Unit 4: How to teach the social competences

Cooperative **classroom games** differ from competitive games, as games (e.g. basketball, soccer) tend to focus on winning or losing, while cooperative games do not have to have a sole winner, as the objective is for all teams to succeed. Competitive games sometimes result in poor self-esteem for students who are on the losing end and not all students have the competitive edge needed in order to win. Think about that student in your class who has great ideas, but is not athletic or competitive. How do we address such needs when that student does not want to participate in the competitive aspect of games?

Co-operative **classroom games** are the solution, as all students will benefit since no one is left out and the focus is on the success of the team as a whole. When students are provided with a challenge, students are given the freedom to work together to solve the challenge by discussing various strategies, communicating their ideas, and putting their plans into action. These games have the student's development in mind, as students are the primary decision makers with little teacher direction.

Cooperative games allow students to work together to make decisions based on creative thinking, communication, and **collaboration**. As there aren't any right or wrong answers (just strategies), students build better relationships with other team members as they struggle, deal with failure, and eventually work to master the problem presented. Throughout this process, students are critically thinking of their strategies and making quick decisions, while they are verbally and physically interacting with one another and, therefore, developing their cognitive abilities. As students try out various strategies and assess the outcomes, they are becoming more self-confident, learning to deal with stressful situations, and understand the importance of working together as a team to be successful.

1	
TARGET GROUPS	High school students (16-18 years old)
TITLE	**Solution-Oriented Teamwork Discussions**
RUNNING TIME	20-30′
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	This activity aims in empowering social competencies, such as dialogue, teamwork, respect of one another and initiative. In addition to that: • Students take responsibility of their learning • Explore leadership skills

	• Facilitate the development of open dialogue • Teamwork abilities are developed • Focus on what they like instead of what they don't like • Focus on what works well already and how they can build upon that
MATERIALS	Prepare a handout that includes the following questions: - What do you like most about your school? Spot at least 5 things. - What do you like most about being part of this classroom? - What are you most impressed by, with what your classmates do? - What do you enjoy most about being part of this classroom? How do you contribute to that happening? How would others say you contribute to that happening? - When it comes to teamwork, what would you like to see more of? What would you like to see less of? What else? - What would be a first small step towards this direction? When would be a good time to take a first small step? - What or who could help you/your team to take this first small step? - What happens next? What else?
PREPARATION	The teacher splits the classroom students into small groups of 4-6. Rehearse how students will seat while working in groups.
IMPLEMENTATION	**Alterative scenarios of implementation** The teacher suggests a topic of discussion and there are three different scenarios as to the sequence that students may work, based on the questions mentioned above: • Students discuss it in groups and present their

conclusions to the plenary
- Students think of the topic on their own and then discuss it in groups and then in the plenary
- The teacher suggests an activity and the students work in groups on this activity, practicing a solution-oriented discussion aimed in planning the activity suggested by the teacher (such as how to take care of the school, how to contribute to the preparation of a school event, how to treat younger students etc.

The questions suggested may be given to the students in a handout or be written on the board.

Also, the teacher can tailor the questions, if he wishes a different issue to be discussed, just by replacing the word "teamwork" used here, by another topic, goal or activity.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER	The teacher has to form the groups in such a way so that they function effectively. The communication happens mainly among students, not between the teacher and the students. This does not mean that he loses control but that he transfers the responsibility of their decisions, conclusions and activities.
POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	It is suggested to rotate and change groups upon the implementation of the process, so that children change partners and don't get used in adopting a specific role during the process.

In addition to that, it is recommended that teachers help introvert students and encourage them to take actively part in the discussion. To this purpose, the formulation of groups has to be done with attention by the teachers, depending on the personalities and needs of the |

	children.
FEEDBACK TOOL	**Questions** - What did you enjoy most during this process? - What was surprising for you? - What did you appreciate most about what others did? - What did you discover? - What would you like to do more of next time? - What would you like to do less of next time?

2	
TARGET GROUPS	Applicable for all types of target groups. More suitable for teenage students.
TITLE	**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**
RUNNING TIME	Depends on the choice of activities, which the teacher has made.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Within the CULPEER context these exercises can be used for attaining the following key competences: *Communicating in a mother tongue*: the proposed games will stimulate the ability to express thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions orally. *Communicating in a foreign language*: the proposed games would improve your paraphrasing, interpreting or translating skills as well as your intercultural understanding. *Social and civic competences*: good communications skills are always related to good civil competences, especially in the domain of improving one's interpersonal and intercultural competences.
MATERIALS	No specific materials are necessary.

