

STRUCTURE REFLECTION TECHNOLOGY

Basic Skills and Methodology
for the 21st Century

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Introduction to the project

When we applied for this project, Europe had a large amount of refugees that came across the Mediterranean. In this project, this was a reality the schools in Germany and Norway could relate to, but for the school in Spain this was to a lesser extent, because their language educating was about preparing the students for work abroad.

All our schools have recently had to deal with significant rises in so-called 'migrant' numbers. Developing and implementing these teaching methodologies and best teaching practices will therefore help us at each school and in each class to build better environments where all students feel welcome, comfortable and able to learn.



To be truly prepared to teach and develop skills needed for adults into the 21st century, the schools needed to develop teaching methodologies that could ensure that students acquire thinking skills and associated cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Skills needed for the 21st century is also about becoming constantly pro-active to ensure an awareness of the correct practical skills called for by a developing technology in the society. By designing courses around relevant teaching methodologies, we can guarantee that the best teaching practices are getting maintained with all our various student groups.

In this project we have exchanged ideas about how to choose, implement and evaluate teaching methods that will help us teach effectively. Sharing our experiences and common practice as teachers from different countries has allowed for the development of a methodological toolkit which compiles tested methods and 'best practices' that meet the educational need of adult students in the 21st century. This has been the overall objective of our working group.

Objectives

Adult students have acquired knowledge throughout their lives, and they have experiences that they can relate to in their learning. Therefore, we assume that background and ability to reflect is an important part of the education when teaching adults. Gaining knowledge through reflection creates understanding and in-depth learning. In this project, it has been important to work with methods that make learning "a lasting knowledge". In this way, students expand their horizons and self-confidence. Developing adult-adapted methods based on the knowledge and resources that the adult students already possess, was an important part of this project.

Methods that can enhance skills in how to approach mathematical tasks have also been a goal in this project since many of our adult students struggle with mathematics. A large group of our students have to learn math in a language that they do not fully understand. To be able to understand the question in a written or oral context, the students have to be able to solve mathematical problems.

To be truly prepared to teach and develop skills needed further into the 21st century, we as schools have developed teaching methodologies to ensure students acquire the right valuable practical thinking skills and associated cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In this project, we have experienced that by combining different pedagogical methods, we can achieve good results. Key words in this regard, is helping students to structure their own knowledge, reflection and blended learning. The goal of a meaningful lesson should be that students, at all ability levels, are building new understandings and developing personal insights"

As time progresses, we and our successors will need to be constantly pro-active in ensuring an awareness of the correct practical skills called for as technology and society develop, and exactly how to design courses around the relevant teaching methodologies to guarantee such best teaching practices are maintained with all our various student groups.

Results and impact and long term benefits

During this project, we have experienced that the teachers have become more aware of adults as learners and how to approach a pedagogy that the adult learner can benefit from. We have observed adult learners in the classrooms, how the teaching is practiced and discussed, different aspects and specificities of the different countries in their teaching methods.

Teachers in all subjects use teaching methods that promote adult learning, and reflection based on participants' experience is consistently employed in all subjects. The teaching in general at school is now based on the use of structure and reflection which in turn provide in-depth education. The lesson plans and methods teachers from the different schools have made together are good examples of adult education that integrate practical thinking, and cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

Task based learning to tackle diversity

Thinking about basic skills and teaching methodologies of the 21st century, we came to the challenge of diversity in the classroom as the most prominent issue for teachers. Diversity has become a common challenge in all European countries, and it has emerged as a predominant issue throughout the project as well. Students with different cultural, social, and linguistic backgrounds, learners with special needs, and students of different ages are part of the same learning groups and have to develop the same skills in different ways. Teachers find themselves facing the challenge of finding individually adjusted methods to help students in their learning process. This can also be related to the future of learning, which is going to be more student-centred and self-organized. The role of the teacher is going to be more of guidance and support.

We have discussed about the evidence of what works in the classroom. The question was to find the method which was most inclusive, and we realized that most of the things we used to do was classroom management. Dividing learners into groups with different tasks seemed like separating them rather than encouraging students to use their individual cognitive abilities to solve problems together. Ultimately, in-depth and task-based learning turned out to be the most inclusive approach to getting learners to learn to learn, use and develop their own skills, and solve problems both individually and as part of a team.

Criteria “What is a good task?”

Based on Rod Ellis’s ideas on Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching, we worked out criteria on what makes a good task:

- ✓ It is a workplan
- ✓ It involves a primary focus on meaning
- ✓ It entails real-world processes
- ✓ It engages cognitive processes
- ✓ It has a clearly defined communicative outcome

For example, learners have to answer a philosophical question by finding good arguments to use in a philosophical inquiry or argumentative essay. Another example could be a real-life situation, such as ordering in a restaurant in a foreign country: what are the cultural values, vocabulary, you need? Or a discussion about a holiday may result in conversations about cultural differences, prejudices and how one comes to a better understanding of each other. A task-based approach could result in meaningful learning regardless of the subject matter.

In addition, a task-based learning entails learning steps which can focus on knowledge, specific language skills (grammar, vocabulary, word order, pronunciation, etc.), and critical thinking (asking questions, contrasting information, identifying reliable sources, etc.) which are necessary to solve the problem of the task. Using thinking maps to identify key words and ideas

Lesson Plan using tasked based learning

Task-based learning approach is the most effective way to deal with classroom diversity. Teachers can use all kinds of resources and activities to adjust them to specific class situations. This practice encourages the use of cognitive resources and focuses on real-life situations and meaning.

