

Attain cultural integration through conflict resolution skill development



Deliverable 3.1 Summary Report (Report on good practices, opportunities for teacher' and educators')

With the recent immigration flows, diversity has become a structural characteristic of European societies. The growing proportion of students with a migrant background implies a series of challenges for the education systems in most member states: diversity leads to educational disparities between dominant cultural groups and immigrant students; also, discrimination and intercultural conflicts have become significant phenomena at school. Teacher education programs do not seem to adequately address those challenges. Hence, there is a growing need to prepare educators to effectively deal with diversity and to build bridges towards migrant communities. Indeed, when adequately addressed, diversity constitutes a substantial opportunity for education: it may enhance rich learning processes by promoting intercultural interaction and peer-learning.

The ACCORD project (Erasmus +, 2017-19) aims to prepare secondary school teachers to take an active stand against intercultural conflicts. Through an open online course using scenario-based learning (SBL) and game-based learning (GBL), teachers in five European countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain) will develop competences in terms of intercultural literacy, inclusive education and conflict management.

This document presents the first results of ACCORD. It presents the pedagogical framework of the project in terms of competence areas, pedagogical approaches and tools. A preliminary study, based on national focus groups, allowed for confronting the pedagogical framework to teachers' views and practices. Finally, we present competence framework for inclusive education and intercultural conflict management.



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1. ACCORD Pedagogical framework

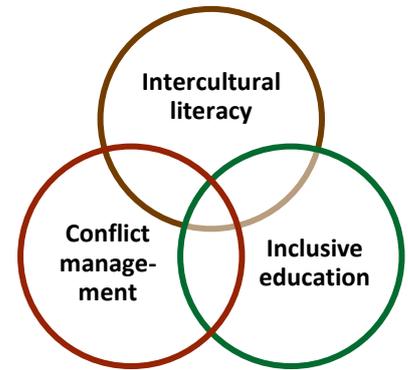
This first section synthesises the competence areas, pedagogical approaches and digital tools selected for developing teachers' intercultural conflict management competences.

Competence areas

Intercultural literacy: upstream competences required by teachers for addressing culturally diverse educational environments and interacting constructively with interlocutors from different cultural contexts.

Inclusive education: competences needed for applying methodologies oriented to an inclusive school, featured by intercultural interaction and a positive approach towards conflicts.

Conflict management: competences required for peacefully resolving conflicts when they occur, including communication, problem solving, negotiation and mediation. In education, the challenge is to channel conflicts into constructive responses and opportunities for group cohesion.



Intercultural conflicts define the implicit or explicit emotional struggle or frustration between individuals from different cultures over perceived incompatible morals, values, or goals, in a communication situation¹. In order to help teachers to deal with such situations, ACCORD explores the different aspects and levels of intercultural clashes, as well as their impacts on the involved parts and on the overall classroom dynamics.

Pedagogical approaches

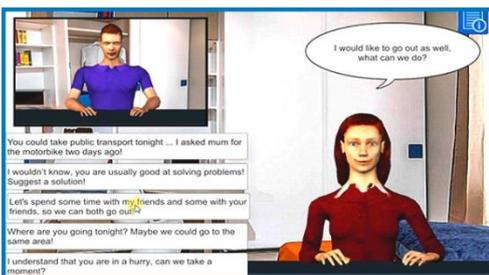


Scenario-based learning: SBL is part of the situated learning approach, which provides meaningful learning experiences by engaging students in authentic environments. SBL defines the use of scenarios to support active learning. Scenarios constitute a starting point for students to immerse in a real-world problem and in a subsequent solution finding process. SBL has proved to support reflective practices in teachers' professional development. In ACCORD, we design scenarios depicting intercultural classroom conflicts, which teachers solve by testing different dialogue patterns.

Game-based learning: Digital games promote learner-centred methodologies which adapt to different learning styles and level of skills. Furthermore, they constitute interactive objects which provide players with a real sense of agency over their actions. They also create meaningful learning experiences where learners face real-world problems. Games constitute virtual worlds featured by freedom and exploration: they allow for trying out different roles and identities. They present risk-free environments where learners can try out various options without suffering the consequences of failure in real life.



Digital tools



ACCORD training is supported by a MOOC including a series of lessons and open educational resources. In addition, we use ENACT², a game platform which allows for developing conflict management skills through a role-play simulation. The game is organized into different scenarios, where users play a character and negotiate with virtual agents. The conflict management model is based on five different styles: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising³.

¹ Ting-Toomey, S., Chung, L.C. (2012). *Understanding intercultural communication (2nd ed.)* New York: Oxford University Press.