PREPARATION	The teacher and the leading students should get to know the suggested exercises and try them out before they practice with other peers. During the practical workshops, the teacher should not actively participate but just monitor how the process is going and probably take part in the debriefing at the end.
IMPLEMENTATION	In this section, by communication skills we mean all the skills required so that a message is properly conveyed; this includes skills such as active listening, non-verbal communication (i.e. body language) and more. Educating students on these kinds of skills is of critical importance not only for efficient cross-cultural communication but also for effective communication strategies after school.

Suggested Activity 01
Is that a Fact?
The activity briefly: Communication is not only about speaking. It's also about listening. This activity is designed to explain the importance of active listening, underline the difference between listening and hearing and also provides a theoretical part that helps build a lesson plan on active listening.
Resource: The University of Tennessee
Link: Find attachment - **ListenActively**

Suggested Activity 02
Body Language
The activity briefly: The activity focuses in raising awareness on the importance of body language as well as creating an opportunity for students to learn to notice more the body language of their interlocutor and realize how this interferes with the message sent.
Resource: Advocates for Youth
Link:
http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/1188-lessons

Suggested Activity 03
Dear Responsible Friend
The activity briefly: This is an activity aiming in cultivating empathy and trust amongst peers. It's a simple activity |

	that also helps strengthen relationships between peers within the classroom. Resource: Youth Deployment Activity Guide Link: Find attached pdf file – **YouthDeploymentActivityGuide** **Suggested Activity 04** Play an active listening game. Start by telling your peers that the majority of people usually hear only half of what the person before them is trying to share. During the rest of his/her speech they start formulating their own response and stop listening actively to his/her words. Now divide the participants in couples or small groups. Ask each couple/group to start a discussion, in which the participants speak following a certain order and the first letter of the first word of each next speaker matches the last letter in the last word of the previous speaker. It is harder to communicate like this, but it is also a perfect instrument for mastering the steadiness of our attention to the other person's words and not on our thoughts related to our response.
ROLE OF THE TEACHER	These exercises can be used by the teacher in order to prepare a group of leading students, who can then continue with their peers from the class. The activities are quite accessible and easy to use by the students themselves.
POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	No specific risks are envisaged.
FEEDBACK TOOL	How did you feel during the activities? Was there something you liked especially? Was there something you would change in the proposed exercises? What did you learn?

3	
TARGET GROUPS	Primary school children (6-12 years old)
TITLE	**Stories about emotions**
RUNNING TIME	Around 15 min
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Fostering the listening and the learning of individual differences in the way people react to others' emotions. Developing their "mind-reading" abilities.
MATERIALS	Story
PREPARATION	Find a story in which there are many strong emotions
IMPLEMENTATION	It sounds simple, and it is: read a story with emotional content, and have kids talk about it afterwards. Why did the main character get angry? What kinds of things make you get angry? What do you do to cool off? When kids participate in group conversations about emotion, they reflect on their own experiences, and learn about individual differences in the way people react to the world. And that understanding helps kids develop their "mind-reading" abilities. In one study, 7-year-old school children met twice a week to discuss an emotion featured in a brief story. Sometimes their teachers encouraged them to talk about recognizing the signs of a given emotion. In other sessions, the kids discussed what causes emotions, or shared ideas about how to handle negative emotions ("When I feel sad, I play with the Wii," or "I feel better when my mother hugs me").
ROLE OF THE TEACHER	Reading the story with emotional contents and exaggerating "a bit" the emotions felt. Leading the discussion afterwards.

POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	None
FEEDBACK TOOL	After few sessions of 15-20 min each, the students show significant improvements in their understanding of emotions. They also raise their empathy and their ability to reason about other people's thoughts and beliefs.

4	
TARGET GROUPS	From 10 and over
TITLE	**Construnction workers**
RUNNING TIME	10-15 min
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Fostering teamwork, communication, cooperation
MATERIALS	1-4 blindfolds per group Puzzle pieces (made from plywood or tag board) recommended that they are color coded
PREPARATION	Blindfold as many of the group members as you wish. After blindfolding the designated construction workers, the sighted group members mix up the parts of the puzzle. Although there is no end to the types of puzzles you or your students could create, we assume the puzzle you will use will become a square when assembled.
IMPLEMENTATION	Group members, using verbal clues and cues, will assist other group members (the construction workers), who will be wearing blindfolds, to assemble a large puzzle. The challenge is not only for the blindfolded group members to complete the puzzle, but also for the sighted group members to communicate in a clear manner so that the construction workers can successfully follow the directions given to them. The sighted group member's five verbal directions to the blindfolded construction workers. The construction workers will need to be guided to the puzzle pieces and then be

	guided in assembling them. The sighted groups are not allowed to touch the puzzle pieces or the blindfolded group members. Make sure the working area is completely free of obstructions or other physical structures.
ROLE OF THE TEACHER	Only the blindfolded members may touch the puzzle pieces. If sighted members physically touch puzzle pieces, the group must mix up the puzzle again and start from the beginning
POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	Even though the exercise is based on a fun action, blindfold might be scary sometimes. If someone does not feel like being blindfold, he/she will be then leading.
FEEDBACK TOOL	Let the participants discuss freely on how the exercise was, how they could have done better, both in the leading part and in the mutual interaction.