We did different workshops in which we looked at our former lesson plans, and modified these applying the criteria of task-based learning. We found out that it took only a small twist, because we merely had to fit previous exercises into a larger frame. A task should involve various steps, which are small activities/exercises that are part of a whole. This implies that learners get support at different stages of the process and can work at their pace to accomplish the task. Below you will find lessons plans in different subjects based on the criteria above:

- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Blended learning
- ✓ Digital literacy
- ✓ Writing an argumentative essay
- ✓ Writing an persuasive essay

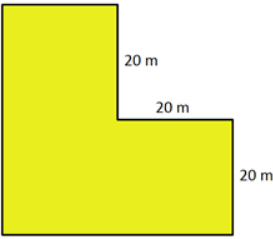
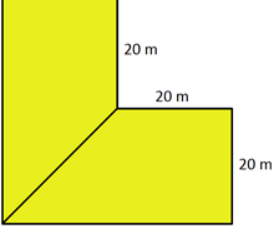
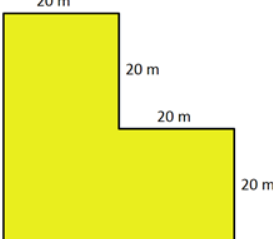
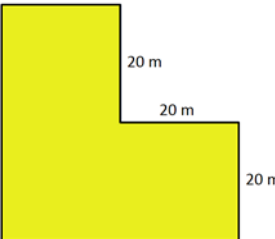

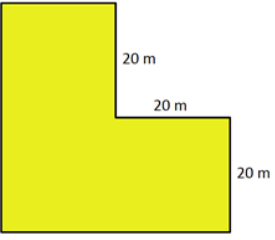
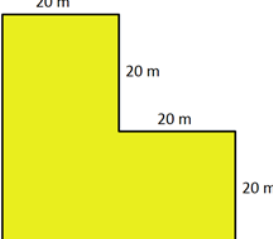
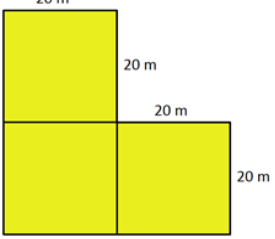
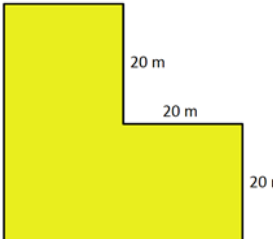
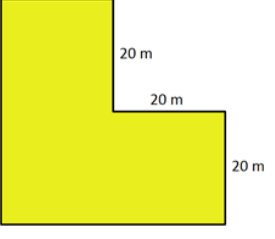
Bridge - Mathematical fractions

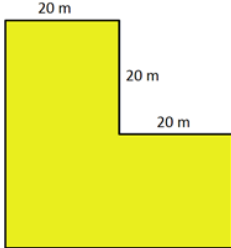
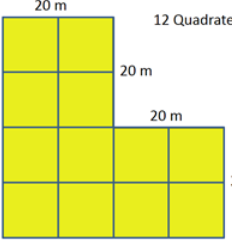
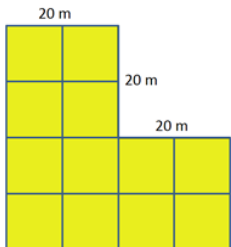
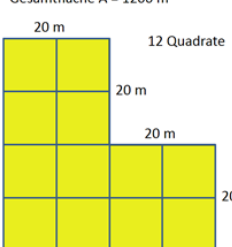
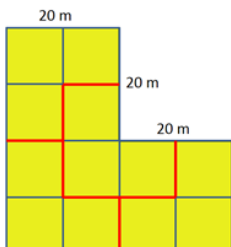
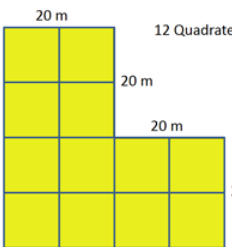
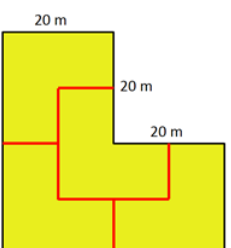
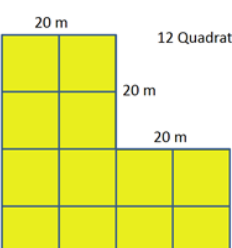
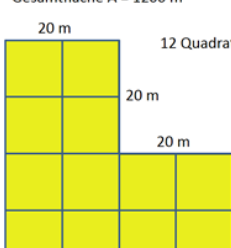
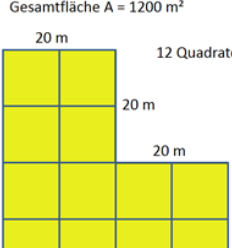
The refugees that attended the course have poor language skills, but a broad range of mathematical skills from primary school up to college experiences. This course had two aims:

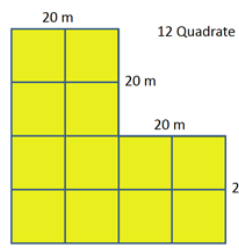
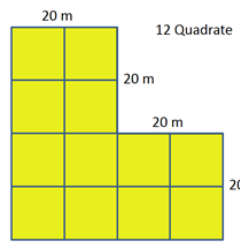
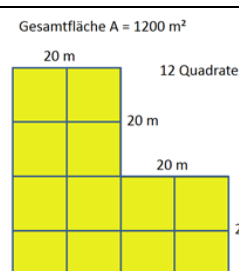
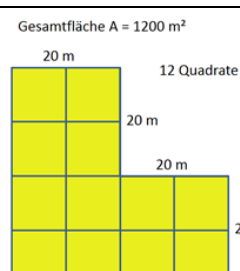
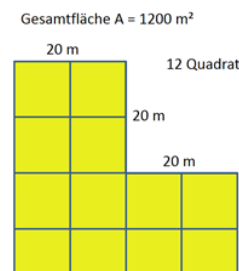
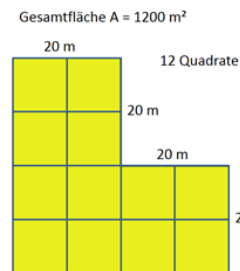
1. To introduce fractions
2. To involve simultaneously the students with weak capabilities?

