

My ID Newsletter

Number 2

December 2019

This is the second newsletter of the SENSE-project. The project aims to integrate sensitivity for sexual diversity (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex – LGBTI - issues) in vocational training. In this project we focus most on vocational training in the social domain.



The project will run from January 2019 until December 2020. Products are prepared early 2019 and tried out in the school year 2019-2020. In this newsletter we report on the European student exchange and teacher training we organized in Athens in October. The trainings took place in the training center of our partner EUROTRAINING.

Students' exchange: challenges become strength

The second international mobility of SENSE saw students from Greece, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy work together in Athens during an intense and fruitful week of great cultural exchange.

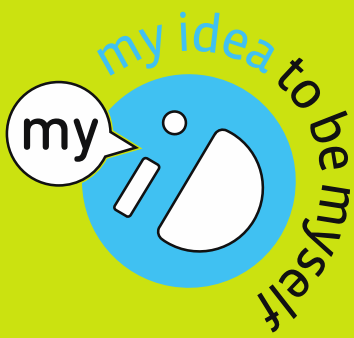
As part of the mobility, the project partners and their collaborating local schools selected a group of students each to take part in a workshop conducted by staff from CESIE (Palermo, Italy) focusing on the important topic of sexual diversity sensitivity in vocational schools.

Develop trigger technology

The main aim of the workshop was to deliver training to participating students on how to develop a trigger technology to foster respect and positive attitudes towards sexual diversity in their local schools. With "trigger technology", we refer to interactive ways to engage other students in dialogue about sexual diversity. This could be a theatre performance, a short video, a rap or an exhibition – in each case followed by discussion among students.

Different cultural contexts

Over the course of five days, students had a chance to know each other, learn from their different cultural contexts. More importantly, it was an opportunity for all participants to confront themselves with diversity from different perspectives: cultural, social, and normative. One of the most important challenges was in fact that of reuniting a very diverse group of young students (17-21 years old), and each one of them was able to contribute in a unique way to the exchange mobility through their opinions, ideas, fears and prejudices. We learnt that everybody is



entitled to an opinion, but also how fundamental it is to be respectful of diversity and to try to see diversity as potential rather than as a barrier.

Using video as a trigger

Different techniques drawn from especially visual art were explored during the mobility. In particular students were trained on how to use photography, stop motion, video making, and music videos to create stories and projects which are able to foster critical and respectful reflection around sexual diversity and gender identity. The objective was to equip them with techniques which they then could use once back in their schools to develop the trigger technologies with and for their peers.

Ideas for when we get back in school

The last two days of the training were dedicated to a more practical session where students had a chance to present their ideas for a trigger. The group from the Netherlands presented an idea for an awareness raising campaign, and other students in the class developed a short stop motion video with the help of staff from CESIE. The training showed to be challenging, given that talking about identity, and specifically sexual identity, can be psychologically intense. However, students showed a remarkable maturity and willingness to challenge their preconceptions, something which allowed the

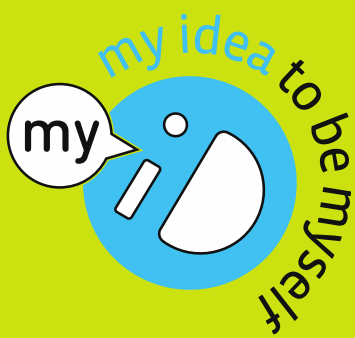
training to be developed with success. Well done everybody, and good luck with your trigger technologies back home! We look forward to seeing the results 😊 Eileen Quin

Explaining sexual diversity

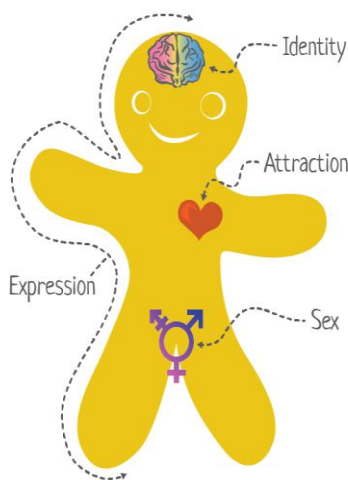
The first day of the teacher training was devoted to discussing what sexual diversity exactly is and how we can explain it to students.

One way to explain it is by using the “gender bread” person. This is a drawing of a person the shape of a baked puppet, which in American is called a “gingerbread man”. For the purposes of sexual diversity, the ginger was replaced by “gender” and “man” by person.

