

MODULE 4

PROMOTING EMPATHY AND INCLUSION THROUGH BLENDED EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

General Description

1. Overview and Context

This 90-minute module supports primary teachers (working with pupils aged 6–9) in promoting **inclusion and empathy** through **blended educational practices**. It aligns with the **SIEMDig Project outputs**, emphasizing inclusive blended pedagogy and emotional intelligence as core elements of 21st-century education. The module aims to empower teachers with **practical strategies and tools** to identify exclusion and build emotional and social competencies and enable them to foster emotional intelligence and social inclusion through structured, age-appropriate learning methods.

It contributes to the broader SIEMDig goal of strengthening inclusive blended education by providing teachers with **pedagogical and emotional insight**, particularly in the context of primary learners' social-emotional development.

2. Learning/ Training Objectives

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- Explain how pupils aged 6-9 process emotions and form social relationships.
- Recognize and address exclusionary behaviours in blended learning environments.
- Design inclusive, age-appropriate blended activities that build empathy and emotional self-awareness.

3. Learning Outcomes & Competences Developed

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

Knowledge	Understand the emotional and social development stages of 6–9-year-olds and define key concepts of inclusion and emotional intelligence.
Skills	Analyse signs of exclusion in classroom dynamics, apply inclusive digital strategies and design blended activities promoting empathy.
Attitudes	Value the role of emotional intelligence in teaching and show empathy and reflective practice in supporting inclusion.

Key Competences Developed

- **Digital literacy:** Use of blended tools (e.g. Genially, Wordwall, Padlet, Flip, Jamboard) for inclusive teaching.
- **Inclusive pedagogy:** Design of emotionally supportive learning activities.
- **Emotional intelligence:** Building empathy and self-awareness among learners.
- **Storytelling for learning:** Use of scenarios and case studies to teach empathy.
- **Collaboration & reflection:** Peer-sharing, group discussion, and reflective journaling.

4. Methodology and Pedagogical Approach

The module follows a **blended, experiential learning** model combining direct instruction, collaborative tasks, scenario analysis, and hands-on practice. Teachers actively engage through reflection, group discussion, and co-design. The approach includes:

- **Experiential Learning:** Real-world scenarios, guided design activities.
- **Peer Collaboration:** Breakout discussions and co-creation.
- **Inclusivity Embedded:** Focus on accessible tools and social-emotional learning strategies.

5. Key Resources, Tools and Support Materials

- **SIEMDig Resources:**
 - IDS Platform
 - Repository of Inclusive Practices
 - Inclusion Guide
 - Rubric for Evaluating Inclusive Activities
- **Templates:**
 - Activity design worksheet
 - Reflection prompts
- **Digital Tools:**
 - Genially, Wordwall, Canva
 - Book Creator

Module Activities Structure

Part A – Introductory Activities

Purpose: Create interest, connect with real-life teaching, activate prior knowledge.

- **Icebreaker:** Invite teachers to “make a mark” on a blank page—any scribble, doodle, or symbol. Display them anonymously.
- **Discussion:** How did it feel to make something with no rules? How does this connect to children’s sense of self-worth?

Possible answers and their connection to children’s feelings and self-worth:

1. Liberating / Fun

- *“It felt freeing, I didn’t have to worry about being right or wrong.”*
- *“It was playful, I could just express myself.”*
 📌 Connection: Children thrive when they’re allowed to explore without fear of judgment—this builds confidence and risk-taking.

2. Uncomfortable / Awkward

- *“I wasn’t sure what to do, I felt a bit silly.”*
- *“It was strange not having rules—I wanted more direction.”*
 📌 Connection: Some children also feel insecure in open-ended tasks. With support, they can move from discomfort to growth.

3. Self-Conscious / Hesitant

- *“I worried if mine would look ‘good enough.’”*
- *“I compared myself to what others might be drawing.”*
 📌 Connection: Children often measure themselves against peers, which can erode self-worth. Positive affirmation helps shift focus to effort rather than comparison.

4. Empowered / Creative

- *“I felt proud that I could make something unique.”*
- *“I realized there’s no wrong answer, and that was powerful.”*
 📌 Connection: When children experience success in a judgment-free task, they internalize self-belief and resilience.

How to Guide the Discussion

- Highlight the range of feelings (some enjoyed freedom, some felt uncomfortable).
- Emphasize that children will feel the same mix—some will blossom, some will shrink back.
- Connect it to teaching practice: *“Our role is to notice those who shrink back and gently guide them toward growth and self-belief.”*

Part B – Core Development Activities

Purpose: Deepen understanding, explore SIEMDig resources, and apply in classroom contexts.

- Celebrate the International Dot Day (<https://www.internationaldotday.org/>), by introducing *The Dot* book as the anchor text (*The Dot* tells the heartwarming story of a compassionate teacher who challenges a hesitant student to believe in her own abilities by encouraging her to take the first brave step and “make her mark.” What begins as a simple dot on a blank page blossoms into a powerful journey of confidence, courage, and self-discovery. This small act sparks a ripple effect, inspiring people of all ages around the world). Every year, International Dot Day celebrates this message of creativity and growth. What started as a story in a book has grown into a global movement, transforming classrooms and communities as people everywhere embrace the limitless possibilities of imagination and creative expression.

- **Short introduction of Peter H. Reynolds, the author of the book**
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPek3VK7Iac>) - 2:00
- **Read-Aloud:** Share *The Dot* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sg-aGFsOk1I>)- 3:30
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - What role did the teacher play in Vashti’s emotional growth?
 - How did inclusion change Vashti’s self-concept?

