# Methodology for elaboration of educational games

## GAMES FOR TOLERANCE

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of This Publication

This publication serves as a systematic guide for kindergarten teachers and elementary school teachers who want to actively devote themselves to bullying prevention during their practice. For that reason, they want to utilize, besides other things, game design and gamification. To meaningfully combine both these topics, we initially offer a brief insight into bullying issues that often come to forefront when discussing preschool and school education. We follow up with the use of gamification and game design in education. Regarding practical level, we introduce instructions on how to create your own games and activities supporting bullying prevention. Bullying is not only a problem of an individual – it is always a problem of a whole group which is negatively affected by bullying during its social development. Therefore, we primarily focus on activities and work with a group.

## 1.2 How to Use This Publication

This handbook deals with several main topics: children bullying issues (described briefly), gamification and its use in education and creating own games for teachers as a part of bullying prevention activities. The topic of gamification and games in education is interestingly accompanied by a chapter about Rituals and Its Significance for Children in connection with bullying prevention. Gamified activities and games may actually become a part of regular rituals that contribute to the balance of children's relations in a class and open communication in a children's group. Following using a game in a group, we add a chapter called *Game and Game Activities Facilitation* as we consider it to be a significant part of bullying prevention methodology.

The first chapter is devoted to bullying, its definition, stages, but also to the role of bullying within the evolution of society. We naturally continue with an environment diagnosis, steps taken during solving the bullying, so-called first aid and finally the topic crucial for us – prevention and actual possibilities of its use in practice.

In the second chapter, we treat gamification and games as tools that can be used for bullying prevention. We explain bullying's principles and we describe important game elements. In addition, we concentrate on gamification and games in education, how to involve children in such activities and how to work with them.

The third chapter follows with, for example, the integration of gamification into the daily schedule of kindergartens and elementary schools and how it affects rituals and their importance for children. We consider the role of rituals during work with difficult topics, such as bullying and their contribution while using them during teaching in kindergartens or elementary schools.

The fourth chapter engages in the possibilities of reflection after game activities, so that the potential of game activities is used well for educational and developmental objectives. We examine the principles of facilitation, the recommended structure of reflection with the use of Method FFFF and also the techniques of reflection.

The fifth chapter focuses on the creation of own games. We will guide you through the process of creating games – from objectives through game characteristics to testing and getting the feedback – with the use of manuals and model examples.

In addition to methodical and theoretical parts contained in this handbook, you can expect specific *Tips* for practice, for example links and inspirational videos. Moreover, you will learn about various interesting facts and additional information in category *Do you know that…* and also in section *Contemplation*. This section contains questions that you should ask yourself before an implementation of practical activities or for formulating your approach to some difficult topics. Alternatively, this chapter serves for a reflection of a specific chapter.

## 2 Children Bullying Issues

## 2.1 Bullying Day in Day

### 2.1.1 How Do We Define „Bullying"

The word „bullying" comes from a French word „chicane" meaning „mischievous bothering, abuse, torment, stalking, bureaucratic insisting on the letter of regulations, for example towards subordinates or citizens. Office workers bully those citizens and require them to use new and new certificates and stamps, they let them pointlessly wait, etc."

In this sense, the word „bullying" is being applied in connection with abusing the power and bothering in bureaucratic systems. Those who bully are, for example, state officials or policemen.

Nowadays, the word "bullying" is used more frequently as a synonym for psycho-traumatization in a group. It stands for a repeated abuse, enslavement, humiliation or suppression of an individual or a group by another individual or another group by means of aggression or manipulation.

In figurative sense, this word is used to denote any suppression of weaker subjects by stronger subjects. Bullying can take a physical as well as a mental form and it appears in all groups – both age and social groups.

Kolář, 2011 explains that bullying happens when one or more students intentionally and usually repeatedly abuse and enslave their male and female classmates by using aggression and manipulation.

Kolář describes bullying from three practical viewpoints as he considers them important:

1. One from-the-outside viewpoint – Perceives bullying as diseased behaviour.
2. Two from-the-inside viewpoints – Bullying is never only a matter of an individual or only between a person who bullies and a person being bullied. It does not take place in vacuum, but in the context of relations of a specific group. It is a consequence of a serious failure of relations in a group.

Contemplation:

- What comes to your mind when you hear the collocation: „equal relation with students"?
- How do you establish relations with your students?
- What helps you to familiarize with your students better?
- In which situations can you establish relations with your students?

Nowadays, even more we face cyber-bullying issues – bullying by means of electronic media (the Internet, mobile phones). A specific feature of cyber-bullying is its anonymity. Anonymity encourages people to attack more aggressively. It is not limited to one specific setting and time (e.g. a school, a playground), but

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it can take place anytime and anywhere. The audience (e.g. onlooking and silent classmates) helps to spread such a kind of bullying, as the intensity of an attack may be increased by sending harmful posts through them. Besides, it is not easy to identify the person being bullied because signs and impacts are mostly psychological and they may not show any outward symptoms.

### 2.1.2 Bullying in terms of Evolution?

A human being is a social creature who creates hierarchical structures naturally. We do so just because we need to cooperate. We need to hunt, collect food, set priorities, all of that together, simply to survive. Hierarchies are based on the assumption that there is a person at the top (we call them "alpha males/females"), and there are some people at the lowest end of such a structure. Evolution naturally dictates us to get to such a place of a social ladder because at this place we will have the best preconditions for reproduction / survival of our genes. There are multiple ways of how we can climb the ladder to the highest level of hierarchy. And one of them is also bullying.

People bully others mostly because they climb up the power ladder over less assertive individuals (over eager/self-confident individuals whose self-confidence does not need to be lower at the beginning). And power is heady – that is why the more the person being bullied yields, the more powerful we feel and we want more.

Did you know, that:

Many times, a **bully** comes from an environment where aggression is a means of action. The person is frequently led to bullying by their own feeling of inferiority, a lack of self-confidence and uncertainty. The bully is often very inconsiderate to the person being bullied and they consider the person being bullied to be inferior.

An individual who is different from the others often becomes **the person being bullied**. A spectrum of differences is huge. In most cases, there are bullied individuals who are handicapped in terms of appearance, socially or physically, people who are anxious, shy or who differ from the others in race, nationality, religion or behaviour. And similarly, a new member of a group may become the person being bullied (a new student, a co-worker).

## 2.2 Environment Diagnostics

How are we supposed to find out that something is wrong in our class and that we should act? The first signs that something is going on might be a change of behaviour of a child or their surroundings. It should lead us to actively focus on that. While diagnosing a class environment in which we suspect bullying to be present/prevalent, we may be guided by direct and indirect indicators:

| DIRECT INDICATORS | INDIRECT INDICATORS |
|---|---|
| - intentional humiliation | - fear to go to school in the morning |
| -- rude joking and ridiculing | -- repeated headache or stomach-ache |
| - insults | - deterioration of school results |
| - constant criticizing and questioning | - loss of interest in education |
| -- damaging and stealing of personal property | - deteriorating concentration |
| - damaging clothing | - staying in close proximity of teachers |
| - mockery | - fearful behaviour |
| - contempt | - late returns from school |
| - suppression of freedom | - returns with damaged clothing |
| - beating, kicking, other physical attacks | - a child returns from school starving |
| - subordinating to domineering orders | - bruises without any convincing explanation |
| - putting the blame on others | - a repeated loss of money or personal things |
| | - a child asks for money for various reasons |
| | - bad sleep, nightmares |
| | - sad mood |
| | - apathy, sometimes aggression |

Tools for revealing and diagnosis of bullying:

● **Observation** – If you want to reveal bullying, first of all you need to look more around yourself and pay more attention to what is happening in a class, during the breaks and the behaviour of individual students.
● **Conversation** – So-called "listening" is a method which is on the borderline between observing and conversation. Teachers and other educational workers should listen to students and be fully at their disposal when solving their personal problems.
● **Questionnaire** – In order to learn about the existence of bullying at school, we need to encourage bullies as well as other students to report, without any hesitation, the cases of bullying at school to teachers and other educational workers. It would make our work much

easier. We use questionnaires in order to reflect alarming events, sights and also a as a sociometric survey.

The most commonly used techniques of sociometric survey, which may help us to analyze the situation (Bendl, 2003):

- **„Guess who"** technique – Revealing a person suitable for the given description (e.g. they have organizational skills, they try to get on well with everybody).
- **Time estimate** technique – A group member states the time that they want or do not want to spend with others in specified situations.
- **Preferential record** technique – Every group member evaluates the others on the basis of points. The goal is to find out if they would be able to cooperate.
- **Sociometric test** – For diagnostics of emotional relations, i.e. mutual sympathy and antipathy of group members.

## 2.3  Solution to Bullying

Bullying should be investigated by a trained school worker or an external expert invited by school. A school acts as an investigation coordinator – it should inform parents and call them in for cooperation on solving the problem. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure the communication between students, teachers, school management and parents in order to successfully handle the situation. The school may also turn to external institutions for help, such as pedagogical-psychological counselling centres, special pedagogical centres, centres of educational care, non-profit organizations, social-legal protection of children authority, crisis centres, health-care facilities, police, etc.

### 2.3.1 Investigation Strategy

If we start to investigate bullying, we should adhere to some basic rules in order to ensure the success of the action:

- We should protect our information sources.
- We should not tell which information we have and which we do not have.
- We should always question witnesses, the person being bullied and the accused person separately.
- We should write down all the testimonies.

We can also follow so-called „**first aid strategy**" (Kolář in: Bendl, 2003). This strategy consists of five investigation steps that are universal, which means that we can use them in all the cases.

1. Conversation with informants and the person being bullied: we put together an outward picture of bullying. If we first talk to an informant, talking to the person being bullied must immediately follow.

2. Finding the right witnesses: we pick group members who are willing to testify. This step is the most problematic one concerning making errors.

3. Individual or confrontational conversations with witnesses (do never confront the person being bullied and the person who bullies): All you need to do is talking with individual students. Investigating witnesses and the person who bullies together is a frequent mistake.

4. Ensure the protection of the person being bullied: the order of the fourth year is not firmly fixed. Sometimes it is clear at the very beginning that a the person being bullied is in danger and you need to protect them. At the initial stages, exceptional security measures are usually not necessary. However, you always need to ensure so-called "functional safety measure". You cannot leave the person being bullied to their fate.

5. A conversation with the person who bullies, alternatively a confrontation among them: it is always the last step of investigation. Until we do have evidence or an outward picture of bullying, there is no point in talking to the person who bullies. We do not expect them to reveal the truth, while talking to them. The crucial importance of the conversation lies in paralyzing their aggression against their close ones. In most cases, you can use a principle called „pushing to the wall", for example in a form of threatening with exclusion, reporting to the police, etc.

A **second option** of the investigation of advanced bullying are internal and global strategies. The second type requires using highly specialized and psychologically harder methods. False testimonies and false witnesses are usual. In this case, you need to creatively use the methods of criminalistic interrogation as well as special diagnostic methods concentrating on students' relations and attitudes and on proving the truth of their testimonies.

## 2.3.2 Obstacles to Investigation of Bullying

Despite our effort to solve the problem of bullying, we will encounter different obstacles on various levels – students, school management, teachers, parents, institutions.

Bendl (2003) introduces six groups of factors that complicate the solution of bullying.

- Chaotic situation

It is difficult to recognize who is the person who bullies and who is the person being bullied, not to mention a special group of children who are at the same time the person who bullies and the person being bullied of bullying. In addition, there is a problem related to the children's age. The younger the children are, the less we are sure of their behaviour and if we can call it bullying.

- Headmasters and school management

School management and its lack of interest/denial of existence of bullying and the headmasters' behaviour to teachers.

- ● Insufficient disciplinary school authorities

The person who bullies know that they will not be punished for their behaviour. The school either does not have enough authorities to punish them or hardly anybody has a courage to try to solve it.

- ● Teachers
  - The lack of interest of teachers in admitting the existence of bullying in their class (school).
  - Intervention against bullying only in selected and exceptional cases.
  - A fear of teachers to take appropriate action against bullying due to concerns about conflicts with students.
  - Bullying that suits some of the teachers.
- ● Students
  - A fear of the person being bullied to report that they are being bullied.
  - The difficulty of the person being bullied to confess that somebody dislikes them.
  - False friendships.
  - A fear of students who are not the being bullied themselves to defend the person being bullied.
  - An unfavourable evaluation of the person being bullied by their classmates.
  - Students' hierarchy (dominant children stand at the top of the hierarchy; the torment of the whole group concentrates downwards against a particular child).
  - A dependency between the person who bullies and a the person being bullied.
  - Bullying that suits some of the students.
- ● Parents

There are parents who prevent bullying at school from happening by bringing their children up to violence, so that their children are able to prove to be successful in a group. Parents sometimes do not admit that their child may be the person who bullies. Parents of some the person being bullied who complicate the investigation because there are afraid that it could make the situation of their child even worse.

## 2.4  Bullying Prevention

We divide bullying into primary, secondary and tertiary. A primary prevention aims to prevent various dangers – it is a timely protection before a risk itself emerges. A secondary prevention aims at people who have predispositions to a possible risk in the given field, or in case when bullying already happened and it is necessary to take measures leading to rectification (timely diagnostics, an investigation of bullying, pedagogical measures, educational work with the person who bullies). A tertiary prevention tries to prevent even a bigger risk in case a person comes into contact with risk in terms of the given issues.