The difficulty to choose a helpful method and in addition a helpful context related to the experience of the students. Assuming that inheritance is a general experience and independent from various cultures, a visual method and a problem of inheritance would be suitable as content.

How is it possible to divide a L-formed land with isosceles legs in a number of parts related to the varying number of inheritors. Fraction in two or three parts could be solved intuitively from all students. But fraction in four parts is difficult, especially combined with the requirement, that the four parts should have the same surface area and additional the same shape. The way of solution made it necessary to change from intuitive feeling to practice mathematical tools.

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Blended learning

When using blended learning a teacher becomes like a guide more than a lecturer. Students become more autonomous, independent and active in their own learning process than in a traditional lesson. In blended learning, the teacher should have the same relation with the student as if you had them in the traditional classroom. We have listed a few of the criteria that we think should be taken into consideration when teaching blended learning below:

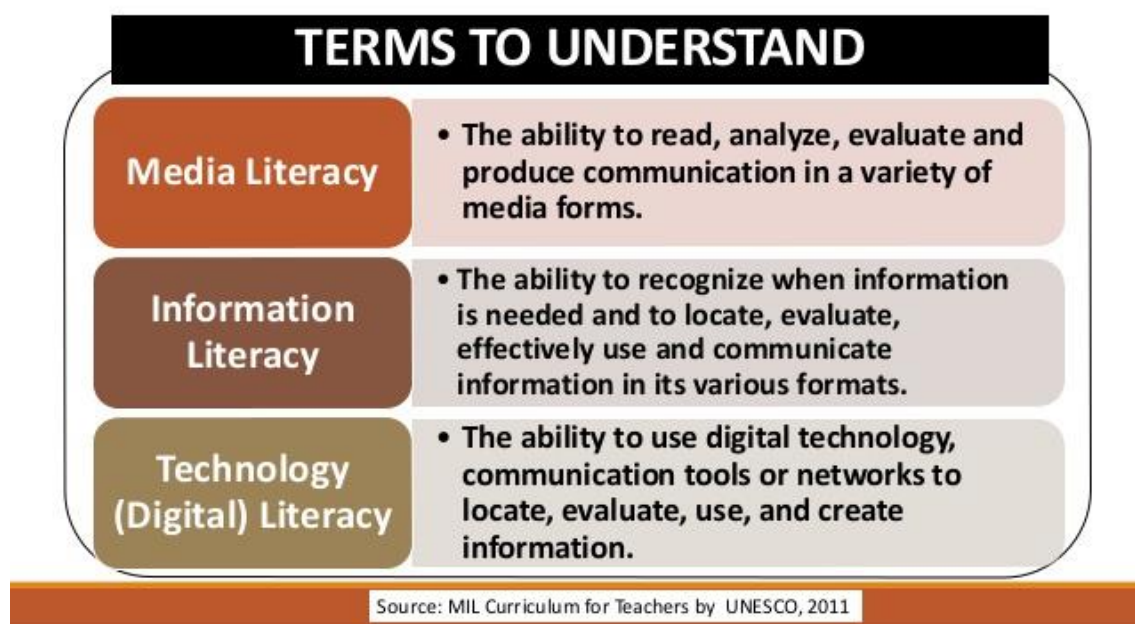
- ✓ The teacher needs to be trained in blended learning.
- ✓ The teacher needs to introduce him- or herself first with a photo, who they are and what they expect from the students as an example. Then the students should be asked to write about themselves and uploading a photo in order to have faces on names, you see people instead of a list of names. This makes it more personal. This means that the students get to know who the classmates are. In this way the teachers get to know the students and are able to make good relations and gain confidence. Having good relations with the students and within the group, means the students will get more motivated in their learning.
- ✓ The first thing the teacher needs to know is whether the students are able to log in to the platform or they need support from the teacher.
- ✓ The teacher needs to be supportive and to give feedback on their work.
- ✓ The student must not feel alone – they need to know that there always is somebody on the other end – this is very important.
- ✓ Teaching in a blending learning environment, means that the teacher has to change the teacher centred learning methods.
- ✓ The students must submit their task on a set deadline.
- ✓ Blended learning is very helpful for the class diversity. The teacher can guide the student individually where they are in their learning process.
- ✓ In the lessons, the teacher teaches the very difficult correlation – if the students fail to understand the topic on the platform– the teacher must help the student to clarify.

To conclude, the most important reason of blended learning is to accommodate the adult learner's need for flexible time and in adaptive learning corresponding to the diversity in the group. Blended learning means that the students can choose to work when they have time for it, at their own level and where they are in their learning and use the learning materials in their own pace.

The best way to learn is when the students make research on their own. Student should be the producer and not the consumer of knowledge. The active one should be students – the teacher is the students guide in their learning so that the students and the teacher interact equally. This way the learning becomes student centred. The way to give feedback is not by giving the right answer – the students need to be challenged – in the end the students become autonomous – have learned how to learn.

Diversity and adaptive learning. If the teacher do not know where the students are in their learning the teacher are not able not support them in the right way.

One of the partners wants to increase the use of blended learning also in the traditional classes. First as a helpful material and tool resource, and further as blended learning.



In many cases Google is the first information source in order to get an overview about subjects, but Google does not give the best information always.

Students tend to search one or several keywords and then they stop at the first searching results because it is the easiest way and it is the quickest.

Media literacy is the competence in using various media and the ability to think critically

How do you know that the information you have found on the Internet is from a reliable source – when, where and who is the author of the web page?