² www.enactgame.eu

³ Rahim, A., & Bonoma, T.V. (1979). Managing organizational conflict: A model for diagnosis and intervention. *Psychological Reports*, 44(3), 1323-1344.

2. A user needs analysis



We conducted focus groups in the five project countries, in order to collect secondary school teachers' perspectives and feedback on the ACCORD pedagogical framework (i.e., competence areas, pedagogical approaches and digital tools).

In total, 69 secondary school teachers participated. A systematic analysis of results across the different countries allowed for confronting the pedagogical framework to teachers' views and practices, as described below.

Teachers' perspectives on competence areas

Teachers acknowledged the relevance of the ACCORD competence areas. Indeed, they generally feel unprepared to deal with intercultural concerns, to apply training methodologies which challenge discrimination and racism, as well as to solve related classroom conflicts. In terms of intercultural literacy, teachers highlighted the importance of understanding the key-elements which characterise the cultures of their students (e.g., codes of conduct and manners, value systems and beliefs, religions and communicative conventions). Regarding inclusive education, teachers need to get familiar with practical strategies for creating a democratic classroom culture, e.g., participatory approaches involving students in decision-making and cross-cultural collaborative learning activities. As for conflict management, teachers find it critical to learn about the factors that contribute to the development of classroom conflicts, as well as the steps and strategies for solving them.

Teachers' perspectives on pedagogical approaches

SBL was considered to be a relevant and innovative approach for teachers. To them, real-life scenarios constitute a powerful tool for reflecting on their teaching practices and sharing their insecurities in terms of intercultural conflicts. They also argued that scenarios allow for embodying theoretical concepts into real situations. Teachers highlighted the need to address more examples of real-life conflict situations, to share their own scenarios, and to address potential solutions for solving them. The GBL approach was highly valued across the different countries: some teachers compared the GBL strategy to "a gym where to get hands-on experience on the dynamics of intercultural conflict".

***"The use of games allows for a better understanding of intercultural concepts in a safe simulation application".
An Italian school teacher***

Besides SBL and GBL approaches, teachers expressed their need for collaboration with other educators. Indeed, they find it critical to debate and discuss around intercultural conflicts, as well as to share related experiences and good practices (e.g., testimonies). Collaboration would allow them for appraising teaching practices across Europe, and critically evaluating theirs. Furthermore, teachers highlighted the importance of accessing practical learning resources (e.g., protocols related to mediation, negotiation and group management; lesson plans for inclusive educational practices; examples of classroom activities like role-plays and creative writing), and hands-on activities, so to become confident when facing classroom conflict situations.

Teachers' perspectives on digital tools

With regards to digital tools, the MOOC was seen as a flexible solution which matches teachers' time constraints. Indeed, they expressed their need to set up their own pedagogical objectives, self-manage their learning time, as well as decide on the study location and freely access OERs. To teachers, the MOOC should also allow them for uploading and sharing their own materials and cases within the project community. As for the ENACT game platform, it was perceived by teachers as a "powerful tool to make real-life experiences visual, thanks to the use of e-characters".

Findings from the National Survey

National surveys were organized in the five project countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain) to gain insight regarding teachers' multicultural personality and conflict management styles. In particular, a questionnaire consisting of open and closed-ended questions to collect Socio-demographic (Gender; Age; Country; Working Experience) and specific employment information (i.e., Geographical Location of Institution; Working Position; Percentage of Students with immigrant background in Classroom; Participation to Intercultural Trainings); the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire Short-Form (MPQ-SF; Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, & Fietzer,

2013⁴); and the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II, Form B; Rahim, 1983⁵; 2001⁶) was submitted online to secondary school teachers. Overall, 589 teachers completed the questionnaire. Data were analysed using Descriptive Statistics, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Pearson's Correlations.

Teachers' Individual and Occupational characteristics: Descriptive statistics provided frequencies and percentages of teachers' socio-demographic characteristics with respect to Gender (Female = 70.6 %, N = 416; Male = 29.4 %, N = 173); Age (Under 35 Years = 26.1%, N = 154; 35-45 Years = 24.5 %, N = 144; Over 45 years = 49.4 %, N = 291); Working Experience (Under 5 Years = 22.1 %, N = 130; 5-10 Years = 20.5 %, N = 121; Over 10 years = 57.4 %, N = 338); and Country (Austria = 18.5 %, N = 109; Belgium = 19.7 %, N = 116; Germany = 7.1 %, N = 42; Italy = 18.5 %, N = 109; Spain = 36.2 %, N = 213).