In this chapter, we will focus on the primary prevention concentrating on teachers and their work with a group. In the next chapter, we will continue with the use of gamification principles during activities supporting bullying prevention.

We should apply the **primary prevention** automatically in terms of all the groups in which bullying has not happened yet. This type of prevention is based on the upbringing of harmonious personality of a child; children, parents and the public awareness of bullying; and preventive activities at schools. The effective means of primary prevention are natural parts of a community (e.g. whole-school meetings, school parliament, class autonomies). The best protection against bullying is building open, friendly and safe relations between association or community members.

## 2.4.1 Social Group Dynamics

If we want to know what is happening in a class, we need to understand the basic principles of how **social groups** work. These principles can help us to familiarize ourselves with the situation, anticipate some problems and react in time.

Groups represent the most socially-developed forms of collectivity. Relations and their function in social groups are closely connected with an evolutionary journey of our ancestors across the epochs of our evolution. The life in a group is an everyday necessity for us. We meet our friends, visit various clubs or schools and, of course, we have employment. Some kind of group dynamics exists in every social group. This group dynamics is naturally always dependent on social interactions and environment and it is created by two or more persons who play mutually complementing and conditioning roles. It is important to realize that even the roles of a bullied person and an the person who bullies meet this condition.

Position in a social group

 "A possibility of existence of a group and its ability to function depends on an integration and organization of individual persons. An individual person affects other members through their values and norms. Likewise, the group is affected by the quality of actual mutual interactions between people and socioeconomic conditions, i.e. a constant mutual interaction between a group, its environment and other systems (as the group is a part of those systems)." (Belz, Siegrist, 2001, p. 43)

It is evident that in every social group, there are established relations that define the individual's position and status in a group. A subconscious and conscious adherence to **hierarchy** is absolutely essential for maintaining the group. If a potential the person who bullies discerns a weakness of the person being bullied, they strive to strengthen their position on the hierarchical ladder at the expense of the person being bullied.

According to Reichel (2003), basically every formal as well as informal authority is defined by four elements stated below.

- **Position** – situates an individual into a specific place in a specific social space.
- **Role** – expresses the expectations of social surroundings, expecting that the individual will behave in a way that corresponds to their position.
- **Status** – an individual's set of opportunities, rights and privileges in a group.
- **Prestige** – a socially-awarded appreciation.

A potential the person who bullies strives to slowly undermine some or all the elements that specify the position of a the person being bullied in terms of group dynamics. If the person who bullies is successful in making the person being bullied falter, they find the weakness of the person being bullied and use it.

Contemplation:
- What did you realize about the evolutionary function of bullying?
- In your opinion, what is the purpose of bullying for the person who bullies?

Stages of group development

If we want a group (a class) to be ready and able to function effectively, the group needs to go through several stages of development. These stages may negatively affect group's functioning in many areas. Although this cannot be avoided, we can work with them.

According to Bedrnová (2008), we distinguish these stages of group development:

**Orientational** – Group or class members are insecure and worried about their position. The testing of an adequacy of social behaviour is in progress. This happens when students meet each other for the first time or when a prominent student leaves; a student who represented an informal authority in a class. Or when a new student / teacher becomes a part of a class collective.

**Confrontational** – It is the time of mutual „getting to know" each other, testing and examining. Searching own place in a power structure. The group is taking form. Small types of rebellion arise.

**Creating rules** – Members feel that they found their roles in a team. Therefore, a team cohesion develops. Respecting the social norms assumes the importance. A spontaneous consciousness – „we" – emerges right in this stage.

**Performance-related** – Substantial contradictions related to power and authority have already been solved. A collective responsibility is being created. There is a focus on future tasks. Relaxation and group members' activity are typical in this stage.

**Sustainment** – Strengthening all the positive characteristics of teamwork.

Contemplation:

- How can you utilize the knowledge of a model of developmental phases of a group to reveal bullying?
- In your opinion, in which developmental phase of a group appear the first signs of bullying?
- How can you solve a situation in which bullying appears during a confrontational stage?

A connection between a person who bullies and a person being bullied is important because both of them mutually need each other. Their behaviour becomes stronger mutually. Actually, the irony is that there may appear dependency between them.

Did you know that:

Dependency on relations is caused by a human strategy to hide own fear and at the same time take advantage of the fear of others.

Therefore, the whole mainspring of bullying is a fear both on the side of a person who bullies (who wants to hide it) and on the side of a person being bullied.

## 2.4.2 Establishing Democratic Rules

A life in a social group and relations with its members provide an individual with various securities. Establishing the rules leads to the orientation of the group in the right direction. The group is subconsciously aware of the fact that group membership is conditioned by a necessity of adaptation and suppression of individual interests. The group itself can eliminate the shows of aggression against its members. The rules set up a strict code. Of course it does not mean that these rules will be one-sided (dictated by a school, a headmaster or teachers).

**Tip:** Take a look at the link to Lindy Cliatt's TED:

http://www.ted.com/talks/linda_cliatt_wayman_how_to_fix_a_broken_school_lead_fearlessly_love_hard?language=cs

Success attained by the establishment of rules in a class is based on the teachers' identification of the current stage of bullying. The best way is to set up the rules before bullying even begins. Nevertheless, although we are in a stage 1 or 2, the probability of success is high. It applies that a feeling "we" arises in a group due to COMMON, APPROVED and DESIRED rules. *Another important signs are, for instance, a common aim, group norms, creating group roles and structures."* (Jandourek, 2003, p. 82)

Contemplation:

- How big is the importance of setting up the rules in a class for you?
- What actually do you want to achieve?
- How much are you determined to solve it? (1 not at all - 10 it is important for me)
- What do you think will be necessary to do for setting up democratic rules?
- What rules should be established in a class?
- Who could help you with a preparation for setting up the rules in a class?
- Who could be present as a social support during setting up the rules in a class?

Together with our students, we will create intelligible values and rules for their class. They will identify themselves with them and you both can follow them together. The essence of the issue is to set up the rules in a way that they will be agreed on by everybody or at least by a majority.

**Notice!** The extent of teachers' interference in setting up the rules is important. It is essential to clarify the rules which you want to be working well in a classroom (e.g. timely arrival to the classroom, the active participation of students during the lessons, openness, directness, truthfulness, discipline, the validity of things that we agree on in a group).

At the same time, a crucial information is the fact that many rules come right from children. Thus, let the children create the things that they really consider to be important. In this situation, a teacher is the one who determines the framework of a whole situation: a structure, time, a method and a real sense of security.

Provide children with confidence in creating their own system, concentrating on how we will behave mutually to each other and what the children want to achieve together. And do not forget that you are a part of a class and thus your rules have to be respected.

Applicable steps are:

**Why?** – Explain to children why you will perform some things differently till now. What impacts of your actions will be on a class and individuals. Depending on students' maturity, we can involve them in a story that will enthuse them and that is related to them.

**Explaining the terms** – We can follow up with the story and let children search for individual terms in books or on the Internet – terms that relate to the story of building the team (what is a team, values, goals, collaboration, support, synergy, cooperation/collaboration, a team spirit...).

**Creation** – Let students divide into 3 -5 groups. The task of each group will be to create a list of values/rules that should be observed in a class. Or they can work out the requirements stating how others should behave towards them.

**Discussion** – Let the groups discuss things among themselves. They should choose the values that they care about. A teacher only moderates the discussion and does not intervene. On the other hand, the teacher asks further questions (preferably coaches): "What will be the impact of this value on you? Where will this value lead us?", "What else will happen if you will intend to observe these values?" etc.

**Review** – After the selection of common values, the teacher should review and summarize what the students have created.

**Approval** – Do all the students really wish to observe these values? It is important to get the final approval of a whole class. Nobody in a class would disagree if the guidance is good.

**Objectives** – Only after the stage of setting up common values is possible to open an objective that the class wants to achieve. Only if it is necessary. Setting up the values itself already does wonders.

**Protection** – Do agree on specific consequences that everybody will have to accept if this team agreement is violated.

**Review** – After a certain stage of group development, it is recommended to return to values and review them again.

Contemplation:

- What threats can you see in setting up this kind of rules together with the class?
- What are the opportunities in setting up this kind of rules together with the class?

### 2.4.3 Other activities to support bullying Prevention while working with group

As teachers, what concretely can we do more to contribute to bullying prevention:

Interesting teaching and attractive school curriculum

- Interesting teaching content – Children are involved, they devote their energy to fulfilling the objectives of common activities that parallelly lead to their socialization.
- Additional activities – The attractiveness of a school is supported by activities leading to bullying prevention and solution (e.g. student autonomy, a school magazine, extra-curricular activities organized by a school).

Work with (potential) the person being bullied of bullying

- Avoiding bullying – children may face bullying, for example, when they stay in a group of their friends during breaks, lunch or on way from their school to home. It is easier for children to face bullying when they are in a group or among their friends.
- Methods of fostering resistance to the shows of bullying – it is important to make (potential) the person being bullied resistant to bullying (through social-psychological games, morning groups, violence education, doing sports, humour, trainings of assertiveness).
- Strengthening self-confidence – it is possible to desirably make the students' self-confidence stronger, for example by giving the responsibility and status both to the person being bullied and the person who bullies. These steps may help to increase the person being bullied' self-confidence and assurance and at the same time to a certain extent limit the abusers' need to assert themselves inappropriately.

Working with the person who bullies

- Building the person who bullies' personal perspective that leads to striving for personal goals and discourages them from inappropriate behaviour. The perspective poses a source of sense of security, assurance and self-confidence to them.
- Getting rid of stress and aggression
  - Relaxation techniques.
  - Safe Spaces for students' fighting (a carpet or a mat where children may fight without getting punished and vent their redundant energy). Children will learn how to fight so that they do not hurt their opponents.
  - Proposal of exciting experiences – You need to offer a wide range of spare-time activities to children and especially to the person who bullies. This case shows that an excitement is a strong motivational factor, which may provide them with more appropriate activities for satisfying their needs.
- Fostering empathy and identification with the role of the person being bullied.
- Behavioural approach – the teacher works with the person who bullies on setting appropriate goals concerning behaviour and on a selection of relevant rewards for their fulfilment as well as relevant punishments for their violation.
- You can win the person who bullies on your side by means of a friendly agreement, an agreement about advantages for a class leader, charging with a responsible and demanding task, granting them a role of a protector of weak people, spending free time by doing sports after the lessons, talking, etc.
- Method of reconciliation the person who bullies with the person being bullied – you can use this method only if the person who bullies shows motivation to change their behaviour.
- Change of scene or transferring the person who bullies (the person being bullied) to a different class (school) – a selection of a class in which a new student will be integrated plays an important role.

Working with all students (in a class, at school)

- Protection of children against the influences of media violence and pornography – both media violence and pornography reduce the sensitivity of children and young people to culture, reduce a sense for discipline, rules, valuable interpersonal relations and the spiritual aspect of life.
- Education – leaflets, information booklets, school and class discussions, subjects, such as civics, literature or history contain topics that can be used in a fight against bullying.
- Student contracts – a teacher talks with children about how the teacher should behave towards the students, how students should behave towards the teacher and how students should behave towards each other.
- Personality, social and moral education across the lessons.
- Supporting cooperation between students – exercises on building trust and cooperation between students, using the possibilities of organizational teaching forms, the cooperative forms of working at school, developing social skills by way of cooperative learning, project days.

Participation of students in bullying prevention and solution

- Student autonomy – gives students an opportunity of initiative and self-realization, offers freedom and at the same time teaches them responsibility for own decisions. It requires communication between the students, between the students and teachers, or other school employees. It teaches the students to use arguments, advocate their views, negotiate and reach an agreement in a democratic way.
- Peer programs focused on bullying and coping with conflicts – a program for people of the same age that ensures the prevention of bad behaviour of children and young people (or curing unacceptable behaviour). This prevention is conducted by utilizing specific relations and bonds in groups of people of the same age. It relies on a fact that during childhood and adolescence, a person is usually more easily influenced by the opinions of people of their age rather than by the opinions of adults.

### 2.4.4 Teacher's Personal Development and Support

A teacher often fulfils different roles within their profession – an educator, a moderator, a manager, a mediator, etc. Teachers need to dedicate themselves to a relaxation, a mental hygiene and further personal development in order to fulfil their role very well, to be a role model for students and to manage the requirements of their profession both physically and mentally.

Regarding the teacher support while dealing with bullying and its prevention, it is primarily possible and desirable to look for support within the bounds of a school/a kindergarten. Of course, we have also mentioned the involvement of parents. However, when we take into consideration a professional aspect, it is recommended to turn to state bodies, such as ministry of education, police or psychological counselling centres, but also to non-profit organizations that carry out various projects, publish support materials and cooperate with schools and kindergartens in the area of intervention and prevention.

In the following chapters, we propose two inspirational topics that may contribute to teacher's personal development – fear and coaching principles in communication.

