Danquart “Schwarzfahrer” / ”Black rider”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFQXcv1k9OM&t=30s>
- While watching, complete the individual task of -the *Double Diary*. The left side of the table is for the description of a fair/not fair decision noticed, the right side is for justifications - why does one consider actions as fair/not fair.
- It is recommended the film is watched in 4 parts. The first part: 0:00-2:17; the second part: 2:18- 5:03; the third part: 5:04- 7:30; the fourth part: 7:31- 9:59. The pause between each part is to be used for filling in the double diary.
- Time for individual work – 20 minutes.

DOUBLE DIARY

| Examples of fair/not fair decisions (who did what?) | Why is it fair/not fair (justification) |
|--|--|
| 1st stop: | |
| 2nd stop: | |
| 3rd stop: | |
| 4th stop: | |

Realization of meaning/comprehension task.

Group task

Course participants continue working in break out rooms. They are asked to share their double diaries. Each statement must be justified by relevant information/facts/evidence.

Approximate time for group work- 10- 15 minutes (depending on group size); and 2-3 minutes for each group’s presentation.

Reflection. Work in the main session.

Participants are asked to reflect upon a resolution of the situation: what do they think about it? Is it fair / not fair? For whom? Approximate time -10- 15 minutes

Part II. Analysis of the Process

1. Recalling all steps of activity/lesson
2. Analysis of activity/lesson from learner's perspective
3. Analysis of activity/lesson from adult educator's perspective
4. Discussions: how did we learn? /what did we learn?

Part III. Planning for Implementation

1. Discussions about how & to whom this lesson/activity can be applied at local contexts
2. Development of a draft plan for implementation

Possible adaptations:

Content: use any video material relevant to group profile/experience;

Time: schedule work in accordance with group size; take breaks if necessary (recommended after evocation/ and/or realization of meaning stage); leave enough time for reflection, analysis of the process and planning for implementation.

Work in the main session/break out rooms: if the group of learners is small, there is no need to work in breakout rooms. If the group is big, it is recommended to work in pairs of trainers/adult educators.

References

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Pepe Danquart "Schwarzfahrer" / "Black rider" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFQXcv1k9OM&t=30s>