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ERASMUS+ PROJECT

Education through Empathy: Together against violence

2025-1-RO01-KA210-SCH-000354805

1. SCENARIO

Country: Greece

Age Group: Grades 9-10 (15-16 years old)

Number of Students: 20-25

Duration: 2 lessons (90 minutes)

Subject: Social & Political Education / Skills Labs

Topic: Nonviolent Communication and Conflict Mediation

Scenario Objectives: See point 2.

Scenario Authors: Kalliopi Ntolou

Language: Greek (translated into English for the project – Nikolaos Papanikolaou)

2. LESSON OBJECTIVES

a) Cognitive (Knowledge)

- **Fact vs. Judgment:** The student will learn to distinguish between objective "**Observations**" (verifiable facts) and subjective "**Evaluations**" (moralistic judgments). This helps them understand how "labeling" someone often triggers immediate defensiveness.
- **Structural Mastery of NVC:** Students will gain a clear understanding of the **4-step Nonviolent Communication (NVC) framework**—Observation, Feeling, Need, and Request. They will be able to identify each component in a transcript or real-life dialogue.
- **Analyzing Hidden Needs:** The student will be able to identify that behind every "violent" or aggressive statement is an **unmet human need** (e.g., a need for autonomy, inclusion, or safety), which is the first step in successful mediation.

b) Affective (Attitudinal and Emotional)

- **Ownership of School Culture:** The student will develop a sense of **personal responsibility** for the classroom atmosphere, recognizing that their choice of words directly influences the safety and well-being of their peers.
- **Empathy for "The Other":** Students will cultivate the willingness to value the perspective of an opponent during a conflict. This involves moving away from a "right vs. wrong" binary and toward a "needs-based" understanding of human interaction.
- **Valuing Connection Over Victory:** The student will prioritize the **preservation of the relationship** and mutual respect over the desire to "win" a social or verbal dispute, fostering long-term emotional intelligence.

c) Psychomotor (Skills)

- **Linguistic Precision:** The student will practice the physical and verbal delivery of "**I-statements**" (e.g., "I feel frustrated when...") to replace accusatory "**You-statements**" (e.g., "You always mess up...").
- **Active Listening Mechanics:** Students will demonstrate **active listening techniques**, such as paraphrasing the speaker's message and reflecting their feelings back to them to ensure clarity and emotional validation.
- **Mediation Performance:** Through role-playing, students will practice the **non-verbal cues** of mediation, including maintaining calm body language, appropriate eye contact, and a neutral tone of voice even in high-tension simulations.

3. KEY COMPETENCIES

Conflict Resolution: De-escalating Verbal Aggression

- **Tactical De-escalation:** Students develop the ability to recognize the "escalation ladder" in verbal exchanges. They learn to use neutral language and "de-escalating pauses" to prevent a minor disagreement from turning into a major confrontation.
- **Negotiation Skills:** By focusing on requests rather than demands, students gain the competency to propose win-win solutions where both parties' needs are met, which is a vital life skill for adulthood and future workplaces.
- **Emotional Regulation:** This competency involves the self-control required to remain calm under pressure, allowing students to process their own anger constructively before responding to others.

Social & Civic Competence: Communication and Community

- **Impact Awareness:** Students understand that communication is not just a private matter but also a civic tool. They learn how individual words can either build a "culture of peace" or contribute to a toxic, exclusionary school environment.
- **Democratic Dialogue:** By practicing mediation, students engage in the democratic process of hearing diverse viewpoints and finding common ground, which is essential for active citizenship in a multicultural society.

- **Promoting Inclusion:** This competency focuses on using language that respects diversity and includes marginalized voices, helping to prevent the "Desert of Gossip" or social exclusion mentioned in the project's overall goals.

Critical Thinking: Analyzing "Hidden Needs"

- **Root Cause Analysis:** Students move beyond judging surface-level behavior (e.g., "he is a bully") to analyzing the underlying causes (e.g., "he is seeking attention because he feels ignored"). This shift requires high-level cognitive processing and empathy.
- **Deconstructing Language:** This competency involves "listening between the lines." Students learn to filter out the "judgmental" parts of a message to find the core message or request hidden within aggressive or confusing statements.
- **Evaluation of Outcomes:** Students practice predicting the consequences of different communication styles, critically assessing which approach—violent vs. nonviolent—leads to a more sustainable and positive long-term outcome for all parties involved.