### 2.4.5 Fear

Let us love our fear. Let us like all the situations in which we are afraid, when we have stomach-ache or when we feel uneasy. Let us observe ourselves and search for reasons why we feel like that. Because it is fear that tells us "Run or fight!" It is the oldest biological tool, perhaps common to all more complex life forms, which tries to save our life. Therefore, we should listen to our fear, frustration, worries and physical symptoms and on their basis either fight or run. Basically, these two choices also affect our final decision – either we take action against bullying or we close our eyes to it in order not to get into problems and unpleasant situations ourselves.

Fear also plays a role in one interesting group experiment. We are not immune to too many social situations. It means that we can easily become the person being bullied or the person who bullies. These states were probably best described by Philip G. Zimbardo, American psychologist particularly known as a coordinator of Stanford Prison Experiment. Zimbardo's book (*The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn*

*Evil*, 2014) represents a unique opportunity for understanding the whole dynamics of this process. In this book, we find out, among other things, that only a tiny percentage of people are able to resist group pressure which manipulates us into a role of a real the person being bullied or the person who bullies. The reason is that none of us is a good or bad person. What are we like and how we will behave depends, in an overwhelming majority of cases, on the environment we live in, namely physical or social. Therefore, if we have accepted a role of the person being bullied (consciously or subconsciously), we will play it. If we have accepted a role of the person who bullies (consciously or subconsciously), we will play it as well.

Let us have a look at one interesting experiment that will help us to lift the shroud of mystery: how do we function as suggestible beings and how much we are suggestible in a group. We will use a well-known experiment of psychologist Asch, who examined the suggestibility of an individual facing a superiority of opinion:

Groups of 7-9 students were watching two pictures that were projected parallelly all the time. The students were comparing a length of vertical lines in these pictures. Except for only one participant, an experimenter was instructing the rest of the students to unanimously answer incorrectly while comparing the lengths of vertical lines. It means that an unknowing participant is the only real human guinea pig who is caught in an extremely unusual and upsetting situation: they must either contradict the opinion of others – presented convincingly and in rare agreement – and with their interpretation of reality seem weird to others, or they must distrust things that they see with their own eyes.

Unbelievable as it may seem, 36,8 % of experimental persons do support the second variation. They intentionally fall to believe an incorrect evaluation of a group, despite the fact that they knew that the group was wrong.

Perhaps the most disturbing result that we need to learn from this experiment is an evidently deep need to be in compliance with a group. Readiness to submit oneself, to cheaply sell individual freedom of judgement and related responsibility for conflict-free collectivity – these are the human weak points that help the demagogues and dictators to get the power.

During the next stages of the experiment, we found out that a presence of a partner who advocates the same opinion represents effective support against the pressure of a group viewpoint. The real essence of the experiment was clarified to experimental persons. Then, those persons narrated about their emotional reactions that included a whole range of responses, from a massive fear to utter experiences of depersonalization. Even those persons, who did not submit to group view, were almost without exception assailed by doubts about a possibility that they may be wrong after all. Others reacted excessively distrustfully and believed, for example, that the explanation given to them at the end of the experiment was actually a part of the experiment itself. One student expressed their experience as follows: "Wow, I have never experienced something like this in my life before – I will not forget this all my life!"

"How meritorious would be an invention that would give the highest number of young people lifelong immunity to all the forms of propaganda and brainwashing." Watzlawick (1998).

## 2.4.6 Coaching Principles in Communication

You can use coaching principles in various situations and conversations (not only) with students. The advantage of coaching is that you are not a person who knows the right solution. You are a person who only guides a "client" to find the solution by themselves. Concerning bullying preventions, coaching is a very convenient tool for leading the students to awareness and thinking. When dealing with bullying, coaching can give you support while holding conversations and inspiration how to build a safe environment for an important personal talk.

If we want to ask children sensitively, we need to ensure that they have a sense of **security** and **assurance**. If we want to be sure that a student allows us to come closer and they will pay full attention to us, first we have to ask them for permission to talk to them. We need to get their consent. Not only that consent will boost their confidence, but the student will listen to us more attentively and at the same time our status rises because we take them seriously and acknowledge them. At that moment, we both can feel secure. There is a high probability that the student will not take a stand against it.

1. I will raise their status (I will appreciate them for doing something concrete, so that they feel their importance).

2. I will outline what will be happening now.

- Jana, I would like to talk to you for the next ten minutes about the impressions that your mood leaves on me. Something is bothering you for already a long time and it makes me worried... At the end of our discussion, I would be glad if we both know how can I help you in your situation.
- Jana, can we talk about...
- Jana, I would like to talk to you about...
- I would like to talk to you more openly about your mood in recent times.
- Jana, I would like to understand your thinking in a situation when...

**Tip:** If you are lucky to obtain student's approval, your work will be easier in the future and at the same time you will most likely experience a conversation on a high level.

3. We will give an opportunity to choose.
- Jana, can we talk about... can it be this way?
- Jana, I would like to talk to you about... Can we talk more about that?
- I would like to talk to you more openly about your mood in recent times. Can we sit down and talk about it for a while after the lessons?
- Jana, I would like to understand your thinking in a situation when... Can we talk about it?

If a student does not want, we have to respect their choice, otherwise we will lose our face and their trust for the next time. Nevertheless, we need to hold on and regularly return to the topic and talk about it sensitively.

Contemplation:

What is the other way how you can get an approval for a conversation in case you have a suspicion that the student is being bullied?

3. We establish a relation. For example, we tell them that the topic of our conversation is confidential and we will keep it only between ourselves.
4. Presenting the situation from a student's point of view. I would like to hear how you perceive the whole situation. After that, with your permission I will tell you how I see the situation. Can we try that?
5. Presenting the situation from our point of view.

We all know that communication is quite complicated. During communication, we can very often get lost, we digress from it or forget about it even when we discuss simple topics. Now, imagine that you discuss a topic that is personally difficult, emotionally affected, unclear, extensive or pressing. In these moments, you need to get oriented, but not only once. You need to orient yourself on both sides, both at the beginning of a conversation and during the whole conversation itself, so that both sides know what part you are talking about and that you are talking about the same thing. Thus, depict the situations that lead you to your presumption. I only describe. I do not evaluate, push or impose.

6. I am asking.

Did you know that:

- PIECES OF ADVICE – We all have an urgent need to give pieces of advice. It is an excellent need, but quite ineffective. If we give advice, we will fight against these three rules.
- Even though we think that we know how we would solve the situation or what solution is the best in this case, the only thing we can be sure about is our awareness of what we would do in the situation ourselves.
- We all prefer to act on the basis of what comes to our mind. In an overwhelming majority of cases, we usually ignore other people's ideas or we have reservations about them.
- The primary dilemma that we deal with is not very often the main problem. The thing that represents the main problem will probably have a deeper meaning and in fact our pieces of advice are irrelevant.

Questions – With the use of questions, we need to lead a student to Aha! effect (Eureka effect). New neuron connections may start to be appearing. When asking questions, the student learns or finds out something useful about themselves or about the situation.

It is important to direct the questions on the future and most preferably on a way of thinking itself. However, if a student falls silent, their brain probably creates something meaningful and Aha! effect may arrive soon.

Let us have a look at how to ask questions appropriately. Let us start coaching.

We examine the current state

During coaching, we slowly get to know, step by step, what is the current state of the level of thinking. What is the student aware of concerning the situation. They will gradually start to realize the dilemma for solutions.

- How are you thinking about the situation in a class that we discuss?
- How often are you thinking about your situation?
- What is the importance of this situation for you?
- Jana, what have you recently noticed on account of...?
- What is the importance of solving this state for you? (number one = maximally important, number ten = absolutely unimportant)
- How are you affected by thinking about this situation?
- Jana, how much do you want to solve it?
- What idea appears in your mind?
- What are these questions telling you about yourself?
- What have you noticed about your thinking?

We examine options

These questions lead the student to start thinking about different possibilities of solving the situation. In this case, finding the right and appropriate ideas is not so much important. More important is to come up with them.

- What are the possible journeys that you can set up for?
- What opportunities come to your mind concerning solving this situation?
- What are your plans for changing this situation?
- What other ideas do you have?
- What do you want to achieve in this situation?
- What else do you want to achieve?
- Do you want to hear some of my ideas that came to my mind?
- I have one tip that could help you. Do you want to hear it?

Let us start the action

Questions lead to a concrete action based on the fact that Aha! effect was created, which means that the energy needed for acting has also appeared. In this case, we suggest your colleague to write down their next steps because this stage disappears fast unless it is "anchored".

- Do you want to think the process over now? How to do it so that it works?

- Do you want to do something about that?
- What specifically do you want to do?
- When do you think is the time you can start doing that?
- When do you want to realize it?
- What can you do to transform this idea into a habit?

How can I help you best so that you can move on?

During the conversation, it is recommended:

**1. To clarify the situation.**

As we have already said, it is possible to get lost or experience misunderstanding even in the course of a conversation. That is all right. You need to realize that our "working memory" is small. Therefore, we need to make things simpler. During the conversation, you need to ask questions and summarize, paraphrase, get information (that the student tells us) clear in your mind. We recommend to make clarifications, even more often than you suppose is enough.

- Let me repeat what you have said.
- If I understand correctly...
- So, you say that...
- I feel like you said...
- I heard that...
- When you were speaking about these students, did I understand correctly that they behave to you...

Contemplation: In which other ways can you clarify the conversation?

**2. Listen to a person.**

A true listening takes a lot of energy and time. It is a real hard work. When we perform it, so-called "mirror neurons" are activated in our brain. They are activated not only when an animal or a human being performs some action, but also when this subject observes another animal or human being performing the very same action. Thus, a neuron "mirrors" another neuron's reaction or behaves as if an observer themselves performs the given action.

These neurons most likely have a direct influence on empathy. The function of empathy is to understand the second person. Due to neurons, we empathize with the second person and "read their mind". It represents our evolutional heritage.

What does it mean in practice? It means that if we do not listen to students with a real interest, we cannot understand them. And the other way around – due to their mirror neurons, the students reveal our pretended interest and distance themselves from us.

**Tip:** While listening to others, focus on the emotional context of the situation. What do students say and what they do not say? What is behind their words? What does they say, but at the same time do not hear it by themselves?

**Tip:** Try sometimes only listen to others; only hear out a situation that somebody wants to tell you about. Be present there „only" for the concerned person. Listen to their message. What do they say? Why do they say it? What is behind the message? How do they look like while saying it? What do they really want from you? And something more

– try not to answer and not to give advice. Just try to understand…

## 3. Remain silent

Silence is an excellent tool for coaching. Very often, we have a feeling that silence is too long and that would be better to say something just to keep the conversation flowing. However, the reverse is true. Our brain needs time to solve the situation. When we get into conversation by using our words, we literally destroy new arising thoughts that could positively affect the student.

**Tip:** Try out „embarrassed silence". When you think that you are silent for already too long and this situation is embarrassing to you, you can be sure that you are on a right way and you can continue being silent. Even if this time seems embarrassingly long to you, you can inwardly congratulate yourself because it is again the right way. You will see what the second person meanwhile though up.

## 4. Practice fairness and politeness

We treat a student fairly, politely and justly the whole time. (We do not hide anything, we do not bluff or make artifices in order not to get them.)

If the student confides to you, please proceed sensitively. Listen to them, show them emotional support and take everything what they say seriously.

# 3  Gamification and games use in bullying prevention

Gamification is one of modern methods that are used across various fields. Besides other things, gamification is also used in education. We could say that – especially concerning education areas – gamification has deep related roots in so-called Schola Ludus by Jan Amos Komenský. Gamification, games, game approaches and results, which are behind their usage in development and education, were a source of inspiration for the creation of a thought that connects them with bullying prevention.

In this chapter, we will familiarize ourselves with key terms, principles and approaches that will help us further with creating appropriate activities for bullying prevention and working with a group.

## 3.1  Gamification explanation

The term gamification is used when game elements are applied in a non gaming environment. In the beginning, gamification was mostly used in Marketing, but nowadays it is used in many other areas, such as HR, business process, Web and mobile application, websites, and of course within education. In education, gamification is used to motivate the students or clients to participate actively in the training. It helps to raise their interest in the topic as well.

## 3.2  Gamification principles

The concept of gamification was first used by developer Nick Pelling in 2002. He referred to it as the use of game elements in non-gaming environment.

In 1896, Sperry & Hutchinson introduced a loyalty programme in which customers collected badges that could be subsequently exchanged for bonuses. We can refer to this loyalty programme as the origin of gamification in marketing. You may be surprised to know how little the method differed from today's methods – the customers put the badges in a special album and then exchanged them for discounts or specialized goods. According to the contemporary information, the people competed within their families and in their surroundings for the higher number of badges. This bonus collecting element became a huge external motivation to buy more expensive goods. It thus made them change their behaviour.

At present, gamification is applied to numerous areas. In a company environment, its application is divided into internal and external processes. The internal processes comprise education, internal communication, adaptation of new hires, etc., while the external processes include marketing, among others.

Gamification in the work environment offers a wide range of opportunities to increase awareness, productivity, and creativity or to improve effective feedback.

Lifestyle gamification is typically focused on the individuals and activities they perform – motivation to exercise, learning foreign languages, budgeting, to-do lists and much more.

### 3.2.1 Player types

Player types are important for us to identify the motivations behind playing games. There are different typologies of players but for each individual, there is a mix of factors that motivates him/her.