The idea behind the gender bread person is to become aware that there sexual diversity is not one concept but we need to distinguish between 4 aspects of our personality: sex, gender, expression and attraction.



The Genderbread Person v4 by its pronounced METROsexual.com



⊖ means a lack of what's on the right side



Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth
 Female Intersex Male



Genderbread Person Version 4 created and uncopyrighted 2017 by Sam Killermann [For a bigger bite, read more at: www.genderbread.org](http://www.genderbread.org)

A teacher can use the gender bread person to explain the differences, but also to help students explore their own identities. For example, you can give them the puppet drawing and ask the note down key words that are essential to them. Or you can ask them to “score” themselves on the continuum male-female or heterosexual-homosexual. In the last exercise, you of course need to discuss that in reality, these “continuums” are just our own attempt to understand these differences and wonder if we should score ourselves at all as male or female (as if “something in between” is less desirable) or straight or gay (again, as if “something in between” is less desirable).

Anatomical sex

Sex (sometimes called biological sex, anatomical sex, or physical sex) is comprised of things like genitals, chromosomes, hormones, body hair, and more. But one thing it's not: gender.



Gender

Your psychological sense of self. Who you, in your head, know yourself to be, based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.



Gender Expression

The ways you present gender, through your actions, clothing, demeanour, and more. Your outward-facing self, and how that's interpreted by others based on gender norms.



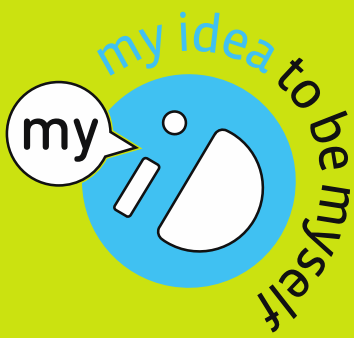
Attraction

Like sex, attraction isn't really a component of gender. However, we often conflate sexual orientation with gender, or categorize the attraction we experience in gendered ways.



Read more on <https://www.genderbread.org/>

😊 Peter Dankmeijer



Stop-motion: an attractive technique to make a short movie

In the student's training, Eileen Quin presented an interesting technique on how to make a trigger movie in a simple way. Here is an excerpt from the trigger manual on how you can do it.

The illusion of movement

Stop motion (or frame-by-frame) animation is an animation technique to make a physically manipulated object appear to move on its own. Playing back these images creates the illusion of movement.



First: make up a good story

The first thing you need is, of course, an IDEA. While brainstorming, keep in mind that you can expect to shoot around 10 photos for every second of film. KEEP IT SIMPLE! The shortest and simplest concepts are the easiest to animate. You don't have to have realistic images. You can also use symbols

and movement for to convey your messages and stories.



Make a storyboard

After brainstorming ideas, you need to write down what the story is in terms of actions. This is called a script. A script is a scheme which explains which shots there will be and in what order.

After the script you need to create a storyboard. This can be simple sketches with short explanations. The storyboard gives the key poses in the story.

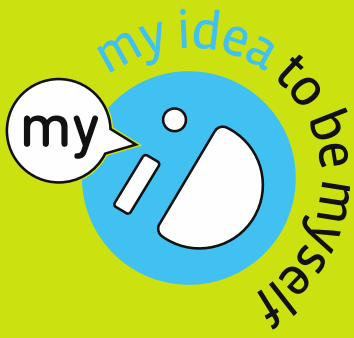
Filming the images

In 2D stop motion animation, the camera is positioned directly above the background upon which the cut-out characters lay flat. The camera is mounted on a tripod because you don't want the camera to move at all during the picture-taking process.

Place the background so that it completely fills the frame for the pictures you'll take.

- Position the characters where you'll want them, and then press the "Capture" button to take your first frame.
- After you take each picture, slightly move your characters into position for the next shot. Each picture you take will become a frame in your movie.
- Click play to replay captured frames in real-time.

😊 Eileen Quin



Sexual diversity and intercultural competence

During the last day of the teacher training, we looked at sexual diversity through the lens of intercultural competence.

Become aware of our sexual backgrounds

We discussed how culturally competent practice (and in this case “sub” cultural competency) begins with the awareness that practice cannot be value-free and neutral. We are all influenced by our culture, the client’s (student’s) culture and the organizational and societal culture. Thus, the first step in sexual diversity cultural competency is to be aware of one’s own cultural and sexual backgrounds and how these have influenced one’s life experiences and outlooks.