Recognizing and Addressing Exclusion

- **Case Reflection:** Vashti begins by excluding herself—how do students do this in real classrooms (e.g., “I’m not good at drawing”)?
- **Small Group Task:**
 - List common moments of exclusion (academic, social, or emotional).

Part C – Practical/ Hands-on Application

Purpose: Try out tools and design inclusive learning scenarios with guided support.

Activity 1: <https://wordwall.net/play/97428/165/804> The Dot Day - Fostering Empathy and Inclusion - Multiple choice questions

Activity 2: <https://wordwall.net/play/97429/969/451> The Dot Day - Fostering Empathy and Inclusion - Spin the wheel

Activity 3: “The T-shirt with the Magic Dot”

Objectives: To develop creativity and imagination through artistic expression/ to express personal, original ideas based on the same visual stimulus (the dot); to show a positive attitude and openness toward their own creation and the creations of others.

Activity Steps: The teacher briefly tells the story of *The Dot* (in an adapted summary), then engages the children in a conversation about it by asking questions such as: “What does it mean to leave a mark?”, “How can a simple dot become something special?” Afterwards, each child receives a T-shirt with a dot drawn in the middle. The teacher explains that this dot is their starting point for creating a drawing. They can imagine the dot as an eye, a planet, the center of a flower, etc. – they decide what it will become. The students then paint or draw on the T-shirt, integrating the dot into their creation. When they finish, the children put on their T-shirts and parade them in front of the class. Each child explains in a few words what the dot represented to them and how they transformed it.

Activity 4: <https://view.genially.com/68bb06e1c65fd7eb743dbbd0/interactive-content-dots-flipcards>
Dots Flipcards. Procedure: Pupils will be shown a small part of a picture and they will have to make guesses about the full picture. Afterwards, they are divided into groups and asked which of them can’t draw. That particular pupil will be asked to try drawing one of the full pictures in the flipcards, starting from a dot (e.g. the dot may be a seed and the final drawing should resemble a sunflower; the dot may be a black spot and the final drawing should resemble a dalmatian dog etc). They will be helped by the ones in the group who are better in drawing.
How to draw a sunflower from dots: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5fes42xDgY>
How to draw a watermelon slice : <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/vXUiDwFQ74M>
How to draw a strawberry: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/RS4U4qpA9To>

Connect the dots drawing – strawberry:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSjvolgXUP4>

Activity 5: <https://wordwall.net/resource/96944506/dot-flashcards> Dot Flashcards

Activity 6: **Objectives:** to stimulate creativity and critical thinking starting from the graphic representation of a point; to raise awareness about the impact of empathy and inclusion on personal development; to increase students' self-esteem.

Description: 1. The activity begins with a short presentation, “*The Story of the Lonely Dot*”, in which a dot on a sheet of paper felt small and insignificant. It wanted to play with the other geometric figures, but they ignored it. The Circle came to its aid, understanding its sadness. The Circle had the courage to tell the other geometric figures that without the dot, they could not draw anything, and without it, the game would have no meaning. The figures realized that it was right and acknowledged the dot’s value. This is how they learned that **empathy** means feeling what the other feels, and **inclusion** means inviting them into your game. A discussion is held about what empathy and inclusion mean and how they contribute together to the development of our character. Real-life examples are given, both from school and outside of it. The game “*Promoting Empathy and Inclusion*” on **Wordwall** is used.

Game: *Creating friendship dots.* Each child receives a small circle on which they write a message about empathy and another about inclusion. Then, they offer it to a classmate they chose before the game began. Discussions follow about how they felt when giving and receiving the dots. **Empathy is the heart that feels, and inclusion is the hand that welcomes.**

A circle is drawn on a flipchart sheet with the words “*The Circle of Friendship – Our Dots Together*”, where the received dots are stuck. A comparison is made between the colors of the dots and the different personalities of the children which, together, form a complete and attractive whole. The activity continues with each pupil creating a representative drawing, starting from a single point in the middle of an A4 sheet, titled “*My Representative Point*”. Finally, a poster will be created in **Canva** with photos taken during the activity!

Activity 7: “Dot-to-poem Challenge” - it emphasizes how a simple dot can spark literary imagination and it also encourages shy pupils to speak in front of an audience.

Pupils are divided into pairs. Each pair draws a card on which a word is written or an image is shown. They are asked to write or recite two lines (including the word DOT) based on that word or image. They will have more fun if they dress up according to the theme of the activity. Pupils who are generally afraid to speak in public are encouraged to recite the lines as if they were actors on a stage.

Ex. of lines: A clown’s red nose and dots so bright/Bring laughter and fun with pure delight.

Minnie Mouse with dots so sweet/On her bow and shoes, a cheerful treat.

A ladybug’s dots are tiny and bright/ Spreading good luck as it takes flight.

Part D – Evaluation and Reflection

Purpose: Assess participant learning and encourage professional reflection.

- Think of one pupil who reminds you of Vashti. What is one step you can take next week to affirm that child or the step you already took in the past to help them grow and get confident about themselves?

Closure/ Reflection/ Evaluation

Closure and Takeaways

Summary discussion, participant takeaways, follow-up resources, and reflection. (linked to Part D – Evaluation and Reflection)

- Teachers make their own “signature dots” as a takeaway (like Vashti at the end).

Evaluation

Description of module evaluation process and tools (linked to Part D – Evaluation and Reflection)

Annexes

Annexes related to Module

Include annexed documents related to the module (e.g., exercise sheet, evaluation rubric, etc.).