4. TEACHING METHODS

- **The "Peace-Lab" Simulation (Role-Playing):** Students don't just discuss conflict; they step into it within a controlled "laboratory" setting. By acting out realistic school scenarios—such as social media "call-outs" or cafeteria disputes—students physically experience the shift in tension when moving from "You-statements" to "I-statements."
 - This method allows for immediate feedback from peers, turning mistakes into learning moments without real-world social consequences.
- **The "NVC Translation" Workshop (Collaborative Group Work):** Working in small "translation teams," students are given a list of common aggressive phrases ("Violent Communication") and must work together to "decode" them into the 4 steps of NVC.
 - This collaborative approach encourages students to debate the difference between feelings and thoughts, sharpening their collective emotional intelligence and linguistic precision.
- **Guided Socratic Discussion & Brainstorming:** The teacher acts as a facilitator (or "Chief Mediator"), using open-ended questions to lead students toward discovering the "Iceberg of Conflict" themselves.
 - By brainstorming the "Hidden Needs" behind common classroom behaviors, the class builds a shared vocabulary of empathy, ensuring the rules for communication are created *by* the students, rather than imposed *on* them.
- **The "Fishbowl" Observation Method:** A small group performs a mediation in the center of the room (the "fishbowl") while the rest of the class observes and takes notes on specific de-escalation techniques used.

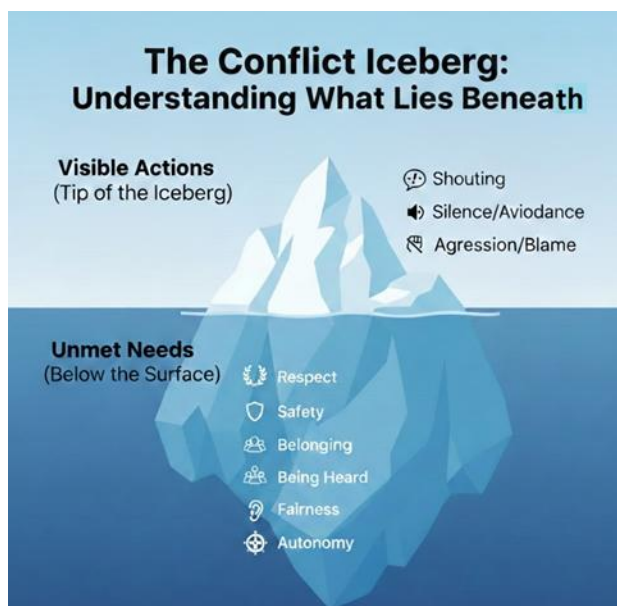
- This method develops critical observation skills, allowing students to see the 4 steps of NVC in action from an objective, third-party perspective before they try it themselves.
- **Interactive Gamification (The "Needs" Sort):** Using physical cards or digital tools, students participate in a fast-paced sorting game where they must categorize various words into "Feelings," "Needs," "Observations," or "Evaluations."
 - This gamified approach keeps energy high and helps solidify the cognitive definitions of NVC in a fun, competitive, and memorable way.

5. REQUIRED MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

- The NVC "Compass" (Visual Aid):



- A large-format poster or digital slide displaying the **4 Steps of Nonviolent Communication** (Observation, Feeling, Need, Request). This serves as a constant reference point during the workshop.
- **Purpose:** To give students a visual map to follow when they "get lost" in the heat of a role-play.
- The "Iceberg" Conflict Map:



- A large illustration of an iceberg where the tip represents "Visible Actions" (shouting, silence, aggression) and the submerged part represents "Unmet Needs" (respect, safety, belonging).
- **Purpose:** To visually demonstrate that mediation focuses on what is "under the water."
- **Appendix 1: "Feelings & Needs" Flashcards:**
 - A set of color-coded cards. **Blue cards** list feelings (e.g., lonely, overwhelmed, impatient) and **Green cards** list universal human needs (e.g., autonomy, inclusion, trust).
 - **Purpose:** Students who "lack the words" can physically pick up a card to describe their state during simulations.
- **Appendix 2: The "Mediation Script" Clipboard:**
 - A simplified, step-by-step checklist for the student acting as the "Mediator." It includes opening phrases like *"I am here to help you both hear each other,"* and closing prompts like *"What is one small step you can both agree on?"*
 - **Purpose:** To reduce the anxiety of the student mediator by giving them a professional "tool" to hold.
- **Appendix 3: "Toxic to Tonic" Worksheet:**
 - A handout featuring a list of "Toxic" messages (judgments/evaluations) common in high school life, with empty "Tonic" spaces for students to rewrite them using NVC logic.
 - **Purpose:** To provide a permanent record of their learning that they can take home.
- **Digital Equipment (Optional but Recommended):**
 - **Smartphone/Camera:** To record short "Before and After" clips (with parental consent) showing the same conflict resolved poorly vs. resolved via mediation.
 - **Projector/Interactive Whiteboard:** To display real-time brainstorming results or "Menti" polls to gauge the classroom's emotional temperature.
- **Physical Space Setup:**
 - **The "Mediation Table":** A specific area with three chairs (Student A, Student B, and Mediator) arranged in a triangle to symbolize equality and neutral ground.