Furthermore, with respect to employment information, considering participants' working position, 531 out of 589 (90.2%) were teachers, 18 (3.0 %) were school directors, and 40 (6.8%) covered other positions (e.g., teachers in training, tutors, policy makers). All participants declared that they followed an intercultural training (i.e., Inclusive Education = 15.3%, N = 90; Intercultural Education = 8.5%, N = 50; Training on Conflict Management = 18.2%, N = 107), and 121 out of 589 (20.5%) reported that they have followed more than one training course. Considering the geographical location of their main teaching institution, 276 (46.9%) participants indicated to work in a Metropolitan Area; 134 (22.7%) in a Medium-sized city; 156 (26.5%) in a Small-sized city; and only 23 (3.9%) in a Rural Area. Finally, considering the percentage of students with an immigrant background (e.g., students born abroad, second-generation immigrants), 169 (28.7%) participants reported the presence of less than 5% of students with an immigrant background; 169 (28.7%) between 5 and 15 %; 100 (17.0%) between 16 and 30%; 63 (10.7%) between 31 and 50%; and 88 (14.9%) more than 50%.

Multicultural Personality and Conflict Management Styles: Findings on **Multicultural Personality** dimensions (Cultural Empathy, Open Mindedness, Social Initiative, Flexibility, Emotional Stability) and on **Conflict Management styles** (Integrating, Obliging, Dominating, Avoiding, Compromising) mean scores reported by teachers participating in the ACCORD survey were compared with the corresponding normative data (Rahim, 2001; Van Der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of MPQ-SF and ROCI-II dimensions

	ACCORD		NORMATIVE DATA	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
MPQ-SF dimensions				
<i>Cultural Empathy</i>	4.15	0.55	4.24	0.45
<i>Open Mindedness</i>	3.79	0.54	3.54	0.51
<i>Social Initiative</i>	3.78	0.58	3.45	0.70
<i>Flexibility</i>	2.76	0.67	3.67	0.62
<i>Emotional Stability</i>	3.26	0.61	2.91	0.69
ROCI-II dimensions				
<i>Integrating</i>	4.12	0.56	4.26	0.39
<i>Obliging</i>	3.38	0.51	3.21	0.49
<i>Dominating</i>	2.52	0.71	2.94	0.67
<i>Avoiding</i>	2.80	0.74	2.78	0.68
<i>Compromising</i>	3.66	0.61	3.31	0.69

Afterward, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to evaluate differences in Multicultural Personality and Conflict Management Style mean scores according to Gender, Age, Working Experience and Country were carried out,

⁴Van der Zee, K., Van Oudenhoven, J. P., Ponterotto, J. G., & Fietzer, A. W. (2013). Multicultural Personality Questionnaire: Development of a short form. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 95(1), 118-124.

⁵Rahim, M. A. (1983). A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26(2), 368-376.

⁶Rahim, M.A. (2001). *Managing Conflict in Organizations*. Quorum Books

revealing that female teachers reported significantly higher levels of Cultural Empathy personality as well as higher levels of Integrating styles and lower levels of Dominating style than male teachers. Moreover, teachers with increasing age and higher years of working experience reported significantly higher levels of Flexibility and Integrating styles, and increasing age was also significantly associated with lower levels of Dominating style. Significant country-specificities were also found with exception of Social Initiative personality characteristic and Dominating and Compromising styles.

Finally, Pearson's correlations have been used to test whether there were significant correlations between teachers' Multicultural Personality dimensions and their ways of dealing with conflicts in order to provide meaningful indications regarding which area and aspects to concentrate training programme and the focus of the learning scenarios of the game. In this perspective, findings revealed that Cultural Empathy, Open Mindedness, and Social Initiative personality characteristics significantly positively related to Integrating, Obliging and Compromising conflict management styles, while Emotional Stability positively related to Integrating style. Moreover, Cultural Empathy, Flexibility and Emotional Stability personality characteristics negatively related to Dominating style, and Social Initiative and Flexibility negatively related to Avoiding style.

These findings suggested to promote the use of specific conflict management styles emerged as positively associated with Multicultural Personality characteristics (i.e., Integrating, Compromising and Obliging styles) and to try reducing the use of those emerged as negatively related to Multicultural Personality (i.e., Dominating and Avoiding styles) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Differences in MPQ and ROCI-II dimensions scores by Gender, Age, Experience and Country