- How do I make precise searches?
- Students take the assignment and type in words for words. If you want to get a powerpoint about Romeo and Juliet from the universities in United Kingdom you can type: Site:ac.uk:ppt Romeo and Juliet

Suggestion:

1. Give the students a reliable source of a webpage that we as teachers know
2. Give them certain criteria that must be present:
 - a. who is the author
 - b. look up contrast information
 - c. click on the object or picture and then you can get information about the source

We don't teach how to make precise searches and students don't learn it because the teacher do not teach it. How do you construct a search to find the primary source – and how to do a fact check. The first step is to train the teacher to get correct informations at reliable websites in short time.

Lesson plans based on cognitive principles

Cognitive psychologist Daniel T. Willingham has tried to bridge that gap in his book *Why Don't Students Like School?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom* by identifying nine cognitive principles fundamental to the mind's operation. Willingham claims that his findings are "as true in the classroom as they are in the laboratory and therefore can reliably be applied to classroom situations" (Willingham 2009, p. 1). They are supposed to "help teachers improve their practice by explaining how they and their students think and learn."¹ The overview below is copied from Willingham's book:

Chapter	Cognitive Principle	Required Knowledge About Students	most important classroom implication
1	People are naturally curious, but they are not naturally good thinkers.	What is just beyond what my students know and can do?	Think of to-be-learned material as <i>answers</i> , and take the time necessary to explain to students the questions.
2	Factual knowledge precedes skill.	What do my students know?	It is not possible to think well on a topic in the absence of factual knowledge about the topic.
3	Memory is the residue of thought.	What will students think during this lesson?	The best barometer for every lesson plan is "Of what will it make the students think?"
4	We understand new things in the context of things we already know.	What do students already know that will be a toehold on understanding this new material?	Always make deep knowledge your goal, spoken and unspoken, but recognize that shallow knowledge will come first.
5	Proficiency requires practice.	How can I get students to practice without boredom?	Think carefully about which material students need at their fingertips, and practice it over time.
6	Cognition is fundamentally different early and late in training.	What is the difference between my students and an expert?	Strive for deep understanding in your students, not the creation of new knowledge.
7	Children are more alike than different in terms of learning.	Knowledge of students' learning styles is not necessary.	Think of lesson content, not student differences, driving decisions about how to teach.
8	Intelligence can be changed through sustained hard work.	What do my students believe about intelligence?	Always talk about successes and failures in terms of effort, not ability.
9	Teaching, like any complex cognitive skill, must be practiced to be improved.	What aspects of my teaching work well for my students, and what parts need improvement?	Improvement requires more than experience; it also requires conscious effort and feedback.

We have explored the implications of cognitive science for teaching mostly referring to Willingham's explanation of how the most important discoveries from the cognitive revolution can be used to improve teaching.

Writing an persuasive text

Introduction

Target Group: Students in their final year preparing for the English Exam

Age: 25+

Competence Level: A2 – C2

The topic for this lesson plan is Global English. This is one of the competence aims in the students' curriculum: "discuss the growth of English as a global language". This is understood to mean: knowledge of why English has become a global language, the role of English today, the effect of English on other languages and the effect on the English language itself.

This plan consists of sequence of lesson aimed at a specific learning outcome: persuasive essays.

This lesson sequence requires knowledge of:

- Persuasive essays
- Note-taking techniques
- Paraphrasing
- The "Four corners" – method

The students are familiar with these methods and genres.

Session 1:

Tasks	Description	Cognitive Principle	Evaluation
Presentation of topic - Brainstorming	Activating prior knowledge: Brainstorming alone - then in small groups - then in class Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does "global" mean? - Why are we learning English? - Why not another language? - Are there other global languages? - How did English become so important? 	2, 4	
Group Quiz - factual questions	Appeals to students' competitive nature –when students invest time and effort in a topic it triggers their curiosity/interest	1	
Class discussion: Relevance and expectations (learning outcome)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss competence aims (curriculum) 2. Expectations: Use your knowledge of Global English to express own ideas (e.g. persuasive essays) about the role of English as Global Language 3. Milestones: Which steps do we need to take to reach our goal 4. Present plan 	1	

Session 2			
Tasks	Description	Cognitive Principle	Evaluation
Summarizing and paraphrasing the content of the text studied during this session	Students are only allowed to use their keywords for this activity Summarize the text together (orally and in writing)	3	
Reading a text which discusses how English became the world's most dominant language.	Teacher reads aloud – paragraph by paragraph (or more extensive chunks of texts), pause while students summarize what they hear in groups and take notes)	3	
Session 3			
Tasks	Description	Cognitive Principle	Evaluation
Multiple Choice test based on the two texts they have read so far.	Factual questions – self assessment	2	
Group work: Students discuss positive and negative aspects of Global English	Groups of three. Each member is given a different role: 1. Make certain only English is used when discussing 2. Complete a mind map 3. Cross out key vocabulary on a list.	4	
Four Corners activity based on a statement. The purpose is to find arguments in support of your opinion.	1. Statement: “The spread of English is a threat to other languages and we must do everything we can to stop it” 2. Teacher writes arguments on whiteboard – mind map 3. Class discussion: Choose one argument from each side: Discuss which points from our texts we can use to support the arguments 4. Class discussion: Choose one argument from each side: Discuss which points from our texts we can use to refute the arguments	3, 5	
Homework: Study the text Icelandic Wordsmiths	1. This is a text on language policy on Iceland – Use note-taking techniques to find arguments in the text.		