6. STRUCTURE AND COURSE OF THE LESSON (90 MINUTES)

Phase 1: Activation & The "Language of Jacks" (15 min)

- **The "Judgment Jump" (5 min):** The teacher reads a list of sentences. If the sentence is an **Observation** (fact), students stay seated. If it is an **Evaluation** (judgment/opinion), they jump up.
 - *Example:* "He is wearing a red shirt" (Sit) vs. "He is being annoying" (Jump!).
- **The Iceberg Hook (10 min):** Using the **Iceberg Conflict Map**, the teacher shows a photo of a common school argument.
 - **Task:** Students brainstorm what "Invisible Needs" are hiding under the water (e.g., a need for respect, a need to be included, a need for peace).

Phase 2: The NVC "Translation" Workshop (20 min)

- **Decoding the 4 Steps:** The teacher introduces the **NVC Compass** (Observation, Feeling, Need, Request).
- **The "Toxic to Tonic" Lab:** Students work in pairs with the **Appendix 3 Worksheet**. They take "Toxic" phrases like *"You always ignore my messages on purpose!"* and translate them into "Tonic" NVC statements.
 - *Goal:* Practice saying: "When I see you haven't replied (O), I feel worried (F), because I need connection (N). Would you be willing to tell me why you're busy? (R)."

Phase 3: Peer Mediation "Fishbowl" (45 min)

- **Demonstration (10 min):** The teacher and two volunteers act out a conflict over a shared project grade. The teacher uses the **Mediation Script** to show how to guide the conversation.
- **Small Group Rotations (25 min):** Students divide into groups of three (A, B, and the Mediator). They use the **Role-Play Cards** to practice:
 - **Round 1:** The "Messy" Version (how they usually fight).
 - **Round 2:** The "Mediation" Version (using the script and NVC).
- **The "Feedback Loop" (10 min):** Mediators share the hardest part of the process. Usually, it's staying neutral!

Phase 4: Reflection & The "Peace Contract" (10 min)

- **The Quiet Minute:** Each student looks at the **Feelings & Needs Flashcards** and picks one "Need" they want to honor more in their class.
- **Closing:** Students sign a large "Peace Wall" or digital board, committing to one NVC "Request" they will use this week.
- **Erasmus+ Connection:** The teacher explains that their "Tonic" translations will be shared with the partners in Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia to create a "European Dictionary of Empathy."

7. NOTES FOR THE TEACHER (DIFFERENTIATION, RISKS)

- **Handling the "Cringe" Factor:**
 - **The Risk:** Students in this age group often find role-playing "embarrassing" or "fake."
 - **The Solution:** Use the **"Director" approach**. If a student is too shy to act, let them be the "Coach" or "Scriptwriter" for their group. They can sit behind the actors and whisper "NVC translations" into their ears. This keeps them engaged without the pressure of performing.
 - **Managing High-Tension Scenarios:**
 - **The Risk:** Real-life tensions between students might surface during the "Mediation" phase.
 - **The Solution:** Strictly, use the **Role-Play Cards** provided. Do not allow students to act out "real" current conflicts happening in the classroom until they have mastered the technique using fictional characters. Ensure the teacher remains a "floating supervisor" to step in if emotions get too high.
 - **Differentiation for Diverse Learners:**
 - **For Students with Social Anxiety:** Allow them to work on the "Toxic to Tonic" written worksheet (Appendix 3) individually or in pairs before asking for any verbal participation.
 - **For Gifted/Highly Verbal Students:** Challenge them to act as the "Master Mediators" for the whole class, or ask them to analyze more complex "mixed-feeling" scenarios (e.g., when someone feels both "relieved" and "guilty").
 - **Cultural Sensitivity:**
 - **The Note:** In some cultures, communication can be passionate and high-volume.
 - **The Solution:** Differentiate between **Volume** and **Violence**. Explain that NVC isn't about speaking quietly or being "robotic"; it's about the *content* of the message. You can be loud and passionate while still using "I-statements."
 - **The "Neutrality" Trap:**
 - **The Note:** Student mediators often want to "fix" the problem or take a side.
 - **The Solution:** Remind them that a mediator is like a **referee**, not a judge. Their job is to make sure the "rules of empathy" are followed, not to decide who is right.
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8. ASSESSMENT (Evidence of Learning)

To prove the impact of your workshop, use these evaluation methods:

- **Formative (During):** The "Observation vs. Evaluation" jump game (Section 6) provides immediate data on how many students understand the core cognitive concept.
- **Product-Based:** Collection of the **"Toxic to Tonic" Worksheets**. Look for the ability to correctly identify a "Need" without attacking the other person.