Unfortunately, there is no universal formula for using gamification so that it works well, motivates and brings goals that we anticipate. When choosing suitable activities and forms, we need to work with the nature of the target group, type of the people who are typically present in it and accommodate their specific characteristics.

Gamification works with several types of players. We choose the simplest according to Bartle[1] who specifies four categories of players and the differences between the various types.

- **Killers** - The first type are players who want to compete and win. They are focused on players and action. In an extreme form, they only need to see others lose. They join the others only if they are strong partners who can help them win. They are usually individualists or dominant leaders. It may seem that this group will be represented in a large number but according to Bartle, it involves only 1% of players.

- **Socializers/Collaborators** - The second type are players who want to work together. They are focused on the players and interaction. For this group, the team and a common success are essential. The players like to join the others to achieve greater success together rather than as individuals. Games supporting teamwork are very suitable for creating and consolidating relationships within a group, building trust and learning the principles of cooperation and role distribution in the team. According to Bartle, 80% of all players fall in this group.

- **Explorers** - The third type are players who want to discover. They are focused on the world and interaction. They find great motivation in the undiscovered area of the board, hidden options in the game and putting pieces together to form a set. They do not need to be the group leaders. They are happy just to discover something that the others did not notice. They can be individualists who do not need the team urgently. Bartle reckons that about 10% of players fall in this group.

- **Achievers** - The fourth type are players who want to overcome obstacles or themselves. They are focused on action and the world. For them, the important factors are progress, strategy improvement and finding new paths to the result, but also the earned points and bonuses, which they like to show off with. They often care for personal results which may not affect the team, but which have a significance or value for them. According to Bartle, 10% of all players fall in this group.

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[1] https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/bartle-s-player-types-for-gamification

Most players are a combination of multiple elements, but it is inspiring to consider whether the games, if you already use any, are not only based on the principle of competition, etc.

**Contemplation:**

When you are playing a game, what type of a player are you? How can you understand the player types among your students? How will you use this information when you work with your students?

## 3.2.2 Game elements

To create functional game systems, the game design uses interconnection of dynamics, mechanics, aesthetics and other components. Gamification then adopts these game aspects and uses them to create the gamification systems.

In the world around us are already contained some game elements, for example, a platinum card for loyal customers is an analogue of a game badge, a free tenth coffee is a form of a bonus, a company competition for the salesmen is a challenge, etc.

The main goal of the game design is a functional connection of these elements. Of course, not all the systems will contain all of the below mentioned components, but it is important to be aware of them. And it is certainly not enough to choose the particular elements randomly. It is always essential to perceive the overall picture and all the goals that we want to achieve with the design.

**Game mechanics** form the individual functional parts of the games (action, behaviour, control mechanisms) which are provided to the player within the gaming context and which serve to direct his/her dynamics. The mechanics comprise a number of tools such as levels, badges and rankings in addition to the basic points.

The **dynamics** represent the player's behaviour and interaction with individual elements of the game. It can involve winning a badge, progress in the ranking, team support, but also the passing time. The dynamics seek to create and awake the players' or users' emotions, which are addressed by the highest layer of aesthetics.

**Aesthetics** is the last layer, which describes the player's emotional reactions to the dynamics of the system. It tries to express how the player feels when playing the game. It seeks to find what makes a particular game entertaining. To achieve this, it uses eight basic expressions: satisfaction, fantasy, story, drama, challenge, friendship, exploration, expression and submissions.

**Game elements**

In most games, we can find three basic game elements – points, rankings and badges. These are known, easy-to-use elements, which, however, cannot be always used in every situation.

Other game elements include progress in the levels, challenges, teams, set collections, but also a story, a secret, battle with the boss or giving/receiving presents. A very comprehensive overview for deeper study is presented in the book Actionable Gamification[2] by Yu-kai Chou.

However, what is still considered a game element and what is not has not been clearly explained. Therefore, the amount and classification of the elements have not been firmly determined. Due to their nature and the heterogeneous design of the gamification systems, it is not possible to arrive at a universal definition that can be implemented into each project.

**Collecting points** serves as the simplest motivator to encourage people to do what they are asked to do. We know the points from games as well as the real life – for example in the form of money. Collecting money is a strong motivation for many. Another example is a score from the social networks, the number of friends on Facebook or followers on Twitter, which is often misinterpreted as a kind of social status. The points can also determine a win or loss or serve as external declaration of the player's progress in the game. This also concerns various marketing loyalty programmes. Last but not least, the points can serve as feedback to the system.

**Badges** are very closely linked to the points. We could even say that they are their special version. They are a visual representation of completing a particular task. When, for example, a player has collected 100 points, he will receive a special badge. Their great advantage is their flexibility. It is up to each designer what amount and what kind of badges s/he designs in the system. However, each badge should have its meaning, it should not be created just for the sake of being.

**Tip:** Try to make your own badge: **https://spark.adobe.com/**

**Rankings (leader boards)** show a comparison of a particular status in the system. When applying them, you should consider whether you want to introduce an element of competition to the group. With worse ranking, motivation can drop and eventually even become counter-productive. We therefore recommend using "growth" progress rankings. They show improvement of the player or a team comparing to their previous performance, so they do not have to be based on the comparison of players among each other.

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[2] https://yukaichou.com/gamification-book/

**Progression (levelling)** shows the player's progress through the game in most game systems. The player moves through the levels by collecting points, completing particular quests or by any other process. The game should respect the player's level and adapt its difficulty and content accordingly.

**Quests**, or **tasks** are pre-defined challenges that have a precise assignment and bonuses for their completion. In the games, they are often used as an element that moves the story forward. To get a bonus, a single task may suffice (for example registration), but also more activities may be required (for example viewing three videos). After the completion, the player – user receives a reward. Whether it is open to public in advance (the user thus knows what he gets before completing the task) or a secret depends on the nature of the quest and the system.

**Set collecting** is closely linked to the badges, which can become one of the collectible items. Compared to the badges, however, they have a single goal – they allow the users to see what they have achieved in the game – system. They are particularly targeted at competitive players (who try to show off their achievements).

**Teams** can be defined as a group of players – users who work together to complete a joint goal. By using the teams, we tend to focus the system draft on the players' social aspects – players who can best manage all quests thanks to their teammates or, on the contrary, players who will find their place in the team thanks to the quests.

**Battle with the boss** follows up the element of teams. It is an obstacle or a challenge, which the player cannot overcome by himself but must join the other players. The reason is greater joint power, better abilities or composition of the specific skills within the team.

A **mysterious chest** is a hidden treasure, bonus or useful material for the game. It can be really in the chest or a box, exposed to everyone, or unavailable until the players reach a key or password in the game that allows them to open the chest. This element is usually connected with the story and environment of the game.

The **story** is an element which puts the game within the context, the time period and roles and which affects the mood and visual aspects of the game. In education, it is ideal as a joint starting point for all activities and educative contents that you want to include in the course. It interconnects the activities, gives sense to the various quests and allows an easy entrance into new roles or simulations.

**Contemplation:**
Which game elements are you already using during teaching?
Which game elements are you using during activities for bullying prevention?
How could you utilize game elements for bullying prevention?

**Tip:** Have a look at school *Quest to Learn* and its work: https://1url.cz/zKze1

## 3.3 Gamification and games in education

### 3.3.1 Gamification in education

An important area where gamification is applied nowadays is education. During training courses, gamification design is used to motivate the attendees, enhance their involvement in the topic and stimulate them in dealing with the subtasks. The gamification elements also allow an easier interconnection of the training outputs and the follow-up steps with the attendees' work reality after the end of the training course. Gamification has a well-developed system of continuities, bonuses and penalties for completed/uncompleted steps that had been pre-defined at the training course. It can thus naturally attract attention to the follow-up steps or interconnect the training courses with each other after a period of time so that the attendees do not lose interest in the topic.

**Motivation**

Gaming elements had been used in the marketing for a relatively long time before they entered the school environment at the end of the 20th century. The main reason for this was the focus on the students' motivation and its enhancement. In 1980, the American psychologist T. W. Malone wrote an essay on student motivation. He discovered that if the students are motivated to learn, they spend more time doing so, trying to find solutions to problems and using the gained knowledge in the future to a greater extent. He defined two main types of motivation - intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external).

Internal motivation is characterized by the fact that it does not need an external benefit. It is the result of our needs and interests. By contrast, external motivation works with benefits and external prompts. It is applied in education if internal motivation is too low.

According to Malone, the optimal educational environment has five features:

- Free movement of students in the environment.
- Instant performance feedback.
- Ability to proceed at the students' own pace.
- Freedom to explore without restriction.
- Context discovery promotion.

Such environments are commonly found in computer games for example, containing highly motivating game elements that support the player's ability to learn while playing. They can select game difficulty levels, immediately see the success of their strategy or set the goals. This results in their willingness to spend tens of hours on the game, discovering the way it works, looking for new and better options. This example is interesting because of its validity to children as well as adults.

Gamification in education has not remained a mere inspiration to the classic school teaching. In 2009, MIT opened the Quest to Learn school where the teaching is based directly on gamification and game principles. It builds on gradual increase of the difficulty and prompts to solve more complex tasks at the students' own pace and progress. It is also typical to set a system rewards, badge collection or unlocking the levels and bonuses.

**Safe environment**

As we have explained above, motivation plays a major role in using gamification. However, there is a further dimension besides the motivation to learn. It links a safe environment and impulses to transfer the awareness and functional strategies to our (work) reality.

If we are subjected to stress or unsuitable conditions, our ability to learn is very low. Therefore, setting a suitable learning environment plays a key role. A game is a typical example of a safe environment without real impacts on the real life when something goes wrong. It thus allows us to explore the environment safely, try new strategies and use abstraction (What would happen if I did this?).

The flow plays an important role. The players get immersed in the game and usually want to succeed, so they look for functional strategies and procedures that lead to a successful solution.

Contemplation:
- How do you make the environment to be safe in a group?
- What could be further improved?

**Kolb's Learning Cycle**

To avoid sticking to a mere game and to move towards conscious study, we work with the principles of Kolb's Learning Cycle[3], which is a basic feature in experiential education. It is a cycle of four repetitive phases: action (for example a game) – looking back (What was going on?) – evaluation plan (What did we do well? What went wrong?) –for the next time (How will we proceed in the following action) followed by the next action.

The reflection phase is a key aspect in the transfer of strategies and procedures into the reality and the awareness of their potential application outside the game. It is suitable to use facilitation questions or a coaching approach.

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[3] https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html

### 3.3.2 Games in education

In this part, we would like to define a concept of a "game" from a concept of "gamification".

Nowadays, we put emphasis more and more on a positive influence of a game and its integration into education system in a form of a teaching tool – whether in kindergartens, elementary schools or high schools. The game is used as an important motivational factor or a support of group dynamics. Such games encourage social climate in a classroom, developing empathy, social skills, competences and social and personality education.

If a game is integrated into the pedagogically-educational process, we call it a "didactic game". Didactic games may take place in various environments (a gym, a classroom, nature, and others), they have their own rules and they require continuous control and final evaluation. They are intended for individuals as well as groups of students. They often develop players' cognitive functions, motivate students to learning through activities, they are used as a socialization tool and they support creativity. The difference between didactic games and other games lies in a presence of subsequent evaluation, feedback, communication about enjoyments and game experience that used to be common. The fact that they can work with real-life situations may bring students and the game together. This process is also being employed by experiential education.

Experiential education raises authentic enjoyments with the use of games and similar activities. Then, it works further with initial value experiences. It uses enjoyment situations as a means of effect, as those situations try to simulate processes, relations, impacts and show a mutual relation between action and reaction. Due to measuring own skills and feedbacks from others, searching and heading, an individual – by the effect of gestalt influence of enjoyment projects – sets up a way to themselves, to self-awareness, identity and authenticity.

Concerning the game classification, there are various approaches that are not usually based on game theory, but on empirical description. From a psychological point of view, the most important criterion is function that is most developed by the game. Based on this fact, we can divide games into, for example, motor and sensory games or intellectual games.

From a pedagogical point of view, games can be divided into creative games (a spontaneous game) and games with rules. Creative games can be further divided into subject games, task games, dramatization games and constructive games (Mišurcová, 1989). Games with rules can be further divided into controlled games and didactic games (Koťátková, 2005).

From a game partner's point of view, Millarová (1978) divides games on the basis of game partner's needs into stand-alone games, parallel games, unifying games and cooperative games.

Another possible classification depends on a game subject (animals, humans, children, adults) or a game object (toys, plants, animals), etc.

Finally, we will mention the division into four groups according to principles (Caillois, 1998)

a. Agon – In agonal games, the basic element is a competition under artificially-made ideal conditions. The objective is to achieve victory on a basis of strength, dexterity, memory, etc. (sports games, draughts, chess, and others).
b. Alea – Aleatoric games are based on a principle of chance and luck. Players do not have the merest influence on results (card games, bets or counting off children).
c. Mimicry – The essence of mimicry games is imitation and pretence (games with toys, role playing, changing clothes, and others).
d. Ilinx – The basis is to experience and enjoy dizziness caused by various swinging, falling, rotations, sliding, and others.

Within these categories, the games are further hierarchized in a specific order. On one side, there are games without rules dominated by natural, pure playfulness, which is denoted by a term "paidia". On the other hand, the opposite of them are games bound by rules and conventions that require more effort. This tendency is called "ludus" (Caillois, 1998).