Valuing differences

After identifying one’s own positive and negative attitudes and behaviours, and identifying why we possibly are afraid of sexual diversity differences, one can begin to shift one’s feelings and thoughts toward valuing and respecting sexual differences. Thus, the second step in becoming culturally competent in the area of sexual diversity is being non-judgmental about differences, recognizing that no culture is superior to another, even when one culture is dominant and another is not. However, there is a limitation to this: when a cultural norm is harming someone else, it becomes problematic to “value” it indiscriminately. We agreed that being non-judgmental about cultural differences means the willingness to accept other people to be what they want to be, as long as they don’t harm someone else.

In the area of sexual diversity, this is often contested. “Traditional” (heteronormative) values tend to hold

that self-expression as LGBTI is “harming” dominant view of family, relations and sexuality. But although traditional heterosexual people may feel “hurt” by non-heterosexual expressions, their rejection hurts LGBTI people even more, especially of the exclusion is codified in laws, policies and social rituals and customs.

Commitment to social justice

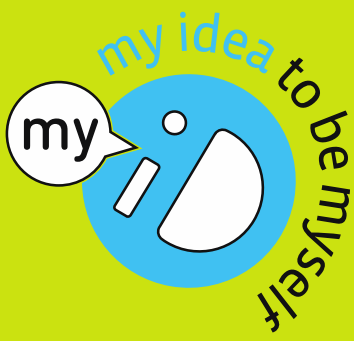
Culturally competent practice also requires valuing practitioner’s commitment to social justice. Formal or informal discrimination or exclusion tends to lead to social injustice, and this must be challenged otherwise “cultural competency” becomes like a meaningless wish to swim against the stream. Thus, the third step in being culturally competent is recognizing that diversity client’s (student’s) problems have their roots in society and not in the client (student).



Our trainer: Yannis Lyeros

Recognizing our own limitations

Practitioner should be able to identify cases in which their effectiveness is hampered by cultural differences or attitudes that the practitioner has difficulty dealing with. Thus, the fourth step is recognizing our own limitations in terms of seeking consultation from supervisors, co-workers and professional development to enhance our cultural competency.



Nathan van der Hooft, Dutch partner, during the training

Critical reflection

The term “critical reflection” involves change referring to an open-minded, ongoing testing effort on considering and reconsidering what we have done and how we have behaved in order to learn, confirm good practice, analyze mistakes and develop alternative actions and responses. Questions contributing to critical reflection might include:

- *How did I engage with that LGBTI student in that situation? What did I do? Why did I do it?*
- *What previous experiences influenced me?*
- *Do I need to change my approach or focus? On reflection, how might I have responded differently, if at all?*

Thus, the fifth step is being a critical and reflective practitioner. A culturally competent practice entails skills such as attentive listening, a positive and open communication style, empathy, appropriate terms and words, visual clues, tone, facial expressions and use of appropriate self-disclosure. When do you express you are heterosexual (or homo/bisexual) and what is the impact of this on others?

Base yourself on human rights

Cultural competence practice is also committed to basic values such as human dignity and worth, social justice, acceptance, non-judgemental attitude and confidentiality. Thus, the sixth step in becoming a culturally competent practitioner is developing specific sexual diversity skills based on inviolable human values. Keep in mind that:

- Cultural & sexual diversity competency IS NOT something that

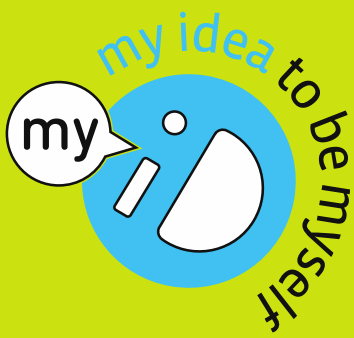
a practitioner acquires overnight. In fact, no one is probably ever completely culturally competent

- Cultural & sexual diversity is a lifelong process in which practitioner is continually developing and improving.

Yannis Lyeros & Peter Dankmeijer

Meditation and bodywork: diversity training?

An innovative part of the trainings of both students and teachers was the initiative to spend an hour on meditation. Our partners Rossella Celati and Ramona Nardò believe that meditation is a key technique to become better aware of inner feelings and how you relate to the outside world. The meditations with students and teachers went well, although this is not a method students and teachers are used to. They are more used to work with their brain only and to neglect bodily experiences. Still, a recent scientific research showed how meditation helps to attain even the “hard” learning skills.