5	
TARGET GROUPS	All students. Great for the younger students to begin learning cooperation, but also great for the older students as they begin to master skills! You can play this as a whole class or in groups (your choice in number of students, size of group)
TITLE	**Baloon Bop**
RUNNING TIME	10 min
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Having students work cooperatively, fostering connection.
MATERIALS	Balloon(s)
PREPARATION	Teacher can model how to tap the balloon lightly in order to keep the balloon up in the air. Try this with

	the students individually and then in partners. Once they are successful at keeping their balloon in the air without dropping their partner's hands, add more students to the group until they form one whole circle.
IMPLEMENTATION	Students begin by standing in a circle, holding hands. The teacher drops one balloon into the circle. The goal is for students to see how many times they can tap the balloon into the air (students may tap the balloon with hands, arms, heads, shoulders, chests, or knees—but NO feet), keeping it up in the air, without losing connection (all students must continue holding hands). In order for this to work effectively, students have to work cooperatively, each of them making sure they are not letting go of their neighbor's hands. They will soon figure out that they must all move together, as a circle, so to make sure they do not lose connection. If the balloon falls to the ground or a student taps the balloon with their feet, the count begins again. Depending on grade level, you can add more balloons to make it more challenging!
ROLE OF THE TEACHER	Teacher can model how to tap the balloon lightly in order to keep the balloon up in the air. Try this with the students individually and then in partners.
POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	None
FEEDBACK TOOL	

6	
TARGET GROUPS	This activity is best suited for students in grade 4 and up.

TITLE	**All aboard**
RUNNING TIME	15-20 min
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	A great activity to encourage students to cooperate and work together in order to solve a problem.
MATERIALS	Rope of varying lengths, music
PREPARATION	Tie a piece of rope in a loop large enough for all students in your class to fit within it and lay it on the ground.
IMPLEMENTATION	Invite all your students to sit inside the circle. Once they have accomplished this, congratulate them for working together to make sure they all fit and now challenge them to see if they can do even better. To challenge them further, make the rope smaller. Now, invite your students once again to sit within the circle. Once they have accomplished this, congratulate them again and see if they are up for another challenge. Continue to make the rope smaller and smaller until you see that your students are beginning to run out of solutions as to how they can all fit within the circle. Eventually, the circle will be much too small to fit every student. The goal is for students to cooperate with each other and work close together to come up with creative solutions.
ROLE OF THE TEACHER	As you watch your students, encourage them by asking questions or to think about the various ways they can go about trying to fit everyone in. You will be surprised with some of the solutions they come up with such as putting only hands in, feet in, fingers in, etc.
POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	None
FEEDBACK TOOL	At the end, discuss what you observed and invite

	feedback. You will find that your students will just love them and the best part − they all worked together and had fun!

7	
TARGET GROUPS	
TITLE	**Reading faces, understanding emotions**
RUNNING TIME	1- 15 min 2- 5 min
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Reading faces and understanding emotions are important skills at home, in school and on the playground. Many misunderstandings arise from kids misinterpreting the emotions of others. Sometimes kids can be confused by what a particular look means. They may easily mistake a look of disappointment and think someone is angry, or they may mistake a nervous expression for a funny one.
MATERIALS	1- Pieces of paper with emotions written on 2- None
PREPARATION	1- Write down feeling words on pieces of paper 2- None
IMPLEMENTATION	1- Emotion Charade Instead of using movie titles, animal or other typical words, use emotions. Write down feeling words on pieces of paper. Take turns picking a slip of paper and then acting out the word written on it. You could substitute written words for pictures showing the emotion. If kids prefer, you can draw the emotion rather than act it out like in the game Pictionary.

	You can make it harder by setting a rule that you cannot draw the emotion using a face. Instead, they have to express the feeling by drawing the body language or aspects of a situation that would lead to that emotion (e.g. for sadness, you can draw a kid sitting alone on a bench, or a rainy day, etc.) 2- Face it Face games are a way to work on social interaction. Like in an acting class, you can try "mirroring" with a pair. Divide the class into pairs and define for each pair one leader and a follower (the mirror). Tell the leaders they can move their arms, touch their nose or stick out their tongue and have their pair imitate them. Make funny faces that the pair can copy. Kids with social skills deficits often have trouble reading expressions and interacting socially, so activities that get them more comfortable with these situations are a great idea.
ROLE OF THE TEACHER	Explaining the activities but stepping into them
POSSIBLE RISKS & HOW TO HANDLE THEM	None
FEEDBACK TOOL	Let the students discuss on their on. Do not force the discussion.