Contemplation:

- How do you yourself use games in teaching?
- How do you work with games in terms of bullying prevention?
- What is the biggest benefit that working with games brings to you?

## 3.4 How to work with children while using games and gamification

While working with games, we can focus on support of group dynamics and development of relations. Games offer an opportunity for emotional and social learning. The resulting impact of games is, however, dependent on the skills of a person who guides them. Therefore, the person should possess experience with guiding the games and discussions at their end that may lead to new ways of behaviour. Thus, we deal with various areas of human behaviour and we learn to:

- try different types of communication.
- express our own emotions and recognize our reactions to other people's emotions.
- solve conflicts and make decisions.
- discover own ways of responding.
- observe behaviour connected with specific roles.
- get to know various kinds of guiding and learn to work with it.

Through games, we can open various topics, not only related to development, but also topics that need to be solved in a group with respect to group's running and relations within the group. On the basis of a gradual development of such a style of work and competences related to it, we can safely talk with children about really difficult topics, such as bullying.

In the following chapter, we will state basic areas of working with a group in which using game is very appropriate:

**Meeting people**

Introducing oneself plays an important role in group dynamics. In this stage, not only we learn names, but we also discover the attitudes and behaviour of others. Behavioural patterns are created and they can be useful for future mutual relations – that is the reason why all the participants are often emotionally involved.

When meeting people, we create in inner idea of what we can expect. It is a space for expressing our expectations and worries, which may represent for a teacher another source used for creating goals. When we choose games, we also need to take into consideration the following facts: whether group members already know each other, whether they are used to play, what is the age structure of group members, etc. These factors determine how difficult something may seem to them or how unusual it will be for them to do or say something.

During reflection, every participant is encouraged not only to get to know their own impressions, feelings and wishes, but also tell them to the group or eventually judge them. This way, preconditions for the development of independence are created both in relation to a group and in relation of a group to a group leader.

**Communication**

Communication always plays a role in human interaction. It applies not only to speech, but also to facial expressions, attitudes, and so on. During interaction, there occurs a mutual exchange of information between two or more people. Communication is verbal or non-verbal. Games can help us to examine communication or non-communication and to create conditions for a new way of communication. In addition, a new perspective on other people's way of communication affects interpersonal relationships and forming of the groups.

**Getting to know people/Observation**

We distinguish between getting to know ourselves and getting to know the others. We can use a method of observation for both of them. Observation is an ability to attentively and systematically feel the processes and characteristics of objects, actions and people. An observer intends to get to know precisely the course of actions depending on certain situations. Observation training brings a greater assurance while uncovering the reality. A part of assurance is also an ability to perceive relation structures in a group and its changes. Observation and its outcomes help us during integration to a group or leaving it.

During observation training, sometimes it is useful to determine in advance some observational categories, so that a comparison can be on the same level for all participants. You can create categories by yourself or you can use some already existing categorization.

**Tip:**

We often use Bales's categories (orientation, evaluation, control, decision-making, tension, interaction).

1. Shows solidarity, supports others' status, helps and rewards.
2. Releases tension, makes jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction.
3. Agrees, passively accepts, understands, co-works, joins others.
4. Gives instructions to others, but presupposes their independence.
5. Demands own evaluation and results of their analysis. Expresses feelings, wishes.
6. Offers orientation, information, repetition, clarification, confirmation.
7. Asks for orientation, information, repetition, clarification, confirmation.
8. Asks for expressing opinions, viewpoints, evaluation, analysis, feelings.
9. Asks for instructions, suggestions, possible ways of activeness.
10. Contradicts, shows a passive disagreement, formalities, refuses help.
11. Shows tension, asks for help, retires from "field".
12. Shows hostility, degrades the status of others, advocates themselves and asserts themselves.

**Empathy**

Empathy is an ability to perceive actions from the viewpoint of another person, to get to know phenomena from the viewpoint of a second person, to learn about their needs. However, it is not necessary to share their beliefs, norms and values and approve their actions.

Games in this section should help to perceive the viewpoints of other people, understand their needs and deepen the cooperation. This aim can be achieved by a range of sub-steps. In individual games, a different weight is given to these steps – expressing own feelings, views, critique, dissatisfaction, evaluation, etc.

**Conflicts**

Conflicts, both in a society and in a group, above all need to be identified. After the end of a game, you need to focus the discussion on revealing behavioural patterns and solving-the-conflicts mechanisms. If those behavioural patterns and solving-the-conflicts mechanisms prove to be ineffective, you need to search for new ways of behaviour in a group that can be tried out and verified during the game.

If you want to achieve satisfaction in life and work, you need to know how to keep a constructive relation to your environment (both objects and people) and at the same time to know and be able to press your wishes and needs. Games may help with the training of self-assertion and its possibilities (connect with the group and use it for asserting own interests or express an opinion on the behaviour of group members, etc.).

# 4   How to Create Games

The aim of this methodology and this section is to introduce the basics of creating educational games to readers. The topic of creating games is very complex and there are many excellent publications devoted to it. In this chapter, we will focus on essential basics that will be sufficient enough for a reader who wants to try to create educational/serious games. Thematically, we will have a look mainly at the following topics: what are the necessary and appropriate steps in creating games, what types of games exist, where we can get inspired for choosing game mechanisms, what we can use during creating games (tools, sources, etc.).

## 4.1   Game Objectives

Before we start to develop a new game, it is recommended to think about few factors. What specifically do we want to evoke in players? How should they feel during playing the game? What lesson should they take from it? What should players think about during the game/after the game? What roles should players identify themselves with?

### 4.1.1 Examples of Aims That We Want to Achieve in Game That We Will Be Creating:

- **Emotional** – What emotions should the game evoke in players before/during/after the end of the game?

- **Relational/ cognitive** – The game should weld a group of people together.

- **Analytical / brainstorming** – Th game should support players' thinking about the given/chosen situation.

- **Simulation** – The game simulates a specific situation/event/environment. This way, it should help the players to understand and perceive this situation/event/environment better.

- **Skill development –** The game should develop some players' skills.

**Model example**: Our main aim is bullying prevention. **Primarily**, we want to achieve this aim by giving children space for discussion, thinking about the feelings of individual bullying participants, why do they behave the way they do and what can we do when we are bullied or somebody around us is bullied. When we focus on one or two main aims, the development will be easier and it will indicate us what type of games is the most appropriate one for the aim that we have chosen. **Secondly,** we want to solve the situation by welding the collective together and contribute to the situation when our game helps children not to be afraid of speaking about bullying.

When we create a new game, we do not need to strive to achieve everything what we have defined in order to help our aim. When we concentrate on too many aspects, the development will be limited and under the pressure; thus, many game concepts – otherwise of quality – will be eliminated. If we return to our model example, even though we would create a game in which children have space for discussion and understanding the problematics, we will not be able to integrate into the game an element of welding the

collective together. It is all right because we can use or develop another game or method for welding the collective together.

Contemplation:

- Define your own game objectives
- When you are done give, every objective a priority from 1-5 given 1 is the highest priority

## 4.2 Important Game Characteristics

In this chapter, we will focus on the development of games specifically for schools and kindergartens. In both cases, you need to start by thinking about the age of our future players: how long are the able to focus on one activity? How long may be the whole game until children start to be tired/sulky/bored? Can we divide the game into many segments and integrate breaks into the game, or is it better to finish the game in one go?

The answers to these questions give us a clearer idea of how the game concept of a developed game may look like. Basic game characteristics include:

game time, number of players, player group typology, game world, game type (game category), game setting (necessary materials, environment limitations), game mechanisms.

In the following subchapters, we will have a look at the description and examples of individual game parameters and at the process of creating a game from the development stages viewpoint.

### 4.2.1 Player Typology (Players for Whom Game is Intended)

Who is the person that our game should entertain? How does our typical player look like? Is our game intended to a wide player spectrum or to a very narrow group of players?

A clear idea, telling us who is the game intended to, helps us to design the game in a way that it will be attractive to our players. We create one concept and game mechanisms for a target group of 4-5 years-old players and another concept for high school or university students. The mere age is not enough. If we set some specific aims that we want to achieve (e.g. bullying prevention and solution), we need to get to know players a bit more.

For getting to know and describing various types of players within the group that we analyse, we can use, for example, a method of personas.

**PERSONAS**

Understanding our players with the use of a method of personas will help us to create a better draft of game design.

We will extend the method of personas (from a game development viewpoint) to questions like:

- What is entertaining to our players? Which books/movies/computer games and mobile games do they like?

- What is not entertaining to our players? What they do not like while playing games? Why do they leave the game early? Which situations they do not want to get into?

- Another questions about motivation: Why do they play games and what do they expect from them? How can we motivate players to finish the game?

- What types of players do we have in a group: players who want to win, cooperate, explore, improve in some area, create, build, etc.?

Tips for more information:

- Check out how to make personas. There are many different approaches, for example: https://fernandocomet.medium.com/the-player-persona-template-d171e3e0c05d
- Check out different player types typologies from Bartle, Amy Jo Kim, Andrzej Marczewski to deeper understand different motivations of players

Contemplation

- Choose one of the player typologies and for every player type write down as many things you can think of that would motivate him in a game.

## 4.2.2 Game Time

Game time depends on many factors. When we play a new game, we are interested in:

- Time needed for a game preparation.

- Time needed for the explanation of rules, ideally including a trial round, so that new players get used to it. After that, when they „play for real ", the game is smooth (without queries about rules).

- Time needed for finishing the game.

- Final evaluation of the game, taking care of emotions, sharing in a group, etc.

If we play the same game repeatedly, the time is getting shorter. When we develop a game for a school environment, first we need to think about the time frame into which the game should fit: one teaching lesson, more lessons in a row with breaks, a project day, a whole-camp game at outdoor school. We adjust the selection of game mechanisms, set the length of rounds, etc., to the selected length of the game.

## 4.2.3 Number of Players

It is important to set the number of players at the beginning of developing a game, because creating a game for 2 players or for 30 players is considerably different. Besides the number of players, we should also think about game mechanisms that we will use for solving the division of players into groups or running the game (1 teacher/educator alone or together with an assistant).

If we want all the players to actively participate in a game and express themselves in a group, an ideal size of a team is 3-6 players. You can also make a bigger group, but then it places demand on thinking over the game mechanisms in relation to the aims of the game.

Possible solution of dividing a big group (in our case typically: 20-30 players):

- Divide players into smaller self-organized groups numbering a smaller number of players who play a majority of game parallelly together with other groups, or sent representatives cooperate between groups, or alternatively integrate bigger interactions of individual groups among each other – between individual phases or at the end.

- Divide players into smaller groups together with moderators – a helping hand who help the groups with understanding the rules, explain game mechanisms, supervise a smooth interaction, etc.

## 4.2.4 Game World

A game world, in which our game takes place, is one of the factors that we need to think over during the process of creating the game. The concept of game world denotes for example: a fairy-tale world, pirates, Egypt, steampunk, Middle Ages, science-fiction, Hello Kitty – let your imagination go wild. A selection of a game world is important because it is connected with principal game story, which gives a deeper meaning and logic to the game and motivates players to get involved in a game and be active. The basic setting of a game world can help us while thinking up the game mechanisms that make sense in terms of the game world that we have selected.

It is absolutely necessary to adjust the game world to the groups of players that we intend to involve (see chapter 3.2.1 - Player types - Players for Whom Game is Intended).

## 4.2.5 Game Category (Game Type)

Another parameter that you need to consider is a type of game that we will be creating. First of all, we choose a principal type of a game: an indoor game, an outdoor game, a card game, a board game, a LARP (Life action roleplaying) game, a word play, a dice game, a memory game, a building game, etc. These principal game types are further divided into subtypes. For our convenience, we do not need to know the characteristics of all games. We will have a brief look at the types of games that are most suitable for our needs (bullying prevention and solution).

**LARP (Life action roleplaying)** – It is a type of game in which players represent various roles that fit in a selected context (a historical period, a social status, a fantasy world with its own rules, life and institutions, etc.). Players themselves choose a role within context, or a prepared role is assigned to them with set objectives, skills, limitations, etc. LARP, in the context of this mechanism, is a good tool that can be used when we create a game in which players should try a role of somebody else. During creating the game, we create various scenarios (i.e. what will be happening), we describe individual characters and their basic

characteristics and objectives – e.g. Franta Vomáčka, 13 years-old, in party with Jarda and Honza, he and Ivan often tease each other.

**Card games** and **Board games** – There exist a wide range of different types of board games and card games, such as: negotiation games, exploration games, war games, racing games, economic games, and many others. The enumeration of categories and concrete games are stated, for example, in the web pages below:

**For more inspiration visit:**

- https://www.boardgamegeek.com/browse/boardgamecategory – in English, or below:
- https://www.zatrolene-hry.cz/katalog-her/ – in Czech.

## 4.2.6 Game Setting – Necessary Materials, Preparation, Game Environment

Other areas, which we need to think over while creating a game, are:

**Game environment in which the game will take place** – at the table, in nature, on chairs, on the ground.

**Which tools and equipment will be available at the place** – a table, a board, a projector, a mobile device, a computer, number of rooms, etc.