Session 4			
Task	Description	Cognitive Principle	Evaluation
Philosophical Enquiry (groups of 10 – 15)	Putting arguments to the test “We cannot stop the spread of English”	4	
Meta discussion	Teacher asks the group to answer these questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did anyone change their minds? If so, what persuaded you? 2. What is the purpose of the method? 3. What was the best argument you had not thought of yourself? 4. Did anyone use any arguments from the text <i>Icelandic Wordsmiths</i>? 	2	
Session 5			
Task	Description	Cognitive Principle	Evaluation
Final learning outcome: Essay writing	Students are given two statements to choose between and instructed to write a persuasive essay. Statements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “The Norwegian language is under attack from English, and we must do everything we can to protect it” 2. “The English language has become too dominant” 	4	

Writing an argumentative essay about forgiveness

Factual knowledge precedes skill, and so before students develop their thinking and writing skills, they read three literary texts, two factual texts and a film, which serve as starting points for their discussions and texts. Memory is the residue of thought, a principle underpinned by retrieving evidence from the texts previously read and analyzed both during discussions and the writing process. Besides, we understand new things in the context of things we already know, this is why many of the philosophical/open questions students discuss are supposed to lay the ground for combining what they already know the new knowledge. The latter can be either new information, new vocabulary, or new views of the concept of forgiveness. By consistently discussing and summarizing discussions in writing students become equipped with the practice necessary to become proficient critical thinkers and writers.

FORGIVENESS



WHAT MAKES US FORGIVE?

I. DEFINE THE CONCEPT

- a. Read the definition to the right. Write down your own definition.



Forgiveness, *in my opinion*, can be defined as...

- b. Share with the class. Add details to your definition.

FORGIVENESS noun
FORGIVING adjective
FORGIVE verb

To stop blaming or being angry with someone for something that person has done

Not punish somebody for something

2. UNPACK THE CONCEPT

- a. Discuss in groups. Share with the class.

1. What is easy to forgive?
2. What is hard to forgive?
3. Is forgiveness detrimental or beneficial?
4. What are the reasons for not being able to forgive?
5. What are the reasons for finding it easy to forgive?
6. When we forgive, who do we think about first?
7. What is the relation between forgiveness and trust?
8. Is forgiveness related to anger?
9. What is the relation between forgiveness and time?
10. How is forgiveness related to self-respect?

PHRASES

Forgive somebody something
Forgive somebody for doing something



Summarize group discussion in writing.

WHY DO WE FORGIVE?

EXAMPLES OF WRONGDOINGS

Betraying a friend
Battering your wife
Robbing an old person
Bullying somebody resulting in suicide
Spreading hateful rumors about a person

- b. Discuss in groups. Share with the class.

1. Make a list of all the wrongdoings you can think of.
2. Rank them according to their seriousness: Which ones are easier to forgive? Which ones are hardest?

CONTEXT ONE

Is forgiveness the first reaction of a person who's been a victim of betrayal, violence, torture or any other serious wrongdoing? Should it ever be? Surely feelings of revenge are there, but sometimes the first reaction is not so much of revenge as of deep sadness or disappointment. The dilemma between forgiveness and revenge is hard to deal with. On the one hand, forgiveness offers feelings of kindness and generosity, but it might also leave a person unfulfilled. On the other hand, revenge is accompanied by feelings of justice and retribution, but it might also leave a person guilty. However, when dealing with the nature of forgiveness, one has to wonder: is forgiveness an important moral value and how much of a person's hurt should be retaliated?

Over the past forty years or so, forgiveness has generated the interest of scholars in various fields, such as international affairs, politics, law, sociology, psychology and philosophy. The term 'forgive' stems from 'give' or 'grant' - giving up feelings of offence and anger as responses to injury or wrongdoing. Thus forgiveness involves the relation between a wrongdoer and a wronged party - the victim. Forgiveness may occur between persons, but also

between groups of people or people and institutions. Both religion and science praise the benefits of forgiveness, yet it seems to be one of the hardest things to do. Letting go of the hurt others have done to us, as well as letting go of the hurt we have done to ourselves, seems to be a continuous struggle between vindication, disappointment, and acceptance.

According to English philosopher Joseph Butler (1692-1752), forgiveness is a virtue of character, which involves overcoming negative reactions by changing inner feelings rather than changing external actions. This implies a great deal of self-control and effort - a strength of character - because negative responses are natural when one has been wronged. Critical moral judgments about the wrongdoer such as anger, hatred and desire for revenge are revised and abandoned, and are replaced by feelings of compassion, mercy, excuse and reconciliation. Moreover, forgiveness can make a person feel in control of their emotions and boost self-esteem. Besides, it helps us be at peace with ourselves and even feel in possession of a superior generosity - we rise above the wrongdoer's actions. 'Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior', declaims English philosopher and politician Francis Bacon (1561-1626).

REFLECT AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.

1. How should we respond to wrongdoings?
2. What is the value of forgiveness?
3. What are the benefits of forgiveness?

CONTEXT TWO

In *The Essays Or Counsels, Civil And Moral*, Francis Bacon declares that revenge has to be controlled by law, since it is in human nature to give in to vengeful feelings, 'putting the law out of office'. Past being gone and irrevocable, it is only wise to busy ourselves with things present. Bacon believes that people make mistakes because they want to satisfy a pleasure, reward, or honor, and that no wrongdoing is done for the wrong's sake. 'Therefore why should I be angry with a man, for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong, merely out of ill-nature',

the philosopher tells us, it is 'because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy.' The person dedicated to take revenge is certain to keep 'his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal, and do well'. And while 'public revenges are for the most part fortunate, as that for the death of Caesar, for the death of Henry the Third of France, and many more', private revenges are not so. 'Nay rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches who, as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate.'

REFLECT AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.

1. When it comes to revenge, are we protected or hindered by the law?
2. Is satisfying a pleasure a more tolerable wrongdoing than hurting someone on purpose?
3. What are the results of 'keeping our wounds green'?