- **The "Mediation Rubric":** Use a simple 3-star scale for the role-play:
 1. Did they use an "I-statement"?
 2. Did the mediator identify the "Hidden Need"?
 3. Was a "Request" (not a demand) made?
- **Summative (After):** The **"Peace Contract" signature wall**. This serves as a qualitative "exit ticket" where students express their commitment to the project's values.

APPENDIXES (CONTENT PROPOSALS)

- **Appendix 1: The NVC "Compass" (Student Cheat Sheet)** A compact reference card outlining the four steps of Nonviolent Communication: Observation, Feeling, Need, and Request. It provides "phrase starters" to help students physically restructure their speech during high-pressure moments.
- **Appendix 2: The Peer Mediator's Script** A step-by-step guide for the student acting as the neutral third party. This script includes specific prompts for opening the session, facilitating active listening between parties, and guiding them toward a "Peace Contract" or mutual agreement.
- **Appendix 3: High School Role-Play Cards** A set of localized conflict scenarios specifically tailored to the social realities of 9th and 10th graders. These cover modern issues like social media misunderstandings, group project tensions, and peer exclusion, providing a safe "laboratory" for practice.
- **Appendix 4: The "Iceberg" Conflict Worksheet** A visual mapping tool used to deconstruct a conflict. It helps students identify visible "surface" behaviors (aggression, silence) and link them to the "submerged" unmet needs (respect, safety, inclusion), fostering deep critical thinking and empathy.

APPENDIX 1: THE NVC "COMPASS" (Cheat Sheet)

Print this on small cards for every student.

Step	Goal	Phrase Starter
1. Observation	Describe the facts without judgment.	"When I see/hear..."
2. Feeling	State your emotion (not your opinion).	"I feel..."
3. Need	Identify the value or requirement.	"Because I need/value..."
4. Request	Ask for a specific, positive action.	"Would you be willing to...?"

APPENDIX 2: THE MEDIATOR'S SCRIPT

Print this on a clipboard for the student playing the "Mediator" role.

Step 1: The Opening

- "Thank you both for being here. My goal is to help you hear each other. I won't take sides. Ready?"

Step 2: Hearing Student A

- "Student A, what happened (Observation)? How do you feel? What do you need?"
- *To Student B:* "Can you repeat back what you heard Student A say?"

Step 3: Hearing Student B

- "Student B, what is your perspective? How do you feel? What do you need?"
- *To Student A:* "Can you repeat back what you heard Student B say?"

Step 4: Finding the Bridge

- "It sounds like you both need [e.g., Respect/Clarity]. What can we do to make that happen?"

Step 5: The Agreement

- "What is one small thing you are both willing to do today?"

APPENDIX 3: ROLE-PLAY SITUATIONS (High School Context)

Cut these into cards. Each group draws one.

- **Situation 1: The Group Chat "Seen"** Student A is upset because Student B read their message in the "Good-Friends" Whatsapp group but didn't reply for two days. Student A called him/her "arrogant" in front of the class.
- **Situation 2: The Project Slacker** Students are working on a presentation for the Erasmus+ project. Student A did all the research, while Student B spent the workshop time on TikTok. A confrontation starts near the computers.
- **Situation 3: The "Borrowed" Hoodie** Student A borrowed a favorite sweatshirt from Student B and returned it with a small stain. Student B is shouting that Student A is "disrespectful and messy."
- **Situation 4: The Misunderstood Comment** Student A made a joke about Student B's grades. Student B felt humiliated because they have been studying hard. Now they are refusing to sit next to each other.

APPENDIX 4: THE "ICEBERG" WORKSHEET

Use this for Phase 1 (The Hook).

The Surface (What we see): Shouting, eye-rolling, social media blocking, gossip.