American study

“A number of studies have shown that mindfulness can improve cognitive abilities, including certain verbal abilities. However, little research has examined how mindfulness can affect verbal learning and memory. Furthermore, no research has examined the mechanism by which mindfulness may improve learning and memory,” said study author Adam Lueke, an assistant teaching professor at Ball State University.

— but they were not any better at retrieving verbal material stored in long-term memory.

Mindfulness helps to memorize

“Mindfulness can potentially make studying more efficient, can help you retain and utilize important information in your work, or even help remember something as simple as a person’s name or a story they shared with you. In essence, the ability of mindfulness to improve learning and memory can help improve people’s lives in myriad ways.”



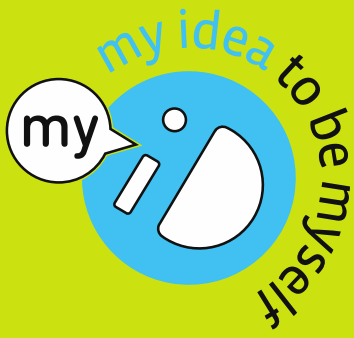
Sonia Savini, Rossella Celati and Ramona Nardò during the training

“We reasoned that, since mindfulness often works to quiet down thoughts which may occupy phonological loop resources, then it should be able to improve the learning of new verbal information, likely by allowing information to be better absorbed through the encoding process of memory.” For their study, the researchers randomly assigned 142 undergraduate university students to one of two groups. One group listened to a 10-minute mindfulness meditation audio tape while the other group listened to a 10-minute audio tape that described an English countryside. Participants who listened to the 10-minute mindfulness exercise tended to be better at recalling newly learned words

Effect already in 10 minutes

“We found that a brief mindfulness meditation of 10 minutes can have these benefits soon after the meditation for novices. But we do not know how long this effect lasts. It could be that this effect wears off rather quickly, thus not allowing improved verbal learning and memory throughout the day. It is important to see how long this effect lasts within novices,” Lueke explained.

“The fact that mindfulness can help with this after only 10 minutes is an important finding that people can use in their everyday lives when they know they will need to rely on these abilities. Big test coming up? Got a presentation for work? Know you’ll be meeting new people and want to remember things about them in order to make a connection? Then perhaps spending a little time to meditate beforehand can help you accomplish your goals.” The study, “[Mindfulness improves verbal learning and memory through enhanced encoding](#)”, was authored by Adam Lueke and Niloufar Lueke.



The letterbox campaign

Student of the ROC of Amsterdam, one of the SENSE-project partners, have started to develop their campaign. The student's group, which consists of 2 heterosexual cisgender students, a bisexual student, a lesbian student and 2 transsexual students.

cisgender

/sɪs' dʒɛndə/

adjective

alternative uses: cis-gender; cisgendered; cis-gendered

Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

In Athens, the students came up with the idea to create a mailbox, where students of all diversities could ask their questions in an anonymous way. The questions would be answered directly or via a website by the students themselves, but under an alias in the form of an avatar. The questions could also function as triggers for discussions about sexual diversity in classes.

With the support of the institute, the student bought a traditional life-sized letterbox. They wanted to place it in the hallway, where students enter the institute. However, the original letterbox looked dull in its basic green colors. So the students set to work and painted in in rainbow colors.

The letterbox will be presented on 20 December.



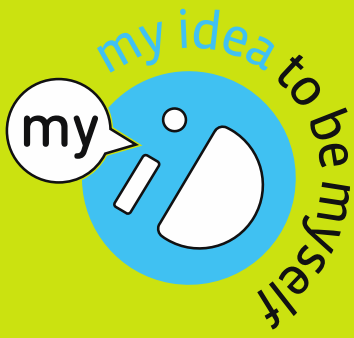
Before...



During...



After...



Colofon

SENSE-partnership (2019) *My ID Newsletter No. 2*,
December 2019. Amsterdam: SENSE-partnership

More information on the SENSE-project can be
found on [https://www.gale.info/en/projects/sense-
project](https://www.gale.info/en/projects/sense-project).

You can subscribe to this newsletter on
[https://www.gale.info/en/news/subscribe-to-my-id-
newsletter](https://www.gale.info/en/news/subscribe-to-my-id-newsletter).



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the
production of this publication does not constitute an
endorsement of the contents which reflects the
views only of the authors, and the Commission
cannot be held responsible for any use which may be
made of the information contained therein