CONTEXT THREE

Vindictive emotions are tiring and extremely negative in nature, which also inflict a lot of suffering on the person who nurtures them. The goal of vengeance is to offer the victim feelings of satisfaction and retribution. 'O, from this time forth/ My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!' declares Hamlet. Payback serves as a tool to create some balance in a world where injustice had prevailed. Philosophers make a distinction between taking revenge and punishing somebody for their wrongdoing. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato tells us in *Protagoras* that punishment is meant to teach the evil-doer a lesson for the future. He believes that 'he who desires to inflict rational punishment does not retaliate for a past wrong which cannot be undone; he has regard to the future, and is desirous that the man who is punished, and he who sees him punished, may be deterred from doing wrong again'. Or as Francis Bacon puts it, the delight of revenge is 'not so much in doing the hurt, as in making the party repent.'

In criminal justice, for example, retribution is realized in the form of punishment by preventing or controlling crime in society in general. On a personal level, though, one may ask the question: is vindictiveness irrational and immoral? Is it a sign of bad moral character and poor self-control? Professor of law and philosophy Jeffrie G. Murphy offers three values to defend resentment: self-respect, self-defense and respect for the moral order. By forgiving, we reward the wrongdoer, which is not only ridiculous, but morally wrong. Forgiveness can indeed mean letting injustice prevail, that wrongful acts can be justified and even accepted. Surely, it might be easy for someone who hasn't been injured to profess uncritical forgiveness, but it is a symbol of strong personality and self-respect to demand punishment. By punishing the wrongdoer, one ascertains the victim's dignity, but also that we all are *responsible for the choices we make and their consequences*.

REFLECT AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.

- What is the value of revenge?
What are the benefits of revenge?

CONTEXT FOUR

To what degree is forgiveness a good thing? To what degree should passions of revenge be banished? Research points to myriads of benefits forgiveness has for our health, including better sleep, lower risk of heart disease, improved immune system function, and increased life expectancy. One view of forgiveness is that it represents liberation from being the object of others' actions, it involves deciding to give up the role of victim. South African anti-apartheid revolutionary and politician Nelson Mandela (1918-2013), representing the emblem of forgiveness, did what is hardest to do – look outside himself and beyond his own circumstances. Forgiveness, he believed, releases us from ourselves and makes us superior beings. Nothing is more liberating than letting go of the temptations of revenge by embracing the peace in ourselves deriving from unconditional forgiveness.

The 2013 British-South African biographical film *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* is portraying Nelson Mandela's remarkable life as symbol of reconciliation and forgiveness. Mandela, played by Idris Elba, is the name that became known to people around the world in the last dark days of apartheid in South Africa. His name became iconic to the world when he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for arguing against racist policies and preaching reconciliation instead of rebellion. In the film, when asked, 'Tell me the truth. When you were leaving prison after twenty-seven years and walking down that road to freedom, didn't you hate them all over again?' Mandela replies: 'Absolutely I did, because they'd imprisoned me for so long. I was abused. I didn't get to see my children grow up. I lost my marriage and the best years of my

life. I was angry. And I was afraid, because I had not been free in so long. But as I got closer to the car that would take me away, I realized that when I went through that gate, *if I still hated them, they would still have me. I wanted to be free. And so I let it go.*

One must remark that forgiveness is made easier by the passing of time, as our memories fade and our strong feelings subside, leaving room for change. As Jane Eyre declares in the novel with the same name, written by English author Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855), 'It is a happy thing that time quells the longings of vengeance and hushes the promptings of rage and aversion'. Jane had been treated badly by her aunt, Mrs. Reed, who is now on her deathbed. 'I had left this woman in bitterness and hate, and I came back to her now with no other emotion than a strong yearning to forget and forgive all injuries - to be reconciled and clasp hands in amity.'

In her poem *I Had No Time To Hate, Because*, American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) proclaims that life's briefness and the prospect of death makes her realize that there is 'no time to hate'. Hate takes up more than a lifetime to put an end to, 'And life was not so ample/ I could finish enmity.' Love, which takes a lot of effort too, is a worthier activity to dedicate a lifetime to. 'Nor had I time to love/ but since some industry must be/ was large enough for me,' declaims the poet.

REFLECT AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.

Is forgiveness making peace with the past or with the future?
Are you weak when you do not fight fire with fire?
What is more exhausting: to forgive or to nurture hate?

CONTEXT FIVE

In the philosophical literature, forgiveness is also studied in connection with anger, which some believe is necessary when one is wronged in order to protect one's dignity and self-respect. Anger is also viewed as indispensable in the relationship with the perpetrator – by showing anger we also show the wrongdoer that we regard him/her fully capable of acting as a responsible agent. In addition, anger is crucial in fighting justice. English poet and philosopher **David Whyte (1955-)** declares that **'anger is the deepest form of compassion', 'the purest form of care', it arises when we feel vulnerable and powerless, because of our involvement with the world. When we feel that 'there is something profoundly wrong with this powerlessness and vulnerability', we give expression to our feeling in the form of anger.**

In *Consolations*, **Whyte writes that 'forgiveness is a heartache and difficult to achieve' because it forces us to face our wound and 'reimagine our relation to it'. In fact, it compels us to accept the wrongdoing that**

has been done to us as something impossibly to eliminate, but necessary to re-evaluate. Forgiveness, the philosopher says, does not come from the wound inflicted on us, it comes the self that we become after we have been wounded. 'To forgive is to assume a larger identity than the person who was first hurt, to mature and bring to fruition an identity that can put its arm, not only around the afflicted one within but also around the memories seared within us by the original blow and through a kind of psychological virtuosity, extend our understanding to one who first delivered it. Forgiveness is a skill, a way of preserving clarity, sanity and generosity in an individual life, a beautiful way of shaping the mind to a future we want for ourselves; an admittance that if forgiveness comes through understanding, and if understanding is just a matter of time and application then we might as well begin forgiving right at the beginning of any drama rather than put ourselves through the full cycle of festering, incapacitation, reluctant healing and eventual blessing.'

REFLECT AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.