**Which other tools, equipment or game materials are a part of the game** – a game board, dice, cards, tokens, a hat for drawing lots/division of teams, coloured markers, etc.

## 4.2.7 Game Mechanisms

The selection and design of suitable mechanisms determine to a large degree if our game will be entertaining for players or not. Here is a short list of several game mechanisms that you can use in your games:

- **Chance –** An element of chance is important for a repeated playing as it increases the variability and a chance of winning for various players. A correctly-composed degree of chance increases the tension and immersion between players. On the other hand, an excessive degree of chance may get the players bored because they lose control and their decisions/actions lose meaning. We can considerably affect the degree of chance by our game design. The game developer decides, for example, about the proportion of positive to negative chance cards in a deck; if a player must throw a six or anything else except of a six. Another option is to give players the opportunity to impact the degree of chance. For example, when players roll a dice, they have various opportunities to increase the chance for a successful throw, or how to decrease a risk of negative effects – for instance, players can decide how many dice they will use to throw, they can throw more times, during the game they can buy/gain more dice/better dice/a defence card, and many more. A chance is usually added to games in a form of various **dice** (n-sides, most often from 2-20 sides). Dice have various numbers, pictures or a chance is added by drawing lots from a shuffled deck of **cards**.

- **Rolling a dice** – A player throws dice/ dices. The resulting value determines how many more fields they should move in the game, how many lives they will take away from an enemy, if the player's figure will manage to destroy a trap that they revealed, etc.

- **Storytelling –** During the game, a player invents/narrates a story to others. The game offers the player tools or limitations (e.g. a player must use a word that they draw from the deck of words or describe what they see in the picture, on a picture dice, etc.). The game itself can move the story forward with the use of a deck of cards with events that move the story forward in cases where an element of chance can be used, or the story may be partially immutable.

- **Roleplaying –** During the game, players represent different roles that they choose/invent by themselves or draw during the game, or they are assigned to them. The roles are usually described during the game or you can leave suggesting the roles up to the players. Within the game, the players fulfil their roles; they participate in different situations which offer then space for their development. For example, one part of players plays the part of teachers and second part of players play the part of students. Each player invents a name, biography and an objective assigned by a game, alternatively they can choose/invent the objective based on the known parameters.

- **Roles with asymmetric information –** This mechanics can be used in LARP games, board games and other games in which players play different roles. A player/players have different information and, in most cases, also different objectives. For example, one of the players knows that they are a thief and during the game they try to persuade others that the thief is someone else.

- **Limited communication –** Players' possibilities of communication are somehow limited. For instance, they cannot talk at all, they have a limited time for agreement, only a determined player can talk, etc.

- **Heroic tasks, quests, challenges –** During the game, players try to fulfil the tasks. Players can fulfil the same tasks by cooperation or competition, or each player has their own personal task. Players can fulfil the tasks as a group or individually (e.g. "Build a road at least 10 fields long, take over 3 enemy's cities, play blindfolded the next round).

- **(Social) deduction –** Who is who? What happened? Who is the killer? Players strive to reveal an unknown information on a basis of indicia or game development.

- **Voting –** Voting can be used in many different ways. First, during the game – e.g. voting about a key decision in the game, solving conflicts, what will happen in the game later if we choose different alternatives, a player elimination. Second, voting can be used at the end of the game – who helped to win the most, who improved most, who made me happy the most, etc. It is good to create such categories in a way that there are as many meaningfully awarded players as possible, and not only emphasize one individuality. Instead of one best player, there can be three best players, children evaluate each other among themselves and not in the whole group, we assess more criteria, etc.

- **Negotiation** – Negotiation can take place between two or more players. The subject of negotiation may be a price, an exchange, etc.

- **Trading** – A player buys, for example, cards/tokens/improvements for gold/tokens/money cards.

- **Action points** – My figure has, for example, 4 action points which can be used in one round to move, attack, defend or regenerate the health.

- **Collecting sets** – A player wins if they put a set of five colours or five different characters together, or they get bonus if they collect all the cards of one kind, etc.

- **Time limit** – Helps to frame the game into a planned time subsidy. When we have the right setting, the time limit increases the immersion and tension. You need to test it well, so that the time is a sufficient challenge, but at the same time everything important manages to happen. The tools that are used very often are hourglasses, stopwatches, etc.

- **Alliance** – During the games, players can form associations, which brings them some advantage. It also influences another game mechanisms, or players can demonstrate their opinion, which has an impact on the development of the game.

- **Advantage token** – It allows players to use a special action/trait/position in a game. For example, a player possesses a protection card that they can use only for themselves or for anybody else and protect them from some negative event in the game. Alternatively, a player has an opportunity to once/twice/permanently throw two dice instead of one.

- **Combination of cards/actions** – Players can combine more cards or actions, which leads to, for example, a stronger game effect.

Contemplation:

- Think about the last game that you or your children/students really liked. What game mechanics was this game build on?
- Can you think of any other game mechanic not mentioned above, that your students really like?

## 4.3  Process of Creating Games

The previous chapter presented the parts of a game that you need to think over and gradually improve during creating a new game. In this chapter, we will have a look at the following issues: how to proceed while designing a game, which steps to take, how to test a game and successfully finish it.

### 4.3.1 Introductory Brainstorming, Selection of Story Environment and Basic Game Logic

At the beginning of creating a game, you need to think over/choose basic parameters of the game – as we have described in the previous chapter (to remind you: game objectives, game time, numbers of players,

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player typology (players for whom game is intended), game world, game category (game type), game setting – necessary materials, preparation, game environment and game mechanisms). There is no set order in which you should solve the given areas. Different people prefer a different procedure – some of them start from the game mechanisms that they know, trust and understand, and only after they try to design them so that they suit other parameters (game time, player types, etc.). Other people prefer to clearly set basic parameters, such as game duration, player types, game objectives and game mechanisms, a story. Those people will choose other parameters only at the moment when those areas are clearly described. Some people start from a specific idea of how the game might look like and after they verify and adjust concrete mechanisms, so that they fulfil the limitations and selected objectives.

It is important that you find a way that suits your needs. No matter which procedure you choose – you need to non-underestimate this stage and pay enough attention to it. It is recommended to write down the ideas in this stage or visualize them in a different way. This way, you support the imagination, creativity and possibility to return to concepts in the future. New concepts are created by a gradual adjustment of introductory ideas into the shape that, according to the author, fulfils all the selected parameters (game time, focus on a chosen target group of players, the game should lead to objectives that the author had chosen, and others). These concepts should be further tested, so that the author of the game verifies at the early stage the facts that will decide about if there is a point in developing the given concept or remake it, put it on the back burner or remove it straightaway.

This stage, including testing and adjusting game mechanisms, most often takes place in iterations. In iterations, we gradually adjust game mechanisms and test and change the game setting, until we get into the stage when we move forward from adjusting the concept to the finalization of the game. The surer we are of our concept, the more we test the game in a form that is nearly the final one. I.e. concerning cards, first we test a thin piece of paper with word description, then with a primitive picture, then on a better paper, and lastly a final form with final graphics, laminated, etc. When we test other mechanisms, we proceed analogically.

**Model example:**

We try to create a game for bullying prevention. During brainstorming, we think about the key objectives of a future game. We use a model example, see chapter 4.1 - Game Objectives. Then, we think about a topic/story.

Ideas: 1) Environment of a social media administrator who solves cyber-bullying. 2) Word play – players have the task of helping the person being bullied of bullying.

Thus, we have two ideas – we begin to develop them more. We think about principal game mechanisms. Topic 1): We invent a board game in which players move small cubes which represent the person who bullies' attacks. Then they draw together the defence cards and try to find out how they would act in the given situation. An alternative can be a card game in which a player decides (from drawn cards) how they would solve the attacks that are generated with the use of story cards and dice throw. Topic 2): We invent

cards containing action words, such as "do, stop, use", that will inspire players to create a plan of how to help the person being bullied.

## 4.3.2 Testing the Concept

We rarely manage to create a game that meets our requirements at the first attempt. That is why the stage of introductory testing is very important. We approach it in case we are convinced that we have a concept that may work or when we are not sure and we want to verify our concerns or uncertainty that decides if we further develop the given concept.

The way of testing the game in this stage cannot be described generally as the game mechanisms/a problem that we test matters.

**What to test:** All the basic game parameters and the fact if the game fulfils our aims.

**How to test in this stage:** Simulation of game development, description of game development, creation of a simple version in a very primitive (simple, fast) embodiment while using everything we have at hand. In this stage, it is important to test as fast as possible and not to lose time, i.e. for example cards do not have graphics, but only a description; instead of final tokens that will be used in the game, we can use cut papers/beads/beans – practically everything what can be used to simulate a game situation that we want to test; we outline a game area on a paper and test game mechanisms in cases that interest us; instead of players, we use figures from a game "Ludo" and we simulate their actions in the game and if the game is workable in this shape.

**What questions do we want to answer in this stage:** Does the game fulfil my aims? What should entertain us as a player in this game? What motivates us to play/finish the game? Is it possible to add something to the game or remove something from it, so that the game fulfils the parameters that we have selected better? What do we need to change in order the game to be closer to the aims that we have set?

If the concept does not fulfil some set parameter, it does not mean that we need to remake the game. However, we must think: Is the new parameter better for us than the planned one? E.g. we have a great game concept, but we find out that the game cannot be completed in 45 minutes and instead we need 60 minutes. In this case, we can decide to agree with 60 minutes because the game turned out very well, and we accept a new game setting.

**Model example:** We take concepts from the previous chapter and try (with the use of simple tools) to see how the games could run. We gradually go through all the suggested mechanisms. If we encounter needless complications or a non-functional principle, we can proceed to testing another concept. For a detailed development, we choose the variant with the highest potential to fulfil our aims.

**Contemplation:**

- Think about how would you test one of your first game concepts. What materials would you need and what/who else would you need to quickly figure out if your concept is worth further developing or not.

### 4.3.3 Adjusting Game Mechanisms

Adjusting game parameters, a story, a game environment and all the other aspects of our game concept follows up with each iteration of testing the concept. Testing provides answers to questions concerning what we need to change/improve/remove; when we are adjusting, we are trying to implement these changes into the concept. We need to abandon the concepts at which we are not able to adjust the game mechanisms in a way that they fulfil our aims, and we need to try to develop or think up other concepts. A situation, in which the game concept that we developed does not lead to our dreamed-of aims, is common and there is no point in worrying about it. We can return to those removed concepts some time later in case a change comes to our mind that could revive the concept and move it on in a way we need. However, it is usually better to decide for/invent another concept rather than devote an excessive attention to a concept that obviously does not work.

**Model example:** For this stage of adjustments, we choose a concept 2) variant 2 (from our previous concepts). Contrary to the introductory testing, we add more action words cards and we start to feel a lack of some game mechanisms. We are afraid that players lack the motivation and we need to move the story forward in a better way. The same way we were thinking during the preliminary creating of the concept, now we think about what we can add to the game. E.g. we can generate the story of the person being bullied – what happened to them, what preceded, etc. – thereby we add a greater variability to the game and players will get the motivation to solve a specific problem. We also add game stages to the game: first the common story is created, then the players individually create a plan how to help the person being bullied, and then a final sharing and a best-plan evaluation follows. Again, we test and adjust the added mechanisms and speculate on if the game needs something extra, or on the other hand if the game does not need to leave out/redesign something.

**Contemplation:**

- Think about a game that you/your students either played recently, or that you/your students like or dislike. What would you change to make it better? What would you change to shift the focus/goal of the game to something else?
- Which other game mechanics would have to be adjusted based on your initial change?

### 4.3.4 Testing the Adjusted Version

This stage differs from testing the concept in a fact that we gradually approach a final stage of the game, i.e. the game contains all the event cards and we test: which event cards will remain in the final stage of the game, how many of them, how they will look like, how text will be arranged, what will be the ratio

between the size of a picture and the size of text, etc. While testing the concept, we have already verified the fact that the event cards bring to the game an effect that we request. Now, we only adjust a concrete shape of this game element.

In this stage, we need to make an important decision about when we start to use final graphics for game elements. Depending on how essential the graphic form of elements in a game is for the game itself, we will deal with the graphics sooner or later. Some types of games are more dependent on the graphic rendering of game components than others. However, generally we add graphics after we have all the final game elements and we do not consider other changes.

For example, when we test a game board during introductory stages, a game board outlined by hand is sufficient enough. When we test cards, we need only their description and a picture from a photo-bank, etc.

The things that we test depend on the type of a game. Therefore, we state only some examples:

- When testing cards:

    - **Intelligibility** of described action/event.

    - **Meaningfulness and real impacts** on the game (entertainment, fun, story development, surprise, it moves the player somewhere in a game, etc.).

    - **How fast does the player understand**, how the card works, what does it do, etc.

- When testing the game board:

    - **Clarity** – the arrangement of elements, graphical differentiation/emphasizing important places on the game board, etc.

    - **Size of components** with relation to the game board – i.e. we need bigger fields, smaller figures, smaller tokens, etc.

    - In case the game board is assembled from more pieces: **how they fit in together,** and if there is not a problem with the transitions between individual pieces.

