

TASKSHEET for Session 2

Developing intercultural competence with young learners of English

TASK 1:

After studying the session's paper state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. Justify your opinion

1. It is expected to have problems in a culturally mixed classroom. A teacher must not deal with problems due to cultural differences. (It is possible that issues come up due to multiculturalism, which are to be attributed mostly to social factors and not to the child itself who is culturally different. The teacher owes to use them for the benefit of all pupils. He/She may see them as a chance to exchange experience and knowledge and not as an intractable problem.)
2. Children who have linguistic, cultural or religious differences will have problems in their school progress. (Not necessarily. A pupil's cultural difference, on the contrary, is a factor of better school performance and it should be viewed as an element of enrichment and reinforcement of the class as a team.)
3. A teacher should have the same expectations of all children (No. Every child, like everyone in general, has different abilities and skills, and different expectations as well. The teacher that has the same expectations of all children does not treat them equally. He/She overlooks the uniqueness and the personality of the child, its personal and social identity.)
4. A teacher can not cooperate with the children's families to reach a solution. (The cooperation between the teacher and a pupil's family is deemed necessary and enables the teacher's work. It is also of significant importance in order to deal with eventual difficulties encountered by a pupil).

TASK 2: Sympathy or empathy?

Intercultural communication entails the ability to put ourselves in the other's shoes. Which of the two stances can lead there?

'*Sympathy*' means acknowledging someone's emotional situation and being positively disposed to comforting and supporting the one suffering.

'*Empathy*' means understanding how the one suffering feels because we had same experiences or are able to imaginarily put ourselves in their emotional position, picking up on deeper and more hidden feelings

SYMPATHY vs EMPATHY

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- Acknowledging vs understanding
- Comforting vs relating
- Reacting to feelings consciously shared vs feelings unconsciously shared

Which of the two options shows sympathy and which empathy in the following case?

- Boy A is crying because Boy B called him names during a conflict at playground time. The teacher talks to the bullied boy:
- A: She asks him what happened and listens carefully. She says to Boy A that she knows how he might feel angry and ridiculed. She asks the boy what would make him feel better and listens to his suggestions. She talks through them with him and together they decide on how to proceed.
- B: She asks him what happened and listens carefully. She comforts Boy A by saying that she understands how being called names is hurtful. She suggests it is not worth giving significance to what Boy B said, as children tend to say things they do not mean. She then calls Boy B to apologise.

(Sympathy or empathy? Test yourself:

- Answers: **A – empathy, B – sympathy.**
- **Case A:** the teacher sees beyond the boys’ tears and wants to help him take back what he was deprived of during the incident (honour and security).
- **Case B:** the teacher consoles the boy and takes his side, by softening or even invalidating his feelings (‘it is not worth giving significance’ – so, when you did so, it was a mistake). She cannot understand his situation and gives the solution that she thinks is appropriate)