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Cultural Empathy	1									
2 Open Mindedness	0.64**	1								
3 Social Initiative	0.41**	0.51**	1							
4 Flexibility	-0.03	0.16**	0.16**	1						
5 Emotional Stability	0.13**	0.28**	0.35**	0.29**	1					
6 Integrating	0.45**	0.46**	0.28**	0.08	0.11**	1				
7 Obliging	0.26**	0.24**	0.09*	-0.04	-0.10*	0.42**	1			
8 Dominating	-0.16**	-0.07	-0.03	-0.17**	-0.09*	-0.28**	-0.02	1		
9 Avoiding	-0.06	-0.03	-0.15**	-0.10*	-0.06	-0.02	0.12**	0.15**	1	
10 Compromising	0.26**	0.23**	0.12**	-0.03	0.03	0.49**	0.38**	-0.10*	0.10*	1

Notes: ** $p < 0.001$; * $p < 0.05$

Psychological Modelling: Findings on correlations between multicultural personality dimensions and conflict management styles induced to a further development of the psychological modelling to inform the definition of ACCORD project, starting from the consideration that supporting teacher's awareness of conflict management styles could stimulate their multicultural personality characteristics and promote more adequate ways to handle intercultural conflicts in the school context.

3. ACCORD competence framework

This section identifies a framework of competences for inclusive education and conflict management which will be developed through the ACCORD training.

Competence defines as “the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities (attitudes), in work or study situations and in professional and personal development” (The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, 2008).

Competence framework design

In order to design the ACCORD competence framework, we followed different steps, as described below:

A Analysis of existing models

B Extraction and selection of competences

C Organization in knowledge, skills and dispositions

D Adaptation to the results of the user needs analysis

E Expert validation

Presentation of the ACCORD competence framework

ACCORD competence framework for inclusive education and conflict management consists of three areas i.e., **intercultural literacy**, **inclusive education** and **conflict management**. Each competence area includes a set of descriptors classified into **(a) knowledge and understanding** - “I am aware of, know about and understand ...”; **(b) skills** (cognitive and practical) - “I am able to ...”; and **(c) dispositions** (beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment) - “I demonstrate”. In total, the framework includes 30 descriptors.

AREA 1 - INTERCULTURAL LITERACY

Understanding and addressing culturally diverse educational environments

Knowledge

- **Understanding of cultural diversity as applied to education and society**
- **Appreciation of the different cultures present in the teaching environment**
- **Awareness of intercultural communication** (nonviolent communication; awareness of the main communicative conventions of the cultures present in the school).

Skills

- **Cultural understanding and sensitivity** (adaptation of behaviour to new cultural environments)
- **Intercultural communication** (adaptation of one’s communication, empathic listening, consideration of non-verbal messages)
- **Critical cultural thinking** (awareness of cultural stereotypes and prejudices)

Dispositions

- **Intercultural open-mindedness** (value, interest and openness towards cultural diversity)
- **Cultural flexibility** (tolerance to ambiguity, disposition to adapt to new situations)
- **Social responsibility and initiative** (willingness to overcome stereotypes and prejudices)
- **Cultural empathy** (empathy with students from different cultural backgrounds)

AREA 2 - INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Facilitating intercultural coexistence and positive approaches towards conflicts

Knowledge

- **Understanding of inclusive school principles** (for addressing cultural diversity in the classroom)
- **Curricular knowledge** (understanding of the purposes and contents of intercultural education)
- **Understanding and integration of the core principles of proactive restorative practices** (building healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict)

Skills

- **Culturally sensitive teaching** (integration of students' cultural references into teaching)
- **Creation of a classroom culture** (promotion of students' sense of belonging to the classroom)
- **Community building among colleagues and families from different cultural backgrounds**
- **Democratic teaching methodologies** (participatory approaches, equitable teaching)

Dispositions

- **Openness to reflect and evaluate own teaching practice and its impact on students**
- **Commitment to promoting the learning of all students** (disposition to provide culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all)
- **Awareness of the role of education for change and the social good**

AREA 3 - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Carrying constructive processes as a means of resolving conflicts

Knowledge

- **Understanding of the factors that contribute to the development of classroom conflicts** (stereotypes and prejudices creating discrimination among students)
- **Knowledge of the main principles around conflict resolution** (steps, strategies and styles)
- **Understanding and integration of the core principles of reactive restorative practices**

Skills

- **Analysis of the conflict and students' emotions** (conflict's dynamics, needs behind behaviours)
- **Restorative practices** (discussion circles, restorative questions; support of students' responsibility)
- **Mediation** (helping students to switch perspectives and clarify their needs, manage breakdowns)
- **Negotiation** (separation of people from the problem; addressing the conflict in terms of

Dispositions

- **Emotional stability** (propensity to remain calm in stressful situation)
- **Flexibility** (disposition to decentre from one's own perspective, to approach alternative opinions, to engage in constructive and critical dialogue and to compromise)
- **Ethics and fair-mindedness** (integrity and ethical behaviour in using influence and power)

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