- When testing LARP games:

    - Are the roles described well and lead the players in the direction we planned? Are the possibilities of a given role clear to the players and are they able to identify themselves with the role on the basis of our instructions and play it in a game world in a way that it is beneficial to the player themselves/to other players?

    - In case the role has a set time limit, objectives, tasks, etc., it is necessary to test if they are achievable, meaningful, correctly set, described, etc.

- Degree of chance:

  - The majority of games work to some extent with the chance (if it is possible). It is good to test, alternatively count up/estimate, how often/how likely will the given random phenomena happen and whether they are beneficial to the game or not. According to the type of game or players and on the basis of testing, we must decide, for example, if the probability that a player draws a card with a negative event is not too high/low, and whether it is not necessary to remove/add negative cards into/from a deck. More about a chance in chapter 1.2.7, Game Mechanisms.

**Model example**: Our semi-finished concept is in a stage when the game is fully playable and it starts to be entertaining to us. If we have not done it yet, it is high time to start testing the game with real players – observe and ask them for their feelings about the game. Questions for players: see chapter 4.4 - Feedback and Questions for Creating and Testing Games. We may find out, for example, when 6 players sit at the common table, that the cards are too small and we need to make them bigger and choose a text with a brighter font. We may also find out that we have underestimated the time it will take players to finish one round and that the method of generating events (that we have designed) sometimes brings non-sense variants, etc. We implement changes to our game on the basis of feedback and testing. Then, we test new versions of the game again until we and testers are satisfied with the game.

**Contemplation**:

What possible setbacks or problems do you anticipate in your proposed changes to the game you picked in the previous *Contemplation* from chapter 4.3.3 - Adjusting Game Mechanisms. How would you test your proposed changes and what would be the questions or hypothesis that you would like to test the most?

## 4.3.5 Creating Manual

When we are at a stage approaching to a final version of the game, there is the right time to write down instructions for our players because a manual also needs to be tested and adjusted, so that all its parts are intelligible and the manual is clearly structured (during the game in progress, a player must be able to easily find a concrete rule/game situation that they do not know how to solve).

The structure and key parts of the manual, of course, differ based on the type of game. We will have a look at the most common ones:

- **Basic game parameters**, such as game time, maximum and minimum number of players, players' minimal age or some other expectations from the players' point of view.

- **List and number of game components –** what components does the game contain (how many dice and figures (and their type), cards, a game board, tokens, etc.). You should state the numbers of all these game components.

- **Game preparation –** What do we need to do/build/prepare in order to start playing a game. For example, how to place game tokens and figures on a game board, how many cards to deal out to the players from which deck of cards, etc.

- **Game course –** What is the course of the game, which stages does it have, how many rounds and what should happen in them? You need to describe the course of the game in a well-arranged manner – you should not overload the readers with unnecessary details, describe winning strategies or advise them how to play. Instead, you should describe in a clearly manner what are their possibilities and explain with the use of examples the situations that may occur during the game.

- **Game objective and how to win/finish the game –** The players need to understand when the game ends and how and what the points are given for.

**Model example:** We can modify the manual either during creating the game (thus in the previous stages), or when the game is completed. In the first case, we should get ready for additional remaking, but there is a chance that we discover the problems sooner. Whether we create the manual sooner or later, it also needs to be tested on real players. In our model case, we find out, for example, that some rules are not clear to players and that they cannot find some game situations in the manual. We remake and test the manual as often as we wish.

**Contemplation**

Think about the 2 most complicated games that you own and one or two simple ones. Put their manuals side-by-side and concentrate on the different approaches that their designers chose while creating the manuals (structure, design, language, level of detail, explaining complicated situations, giving examples, explaining of how to setup the game etc.). Take notes on what you find to be good and bad.

## 4.3.6 Adjusting Testing and Production of Final Version of the Game

When we feel that the game is working exactly as we wanted (based on our previous testing and adjustments) and there is no need to test it more in terms of game mechanisms, a story, game components, etc., then we move forward to the last stage of game development – testing the final version of the game. In this stage, everything looks like and behaves as a final game – the cards have a final graphical layout, they are printed on a quality paper, the game board is printed on cardboard/paper, etc. These final adjustments and testing are very important; without them, it is risky to release the game. In this stage, we do not expect many changes, but it is possible that we discover some problem or necessary changes.

**Model example:** We found out that game components and a game board (where the cards are put) do not fit into the box, the cards are printed on too thin piece of paper and they can easily get bent and destroyed and players have difficulties playing with them. We need to choose more quality printing because the game board does not have contrasting colours (despite a beautiful graphical design) and players get lost on it.

## 4.4  Feedback and Questions for Creating and Testing Games

Collecting feedback, asking the right questions and following important facts is the right way of creating a quality game. We create the game for players and that is why we need to know their opinions, pleasant as well as unpleasant emotions, reactions, worries, behaviour before/during/after the game. What approach we choose during collecting the feedback and what types of questions we ask depends on our possibilities (for example, how easy is testing based on the accessibility of players, how many times can we afford testing and how many players participate, etc.). In this chapter, we will have a look at our possibilities.

### 4.4.1 How and Which Feedback We Collect While Testing the Game

We can collect feedback from players in the following stages:

- Before the beginning of the game.

- During pauses between individual stages of the game/game days, etc.

- Shortly after the end of the game.

-  A longer while after finishing the game.

- After several completed games.

Which form should we use for collecting feedback:

- Conversation

- Questionnaire

Other methods that can be used while testing the game with more players:

- Audio-visual record from testing – We can observe non-verbal communication, reactions in concrete game stages, etc.

- Role of observers – Observers observe the previously-given events, criteria and everything that they consider important.

## 4.4.2 Sample Questions for Creating and Testing the Game

| | |
|---|---|
| **General questions on a game and emotions** | How did you like playing the game? What did you like the most about the game? What did you like about the game and what did you miss? |
| **Questions on concrete game element** | What do you think about action cards? How did you like the game board? Is there something you would change? Did you miss something there? Was everything clear? (etc.) How did you like the story? What did you dislike about the story? What would you change in the story? |
| **Questions on game parameters** | How difficult was the game in the range between 1 (primitive) to 10 (very difficult)? Analogically, the same about other parameters that interest us. |
| **Questions on personal strategies** | Why did you decide this way in a situation XY? What strategy did you choose at the beginning of the game and why did you change it later? |
| **Questions on concrete situations** | Why did you not use the defence card at the end of the game when Franta was drowning in Oblivion Lake? |
| **Questions on achieving a concrete aim** | What questions did the game evoke in you? How do you think Pepa was feeling when you humiliated him during the game? Pepa, how did you feel in that situation? What will you change in the future, what will you do differently? |

As we have already stated in previous chapters, a game is one of the most effective ways how to learn new strategies and safely explore the world around us. Learning during the game is natural, often in a form of a subconscious process. Nevertheless, if we add to this process a conscious or controlled reflection, we can support the process of learning even more (see Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning).

Through a facilitated discussion, we can process even unpleasant or in other respects demanding collective experiences. If it is correctly treated and analysed, then even a negative experience (but not traumatic) can offer plenty of important and positive motivation for the development of an individual as well as a group.

In the next chapter, we will focus on how to hold group reflections as well as on facilitation methods as such. Later on, we will have a look at the significance of rituals in the life of a child and how we can approach them.

# 5   Facilitation

During facilitation, teachers get out of their expert role and evolve into guides. Their aim is not to hand out knowledge and know-how, and on the other hand not only to correct a guided discussion. The role of a facilitator means to support the children so that they think about the given topic themselves, see it from different points of view and reach their own realizations.

## 5.1   Principles of Facilitation

### 5.1.1 Deliberate Intention

Facilitators open space for reflection. It means that they should not try to deliver their own opinion or conviction to children. On the other hand, it is important to set intention for reflection. If facilitation follows the game or another pre-planned activity, its intention may be to reflect the given topic as a whole (e.g. cooperation) or to concentrate on some of its parts (e.g. a role in a team, a reaction under pressure, and others). Then, the facilitator, in compliance with that, asks their questions and shares their observations. While preparing for facilitation, we can ask the questions like: "What is the intention of reflection that I am going to guide?" or "What do I want the children to learn from the discussion?"

### 5.1.2 Safe Environment

If we want the children to open and share things, the discussion needs to take place in a safe environment. It is important that the children have confidence in a facilitator. The task of the facilitator is to guide the discussion in a way that all the opinions are heard, they have the same value and we can disagree with each other. Before the start of the discussion, we recommended to set or remind of the rules (see chapter 2.4.2 - Establishing Democratic Rules) that the children approve. One of our favourite rules is "we agree to disagree". During the discussion, the facilitator corrects the discussion with respect to participants and previously approved rules in case of a conflict. Another important rule of a safe environment is confidentiality – everything we talk about during the discussion remains between us and we will not leave the room. That is also the reason why it is important to ensure that there is nobody else within earshot whom the children may fear or they may be afraid to express themselves openly in front of them for different reasons.

### 5.1.3 Each Opinion is Welcomed

Facilitators try to evoke reflection in children by asking questions; they welcome sharing of any opinion. Even though facilitators would not agree with the opinion by themselves, they do not show their evaluation. It could evoke in children a feeling that there are right and wrong answers and discourage them from further sharing. The facilitator can ask more questions in order to understand the opinion more, polemize against it, evoke deeper reflection by asking questions, etc.

Equally important is the fact that all the children should get enough space to express themselves. Sometimes it is necessary to purposefully offer space to children who are less assertive, shyer or introvert types, but at the same time respect if they decide not to use the space. Sharing should always be voluntary.

## 5.1.4 We Ask Questions

Asking questions represents a crucial discipline of facilitation. We can apply the principles of coaching (see chapter 2.4.6 - Coaching Principles in Communication), but the difference is that we do not focus on individuals and therefore we direct the questions (with exceptions) generally ("What can be done in such a case?" / "What can we do in such a case?" vs. "What can you do in such an example?").

Facilitator's questions should open the space to children for contemplation, encourage reflection and make a dialogue possible. For this, it is good to use open questions – those that are answered other than yes/no – for example: "What did you like?" vs. "Did you like it?". On the other hand, the advantage of closed questions is that they evoke a greater sense of security and assurance. Many times, it is easier for us to say that we dislike something than sharing what we dislike and why. It means that closed questions may be helpful, for instance in emotionally more demanding situations, while solving a conflict or when we try to get the group talking. In general, it is true that we mostly use open questions during facilitations.

We recommend to pay specific attention to questions introduced with "why". During the discussion, you should help children to find new associations, which means to search for when something is happening. But the question "Why?" itself may be misleading and instead of discovering new associations, it evokes in us a need to defend ourselves, explain, talk something out of, etc. Our recommendation is to rephrase the questions on intention, reason, etc., so that "why" does not appear in those questions.

Example:

- What was the reason you did that?
- What made you do it?
- What was the reason you decided to do this?

## 5.1.5 We Moderate Discussion

The role of a facilitator involves, besides asking questions, also bringing a view „as if from above" that connects individual opinions together and also connects those opinions together with other stimuli including, for example, own experience, summarizing what has happened so far and connecting it with the intention of facilitation.

With reference to that, you can use the following techniques:

- Ask more questions so that you understand correctly.
- Summarize and rephrase children's opinions, so that everybody understands who wanted to say what and how it is related to the topic of discussion.

- Enrich the discussion with your own experience, observations or stories that stimulate another reflection. However, they are not a standpoint.
- For better visualization and easier remembering, it is good to write observations down on a flipchart. If children cannot read well yet, the facilitator should take notes and summarize the observations regularly.

## 5.1.6 Pink Elephant

If there is so-called „pink elephant" in a room (which means "something unsaid, but what can be seen or sensed", for example individual emotions, moods, injustice, etc.), it is always necessary to name it. Even though we, as facilitators, do not know where it comes from. For instance, if we feel that there is an oppressive atmosphere in a group (or between specific children), we can just say: "I feel that there is an oppressive atmosphere today." and ask them what is happening. It is good to introduce our observation by stating that it is our own feeling, impression, etc., rather than saying something like: "What is wrong with you today?" or "You are behaving weird today." and so on. Such utterances may sound offensive and demotivate children from further sharing.

## 5.2  Structure of Reflection: Method FFFF

If facilitation takes place after the game or other common experience (even negative), we should structure the discussion in a way that we make sharing easier and at the same time we stimulate learning. We guide the children through the whole Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning with the use of method FFFF (*facts – feelings – findings – futures*).

**Course**

Immediately after the experience, we ask children the questions that can help them reflect on the things that happened during the activity. This is a "warm-up round" in which they recall the sequence of events, key moments or forgotten details. This part is important especially after the activities in which the children, for example, had different roles, when they were situated in various places, when they were blindfolded or due to any other reasons why all of them do not know exactly what others were doing. In this part, we concentrate on facts instead of opinions. Children realize what exactly happened and at the same time they have an opportunity to get talking through undemanding questions.

Sample questions:

- What happened?

- What was the task of your group?

- How did the cooperation go in your group?

We can skip this part if we reflect on rather short and simple activity that has just ended.