- How does anger show self-respect?
- How does anger fight injustice?
- How does anger show one cares?
- Why do we get angry when we feel powerless?
- Does to forgive mean to understand?
- Does to forgive mean to have changed as a person?

CONTEXT SIX

‘Though short-term anger is understandable and human, it is rarely helpful, and it certainly should not dictate the course of the future’, writes American philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1947-) in *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, Generosity, Justice*. Even though we are under the illusion that the suffering of the offender is going to somehow diminish our own suffering and pain, it is a false belief, meant to lead us astray. Payback, meant to restore the things that was damaged, derives, according to the philosopher, ‘from deep-rooted but misleading ideas of cosmic balance, and from people’s attempt to recover control in situations of helplessness.’ However, the wrongdoer’s suffering is not going to bring back what or who was injured or lost. What makes anger so complex an emotion is that it ‘involves both pain and pleasure’ because of the pleasure offered by payback. And yet, anger can have a narcissistic touch to it, because it focuses obsessively on one the person being wronged. This also is bound to lead nowhere, since the damage done cannot be undone.

In addition, anger is an emotion which deals with trust – by trusting others we make ourselves exposed to betrayal. ‘Living with trust involves profound vulnerability and some helplessness, which may easily be deflected into anger.’ Anger also implies a certain degree of loneliness, when there is no place to go, and our trust is betrayed, we inevitably get overcome by helplessness which in return triggers anger. Nevertheless, Martha Nussbaum reminds us that, ‘The target of anger is the person, but its focus is the act, and the person is more than the act, however difficult it is to remember this.’ Yet, no matter the type of payback anger may imagine, it only serves as hindrance for a well-functioning future. Anger keeps your self at the center of your thoughts and stops you from acknowledging that the past cannot be changed. ‘It makes one think that progress will have been made if the betrayer suffers, when, in reality, this does nothing to solve the real problem. It eats up the personality and makes the person quite unpleasant to be with. It impedes useful introspection. It becomes its own project, displacing or forestalling other useful projects.’

REFLECT AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.

- What is the relation between forgiveness and trust?
- What is the relation between anger and loneliness?
- What makes retribution pleasant?
- What makes anger a contradictory feeling?
- Does anger have any utility?

CONTEXT SEVEN

When we are hurt, it is natural to feel anger and resentment. In fact, the feeling is 'just and useful for the conservation of society', says the Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius in *Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*. 'It is useful that wrong-doers should feel the natural consequences of their actions, among which is the disapprobation of society and the resentment of him who is wronged. But revenge, in the proper sense of that word, must not be practised'. The best way of avenging yourself, says the philosopher, is not to become like the wrongdoer. He believes that wrongdoers offend out of ignorance, and not out of ill will. Socrates advises us that when somebody does us wrong, we should instantly consider their opinion about good or evil, and by doing so, we will feel pity rather than anger.

Being 'excited by anger' means turning away from reason 'with a certain pain and unconscious

contraction', declares Marcus Aurelius in *Meditations*. On the other hand, offenders usually display poor self-control, letting themselves be overpowered by desire and pleasure. Rightly, an offence committed with pleasure is more blameworthy than that which is committed with pain. And yet, the Stoic philosopher believes that anger, just like grief, 'proceed from weakness'. Upon receiving a wound, the person being wronged yields herself/himself 'cowardly' to the emotions triggered by such an act. But it is foolish to believe that anger would remove all 'wicked men in the world, because it is impossible'. And yet, how can one believe that 'there should be wicked men in the world, but not to endure that any should transgress against himself'? This is not only 'against all equity', it is indeed 'tyrannical'. Surely, nobody can expect to be exempt from wrongdoing; yet, it is within our power to summon forgiveness to rescue us from the clutch of anger.

REFLECT AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.

Does ignorance make an offense less blameworthy?

Is a wrongdoing out of pleasure more blamable than one out of pain?

Is being wronged something everybody should deal with in life?

Does anger derive from weakness?

What is the difference between anger and grief?

CONTEXT EIGHT

The Greek philosopher Aristotle asserts that people who take pleasure in revenge and have it as their fighting cause, may be good fighters, but they are not truly brave. Courage, says the philosopher, is based on a moral choice and a proper motive. Anger and revenge are based on immediate feelings, thus on impulsive and instinctual tendencies rather than reason and integrity. Yet, inasmuch as feelings of anger are a natural part of being human, Aristotle allows for a certain degree of anger to run its course 'in right manner and time, and for proper length of time', when the wrongdoer offends out of malice. As he puts it in *Ethics*, 'angerlessness' can also be seen as a defect, 'I mean, they who are not angry at things at which they ought to be angry are thought to be foolish'. A person incapable of being pained and wanting to avenge himself, a person who feels no anger and

patiently watches harm being done is a mindless person.

Nevertheless, the philosopher points out that it is 'hard to reconcile and keep anger for a long while', because it only means repressing the feeling. In this case, payback can serve as weight taken off one's mind, as 'vengeance destroys their anger by producing pleasure in lieu of pain'. However, if this does not happen they keep the weight on their minds. In fact, by not showing anger one misses out on the opportunity of reasoning it away in conversations with others, and thus engage in a quiet process of becoming 'bitter-tempered'. And as Aristotle points out, 'Such men are very great nuisances to themselves and to their best friends.'

REFLECT AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.

What is the relation between anger and self-control?

What is the difference between impulsive and reasonable behavior?

What is the opposite of repressed anger?

Is denying to avenge yourself a sign of inanity?

PART I – SPEAKING

IS FORGIVENESS BRAVERY OR WEAKNESS?

a. Discuss in groups. Share with the class.