The Submerged Part (What we need):

- **Autonomy** (to choose for myself)
- **Belonging** (to be part of the group)

- Clarity (to understand what is happening)
- Dignity (to be treated with respect)
- Empathy (to be understood)

APPENDIX 5: THE PEACE CONTRACT

(Print one for each student on A5 paper)

MY PERSONAL PEACE CONTRACT

Communication for a Better School

1. TODAY I DISCOVERED...

(Reflecting on the "Iceberg")

What is a need I often hide behind my anger?

2. MY NVC SUPERPOWER

Which of the 4 steps (OFNR) do I find easiest?

Observation Feeling Need Request

3. THE "TONIC" CHALLENGE

Think of a "Toxic" phrase you've used lately.

Rewrite it here as a respectful "I-Statement":

4. MY COMMITMENT TO THE TEAM

In the next conflict, I promise to:

Stop and breathe (Pause)

Use an "I-Statement"

Ask the other person: "What do you need?"

"Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means."

Signed: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 6: THE "PEACE WALL" (Large Format)

This is a collaborative activity for the end of the workshop.

Instructions:

1. Place a large sheet of paper (A1 or flipchart size) on the wall.
2. At the center, write the project title:

"Education through Empathy: Together against violence: ...Place.. 2026".

3. Each student, after signing their individual **Peace Contract**, comes to the wall and writes one **Universal Need** they want their school to provide (e.g., *Safety, Respect, Listening, Belonging*).
4. **Final Photo:** Take a group photo with the students and the Wall as evidence for your Erasmus+ dissemination (with parental consent).

PROPOSED EVALUATION SHEET FOR THE TEACHER

Project: Education through Empathy: Together against violence

Scenario: Nonviolent Communication and Conflict Mediation (Greece)

Class: _____ **Date:** _____ **Location:** _____

ACTIVITY EVALUATION:

1. Activation - The "Iceberg" & Judgment Jump:

- **Student participation:** High Medium Low
- **Distinction between Observation/Evaluation:** Excellent Good Needs improvement

2. NVC "Translation" Workshop:

- **Accuracy in using the 4 steps (OFNR):** High Partial Low
- **Ability to identify "Hidden Needs":** Deep Superficial Struggled

3. Peer Mediation Simulations (Fishbowl/Groups):

- **Student engagement in roles:** High Medium Low
- **Mediator's ability to remain neutral:** Very Neutral Mostly Neutral Took Sides
- **Quality of de-escalation solutions:** Realistic & Creative General Weak

4. Effective Use of "I-Statements":

- **Linguistic precision:** Excellent Good Difficult for students

5. Reflection & Peace Contract:

- **Depth of individual commitment:** Deep Superficial Uninterested

OVERALL IMPACT:

- **Did the workshop reach the intended objectives?** Fully Partially Not yet
- **I would use this mediation scenario again:** Definitely Maybe No

Notes on what worked well (e.g., specific role-plays, student breakthroughs):

Notes on what to improve (e.g., timing, handling "cringe" or tension):

Teacher's Signature: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TEACHER REGARDING APPENDICES

- **Pre-Lesson Preparation:**
 - **Appendices 1, 2, 3, and 5** should be printed in sufficient quantities (one per student or one per group as specified) before the session begins.
 - **Appendix 4 (The Iceberg)** and **Appendix 6 (The Peace Wall)** should be printed in a **larger format (A3 or flipchart size)** to allow for collective brainstorming and visual impact.
- **Visual Customization:**
 - While the NVC steps are structured, the **Role-Play Cards (Appendix 3)** can be updated with names or specific locations familiar to your Kavala students to make them more relatable.
 - Ensure all materials are modern and visually clean; for Grades 9-10, avoid "childish" clip art and focus on professional, infographic-style designs.
- **Technology Integration:**
 - If your workshop room has a projector, keep the **NVC Compass (Appendix 1)** displayed on the screen throughout the role-play phase as a "live" reference for students who may get stuck.
- **Project Documentation & Exhibition:**
 - After the workshop, the "**Peace Wall**" (**Appendix 6**) can be displayed in the common area of the Workshop Center or the participating school's hallway as part of the Erasmus+ dissemination.
 - Take high-quality photos of the completed **Iceberg Worksheets** and the **Peace Contract** signatures (ensuring GDPR compliance/parental consent) to upload to the project's TwinSpace or website.
- **Student Portfolios:**
 - Students should keep their signed **Peace Contracts (Appendix 5)**. We recommend they file them in their "Personal Skills Portfolio" as evidence of their training in conflict mediation and emotional intelligence.
- **The Teacher's Role:**
 - Act as a **facilitator and coach**, not a lecturer. In the peer mediation phase, move between groups but only intervene if a conflict becomes "real" or if a student mediator is significantly struggling to stay neutral.