**Feelings**

In the next stage, we focus on feelings that children experienced during the activity. A realization and naming your own emotions is an important part of the reflective process. If the activity evoked stronger emotions in children, they may feel a need to express them. If they do so, they can process the emotions more easily and by this way create a mental space for another thinking and learning, whether the emotions are pleasant or unpleasant. It is essential to name the emotion, but not to evaluate it. All the emotions are welcomed and all right. For example, if children feel anger, we accept that without explaining to them that it is only a game or stating other reasons why they should not feel the anger. If it is difficult for children to share feelings by talking, we can choose some other form of reflection stated in the following chapter (Techniques of Reflection).

Sample questions:

- How did you like it?

- How did you feel?

- What feelings did it evoke in you?

**Findings**

In this part, we ask children such questions that help them to evaluate their experience: what was achieved, what was working, what was beneficial and oppositely what was not. The aim of this part of facilitation is to help the children to interpret the past experience, find new associations, realize and name strategies and behaviour that are desired and effective and the ones that are not.

Sample questions:

- What was the reason why you did (did not) succeed?

- What helped you in the given situation?

- What impact did the given behaviour have on others?

**Opportunity**

In the final part of facilitation, we help the children discover new opportunities. We have already realized what was working and on the other hand what was not working. Therefore, we can think up new strategies and plans of how to behave the next time in an analogous situation. If the game or activity served us as a parallel to a real situation, in this part we help the children by asking questions to find this parallel and move our realizations from the game into the real context.

Sample questions:

- What would you do differently the next time?
- How would you behave in such a situation the next time?

- What things that we have now talked about can you perform at home/with friends?

With this stage, we have closed the first loop of Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning. It is possible to follow it up with another round of a game that will be enriched with new realizations and strategies. We will follow them up with a next round of reflection (*facts – feelings – findings – futures*). If we have an opportunity, we should perform two or three iterations. With every round, children get deeper into the problematics, they realize new associations and learn new findings. We can slightly vary the rules of each round, add difficulty or bring new elements.

If there are more iterations, under certain circumstances children's unsuccess in the first round of the game can be even desired and it is all right. Due to facilitation, they have an opportunity to name their unsuccess, cope with their emotions that it evokes in them and find out what to do differently the next time. In the second round of the game, they immediately experience the impact of newly found solutions or approaches. For that reason, they also probably experience a success. Therefore, this way the children can learn to work with failure and perceive it as a natural part of life and an opportunity to learn.

**FFFF Joker**

The joker is an exception proving the rule. Each method has its own limits. When we work with the group, the most important thing is to perceive the group and adapt to its dynamics. The joker reminds us to believe in our judgment and intuition, not to limit ourselves by rules and simply play our own game :-)

## 5.3 Techniques of Reflection

You should give children the space for reflection after any kind of game, activity or a day spent together. Reflection does not necessarily need to be a discussion. It may be short, creative and playful. We may adapt it to our time possibilities, age, children's mood and the environment in which we find ourselves at the moment.

### 5.3.1 Fingers

We ask a question, for example: "*How did you like the game?*" After that, all the participants show at once their evaluation with the use of their fingers (1 – minimum, 5 – maximum). Afterwards, each participant can comment on their evaluation – why they decided to give the relevant number of points. This technique is useful when we want to find out the mood or situation in a group quickly.

### 5.3.2 Associations

We ask the group a question, for example: "*How do you feel at this moment?*", and the participants should answer in one word (a variation: one sentence). Each participant one by one answers the question in one word (or one sentence) without any further comment.

Due to this form of reflection, the children learn to perceive and name their own feelings and also it is a good training of communication.

### 5.3.3 **Thermometers (Scaling)**

We ask the children a question, for example: "*How did you like group-work?*" We introduce them a scale that they should use for their replies. The scale can be represented by numbers (0-10), words (e.g. unsatisfactory – nothing much – normal – good – great), or a scale of emotions (from unpleasant through neutral to very pleasant).

We can graphically depict the scale on a bigger piece of paper. Then, each child put there a dot, a post-it, etc. Alternatively, we can determine the scale limits within the space, which the children enter by themselves.

### 5.3.4 **Traffic Lights**

Each child is given 3 cards – green, orange and red. We ask the group a question or we present a statement, for example: "*Today I have learned how to better cooperate in a team*." We explain the meaning of each colour (e.g. green – yes, orange – a little, red – no). Then, each child shows the card that best expresses their answer. Voting can be a stimulus for another discussion (the same way as every other shorter technique of reflection).

### 5.3.5 Target

We paint an evaluating target on a bigger piece of paper. This target contains four concentric circles (or one circle divided into quarters). Each circle (or its part) has highlighted a point value (1, 2, 3, 4). We ask the group a question or we present a statement, for example: "*Were you successful in keeping the rules?*" Then, each participant shares their opinion: they "shoot" at the target, which means that they put a post-it/a small stone/a dot, etc. on a circle or a sector of a circle that contains the point value that expresses their answer the best. A discussion about the final shape of a target, causes, opportunities for improvement, etc. may ensue.

### 5.3.6 Emotion Cards

Each child has cards with various emotions (joy, anger, sadness, ...) at their disposal. We can reflect the current feelings or, for example, how they were feeling during the activity. We ask a question and on request the children show a card that best characterizes their feeling.

Children can create emotion cards by themselves (or colour in). During reflections, each of the children can use their individual deck of cards.

### 5.3.7 Emoticons

People share their feelings through emoticons. We select several pictures that best express basic feelings (three are enough – happy, sad and neutral). We can place the emoticons around the room and on request the children come and stand at the picture which best expresses their feeling. Alternatively, the emoticons can be painted on a flip chart and we let the children vote with the use of a post-it or stickers. However,

the advantage of the variant when pictures are placed around the room is that we can leave the pictures in a classroom as a part of decoration (children can easily paint them together in advance) and use them regularly – anytime when needed.

### 5.3.8 Sharing cards

We place a deck of picture cards in front of a group, for example Dixit or any children picture cards. We ask the children a question that they should answer with the use of a card. We can ask them about their current feelings or game experience, whether emotional (how was it for them) or factual (what happened, what was interesting for them, what was easiest, what was most difficult, etc.). After that, each child shares with others which card they chose and why.

### 5.3.9 Statues

We form a circle. We let children close their eyes and we ask them to express how they feel at the moment by showing a specific posture (or movement). Then after opening their yes, we encourage children to comment one by one on their statue and what it shows. Alternatively, the children can express their feelings by using a grimace.

### 5.3.10 Popcorn

Popcorn is an alternative game to sharing in a form of a circlet. We ask a question, but we do not determine the order in which the participants answer. We give children the space to express themselves at the moment when they decide to do it on their own (when they "mature"). Just as during the circlet, it is important that everybody gets space to express themselves.

### 5.3.11 Stories

In the circle, children talk about their experience in the form of a story. They take turns in narrating after short periods of time and they alternately present the story once as a catastrophe and once as a great success. You should integrate this form of reflection later after longer common experiences, for example a day spent together.

### 5.3.12 Diagonal

In a room, we create (with the use of a string or other suitable tool) a line segment going across the room from a corner to a corner. One end of the line segment represents the highest or the best part (a positive evaluation). On the contrary, the second end of the line segment represents the lowest or the worst part (a negative evaluation). We ask the children to stand on the line segment based on their feelings which they had before the activity. They can comment on their stance. We ask additional questions about the course of the activity, a specific moment, etc. We observe if the children change their positions in space. We may ask those who change their place for a commentary.

As an alternative to this form of reflection, we can use a graph. We prepare a graph on a big piece of paper. On the left side, there are values 0-10, at the bottom there is a stage of activity (e.g. getting to know the activity, preparations, the first round, the second round, etc.). Each participant approaches the graph individually and plots their line of feelings or they comment on it and explain it.

Both forms of this reflection can be used appropriately, for example if we want to reflect on how children sense the feelings of third parties (e.g. in a fairy-tale, a movie or another story or a real situation). We can ask them about the feelings of several different characters. The differences become apparent very well, especially in a spatial variant of this reflection. The children realize the differences even better due to their own movement.

## 5.3.13 Aquarium

This type of reflection can be used after the activities in which children were divided into two groups, or they had two types of roles. Each group creates a circle so that there are two concentric circles. A group in the inner circle shares their impressions and answers the facilitator's questions. A group in the outer circle silently observes. Afterwards, the groups reverse their positions so that the second group sits in the inner circle. In this round, the second group shares their feelings about the activity, what they learned, etc. At the end, a common discussion may ensue in which the children share their impressions: how they liked the observation of the second group, if they got surprised by their point of view, etc.

## 5.3.14 Quarters

We distribute paper and coloured pencils among children. The children fold the paper in half and once again in half, so that four windows are created. We ask the children 4 questions and they draw their answer on one of the questions into each window.

## 5.3.15 Creative Reflections

When the activities are done, reflection can be performed in a creative way. The participants can express their feelings, impressions, experiences, views and opinions through various art techniques, scenes or in a written form. Creation can take a form of a group or an individual activity. These forms of reflection represent an experience themselves – children have a field day and during group creation they train their social skills even more.

*Graphically*: a painting, a drawing, a comic book, a photo, modelling in clay, a collage

*Dramatically*: pantomime, a scene, a living scene, a video

*Writing*: a letter, a poem, a short story, free style writing – i.e. for the duration of approximately 5 minutes, each participant writes down anything that comes to their mind – ideally in a form "the pen does not leave the paper", which means to write without thinking and stopping yourself.

# 6 Ritual and Its Significance for Child

Rituals, which means regularly repeated activities, have a great significance for human life. From a historical point of view, we encounter some rituals perhaps in every human culture. Rituals can be various ceremonies, celebrations (of solstice, spring, harvest, …), religious rituals (Easter, Christmas, …) or secular rituals, or transitional rituals (from a child to a woman or a man, a school-leaving exam, a funeral, …).

From a psychological point of view, we consider ritual to be any human action that is based on previously stated rules (a common Sunday lunch, a morning shower, …). The activities that repeat regularly have a wholesome influence on our psyche, they give order to our life, they allow us to calm down and they give us a sense of security. They can be very important for us, especially in a developmental stage.

The rituals represent an opportunity to develop social skills, strengthen relations, develop our own creativity as well as communication. They can play a role in supporting the children in times of a crisis, a change or a loss. The rituals can help children with the adoption and interiorization of certain moral norms.

The rituals strengthen the sense of belonging to a bigger collective. It follows that they help children in common living. The rituals can make the integration of children into the collective easier. We talk about the children who may be considered different due to various reasons and therefore they stay out of a collective: children who are shy, children from other ethnic groups and some other children.

Let your fantasy go wild while working with rituals. You can create a ritual out of any naturally-repeated occasions, for example birthdays, by establishing and keeping certain steps and rules of how the celebration takes place in a collective. For instance, on the day of birthday people devote time to collective creation: children create presents and give them to each other, a birthday person has a special moment or a role in terms of other activities, etc. You can also certainly celebrate spring or every new day.

Within the structure of a day or a week, you can consider trying the following rituals.

## 6.1 Welcoming Ritual

At the beginning of a new day or a week, it is pleasant to welcome children. If we welcome each child individually (by holding out hand to them, calling their name, …), the child has a feeling that they are welcomed and accepted with pleasure. A group welcome allows us to get on the same wavelength, express a joy from meeting, calm ourselves down, tell each other what awaits us, etc. Every group and every environment are different, it is up to the leader of the group what will be the focus of the ritual, when and in which form to perform it.

## 6.2 Meeting Circle

A meeting circle represents a safe space where everybody has an opportunity to share and listen to others. We can start by integrating various relaxation techniques, meditations or another form of calming activity and getting on the same wavelength as well as preparing for a subsequent activity. Sharing can also be a nice beginning. We can share how individual children feel at the moment, for example with the use of

specific techniques of reflection (see chapter 5.3 Techniques of Reflection). A subsequent sharing may have a free form (see 5.3.10 Popcorn) or it can even use a special object – any people holding the object in their hands have a turn to speak and they can start sharing. Sharing can have a topic given in advance which relates to the group. The teacher or children feel a need to discuss it. Alternatively, the topic can represent a probe into the children's feelings and needs. After the end of the main activity, we should close the meeting by a short sharing, for example: "What did the individual participants learn during the meeting?", "How do they feel at the moment?". We can also use "a praise on the right", which means that we appreciate the children for something one by one or the children have to express their gratitude to a person sitting next to them in the circle.

## 6.3  Closing Ritual

At the end of a day or a week, you may give space for reflection: what happened, how was it (see, for example, Method FFFF). This way, we find out if somebody needs to ask something or say something, so that all the children have the time that they spent together mentally closed. Expressing what the children are grateful for or what they can praise themselves for (each of them praises only themselves) is a form of sharing. Such sharing fosters positive thinking or healthy self-confidence.

## 6.4  Relaxation Ritual

In the course of a day, we recommend you to create moments of stopping yourself and calming down. During a controlled relaxation or meditation, children have an opportunity to feel their body, realize their emotions, break themselves free from the sequence of daily events and put themselves in a mood for other activities. Relaxation does not need to be long: 5-15 minutes is enough. During this time, the children concentrate on the present moment, they realize what is happening inside them and they calm down their mind. For example, we can guide them through a body scan (a method of mindfulness) when we gradually focus on individual parts of the body from big toes to the head. We can express to our body our gratefulness, we can use touches and caress or we can even stretch ourselves. If we start using relaxation regularly in some specific part of the day, suddenly we have one useful ritual ☺