1. What is the relation between forgiveness and self-respect?
2. How is forgiveness related to anger?
3. What is the relation between forgiveness and self-defense?
4. Does forgiveness mean that we value others more than ourselves?
5. Should all people be forgiven no matter the offense?
6. What happens when somebody is unable to forgive?
7. Is to forgive the same as to give up?
8. When can we justify revenge?
9. What is the relation between revenge and moral order?
10. Are some things unforgivable?



Remember to take notes along the way!

NOTES

Act on first reactions

Not have control over your emotions

Let the ego be in the



Summarize group discussion in your notebook.

IS FORGIVENESS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS?

b. Discuss in groups. Share with the class.

1. Do we use reason or feelings when we forgive?
2. Do we use reason or feelings when we cannot forgive?
3. Are self-forgiving people better at forgiving others?
4. What is the relation between self-control and forgiveness?
5. What do we learn from forgiving?
6. What do we learn from being forgiven?
7. Is forgiveness making peace with the past or with the future?
8. Does time help to forgive?
9. Does love always end up forgiving?
10. Is forgiveness the ultimate form of freedom?

NOTES

Let bygones be bygones

Accept that you have no control over others

Accept human imperfection

Overcome negative reactions

Be patient and tolerant



Summarize group discussion in your notebook.

IS FORGIVENESS A SIGN OF COURAGE?

PART 2 – WRITING

ESSAY WRITING

IS FORGIVENESS BRAVERY OR WEAKNESS?

This is where your notes come in handy! You will have to use your notes, ideas from texts and arguments from previous discussions to organize them into an argumentative essay.
In groups, compare notes and exchange ideas: how can you use the texts we discussed, as well as your own ideas throughout this chapter in order to answer the question? Help each other in planning your essay!

The structure of your essay should be as follows:

INTRODUCTION

What is forgiveness?
Do you associate forgiveness with bravery or weakness?
What are your three reasons for believing that?

BODY PARAGRAPH 1

First reason.
Evidence - examples/quotations from texts (other examples)
Explanation of the evidence.

BODY PARAGRAPH 2

Second reason.
Evidence - examples/quotations from texts (other examples)
Explanation of the evidence.

BODY PARAGRAPH 3

Third reason.
Evidence - examples/quotations from texts (other examples)
Explanation of the evidence.

CONCLUSION

Rephrase your view and your reasons for it.
Final thoughts.

Presentation of the partners

Oslo Voksenopplæring Sinsen



Oslo Adult Education Centre Sinsen has several vocational and general programmes with specification in science and mathematics. There are roughly 1400 adult students at the Centre ranging in age from 20 to 60 with the majority aged 25-30. About 50 % of the students undertake a general education course. The other students are enrolled in vocational programmes, chiefly in the area of health sciences. The Centre is responsible for providing official assessment of real competences of different adults who come to us at the level of upper secondary school in Oslo. All training is in accordance with national learning objectives, national curricula, including the assessment of real competence. Our students come from all over the world: 75 % of them have foreign backgrounds with some still needing help learning the Norwegian language. The Centre's aim is to help the students complete their upper secondary education and pass the relevant final exams. In this regard, good literacy skills are imperative. With us, students get a second or third chance to succeed. One of our ultimate aims is - by improving their basic literacy and numeracy skills as well as thinking capacities - to best prepare them for working life and college or university studies.

Schule des Zweiten Bildungswege Dahme-Spreewald



Die Schule des Zweiten Bildungsweges (SZBW) is located next to Berlin in the District of Dahme-Spreewald, south-east of Germany's capital. SZBW is a government school dedicated to providing the best quality courses possible to students making their second or third attempt at completing a secondary school course in order to graduate with a certificate recognised across the country, thereby enabling them to enter a particular career or move on to college or university. A staff of twenty teachers from different backgrounds

and nationalities currently run day and evening courses for more than 300 pupils aged 17 to 45 on average at the school's two locations in the province of Brandenburg. Importantly, SZBW provides individual support to pupils by way of career guidance and social counselling, as many students face learning difficulties and other social issues which present challenges to their progress at school and in life in general.

The past decade has seen SBZW involved in a quality assessment program as certified by the relevant Board for Quality Education. Participation in this sort of program has helped strengthen the school's quality of instruction and general teaching methods to the benefit of all pupils, especially with regard to teacher-pupil relations. Many pupils find it difficult to combine work, family and school commitments so that the school's blended learning curriculum for upper secondary courses has been a great success. There remains the challenge to reach more people who lack a proper secondary school certificate and are hesitant about going back to school as adults.

Escuela Oficial de Idiomas Ronda



Vocational School to also teach both German and English to their students during a practical in-country internship in either Germany or England, with the possibility of staying and working in either country long term. Such in-country immersion enables successful social and cultural integration with their host country - a basic requirement for a successful working life on the ground. Our institution is state-run and certifies the level of language skills our students attain according to the Common European Framework of Reference. Our school relies mainly on classroom-based courses but we also offer an on-line course for learning English, where students get part of their language instruction on a Moodle platform, an on-line tool used predominantly at universities. On-line students can also attend our school once a week for a

language workshop. Most of our learners are adults, but we also have a minority of very young people in the age group 14 to 19. Our institution is located in the South of Spain in a rural town called Ronda, which belongs to the autonomous region of Andalucía.

Our school provides on-line courses for those students who are not able to come to our classes regularly: single mothers, disabled learners and students who live far away from our school. Ronda is surrounded by mountains and although there are many small villages in the area young people typically lack access to further educational facilities or traineeship opportunities. Due to the few job opportunities around, a growing number of adults is interested in improving their level of education, especially in the field of foreign languages in order to be prepared to work in other European countries. As a consequence, our school has become something of a counselling and advisory centre for students and potential students who want to improve their chances in the job market outside Spain. Our German and English Departments are working with the local Educational Authorities as well as businesses who expect a high level of English and German language skills from our graduates. We organise workshops around our area in different sectors to further support our students' chances in the foreign job market.