Module 5: How to Start a Conversation in the Classroom about Cyberbullying

INNOHUB

July 2022

Contents

Introduction to the module

Objective of the module

When considering how to introduce the topic of cyberbullying in the classroom, two positions have to be taken into account: that of the VET teacher and that of the VET learner.

This module will provide practical tips, useful information and tools for teachers to introduce the topic of cyberbullying to students. The aim is to help teachers and students to create a safe space to express themselves and communicate, a space where they can embrace vulnerability and talk about sensitive issues such as cyberbullying.

In this module we will look at the basics for establishing a good foundation for open communication in the classroom, and offer advice on how to identify toxic behaviour and practical exercises for talking about cyberbullying, how to ask for help and how to encourage students to do so, the importance of emotional intelligence, and, finally, general advice on how to stop cyberbullying.

Description of the module

Content / Activity	Method / Advice / Tips	Training Equipment / Materials / Tools	Timing
How to start a conversation in the classroom about cyberbullying.	This module includes both a theoretical part focused on VET teachers to consolidate the necessary foundations to establish good communication in the classroom regarding cyberbullying. In sections 1 and 2 we will learn how to engage students in conversation, laying the proper foundation and also teaching the importance of asking for help. Also included are two group dynamics in section 3 as well as videos and recommended readings for reinforcement if deemed necessary.	Pen for the students and a blackboard for the teacher for the practical exercises. If necessary, this module can be printed and given to the students as a lesson handout.	One hour and a half

1. How to engage students in the conversation: laying the foundations.

Cyberbullying is a very sensitive topic and talking about it can be particularly difficult for students, as they may feel very exposed and afraid. In order to be able to talk about cyberbullying, it is necessary to create a comfortable atmosphere in which both teachers and students do not feel pressured or judged.

This requires teachers to take the initiative to establish a good educational environment. Once the issue of cyberbullying has been addressed, it is interesting to dive into **some tools that can be used to address the issue**:

- **Building open communication**: one of the biggest and best benefits of maintaining an open communication system with teachers and schools is that everyone feels valued. People need to feel heard in order to feel appreciated. Having an open communication system makes this even easier.

Before addressing complex issues such as cyberbullying, it is necessary to encourage open communication in general. It is important not to ignore or miscommunicate what your students have to say as it will directly affect their attitudes. For example, if you, as a teacher, raise concerns about cyberbullying in class in a hesitant and indirect way, your students will ignore them and be completely indifferent to the issue. But, at the same time, if you listen to their concerns without judgement, communicate with them and understand them properly, you will make them feel cared for and appreciated, just as you, as a teacher, will feel valued and fulfilled.

Moreover, open communication encourages conflict resolution and will make it easier for your students to adapt to new protocols and rules, in this case, the implicit measures to prevent and stop cyberbullying and all other forms of bullying.

Conflicts in the classroom are easily and quickly resolved when everyone communicates well and when a case of cyberbullying has been detected among any of the participants

in the classroom, it is important to address the problem with empathy and good communication is placed, try to resolve the issue with school and state resources.

- Empathy: is about reading the emotional atmosphere surrounding people. It is about putting oneself in other people's shoes, negotiating and interacting sensitively with others without offending or hurting them, and caring about their feelings, as that would lead one to understand another person's feelings. Empathy presupposes the notion that human beings are capable of interacting and developing emotional bonds with their environment and fellow human beings.

Developing empathy is key as this will lead teachers to understand the inner world of their students, their emotions and the meanings that experiences take on for them. The genuine empathy that a teacher must acquire facilitates understanding and focuses on their pupils' problems, such as cyberbullying.

To be familiar with empathy, one must be committed to one's own growth and self-knowledge. That is, the more aware we are of our emotions and feelings and recognise the processes involved in regulating them, the more we are able to understand them. Self-confidence, self-esteem, etc. are the first qualities of individuals that are affected when they are victims of cyberbullying or any other type of bullying, and identifying this is easier when one can recognise these emotions in oneself.

- Emotional Intelligence: is the basis of our psychological well-being, which helps the harmonious and balanced development of our personality. It is important to foster and develop emotional intelligence in the classroom in the following ways:

1.   Detecting the emotion behind your actions.

2.   Expanding the emotional vocabulary in the classroom.

3.   Not judging the way we feel.

4.   Interpreting body language messages.

5.   Identifying our thoughts to control our behaviours.

6.   Understanding the 'why' of others.

7.   Keeping an emotional diary.

8.   Expressing emotions in a clear way.

Therefore, the general **keys** for how to involve pupils in the conversation are:

1- Listen emotionally to your students: listen to the problems they express without interrupting them, and stay by their side. In this way, they will learn to listen to their own emotions and those of others, thus laying the foundations for the development of empathy.

In short, focus on understanding the other person rather than judging them.

2-Active listening: teach them to listen to their partner not only by paying attention to what they say, but above all to how they say it, focusing on discovering the emotion they feel, the gestures they make, their tone of voice, etc.

3-Sharing dynamics or practices to encourage peaceful conflict resolution.

4- Train the ability to understand one's own emotions as a basis for understanding the emotions of others.

5- Avoid relativising the other person's problem. What is relevant is whether it is important to them and not what we think of it.

6- Do not jump to conclusions or resort to simplistic explanations.

2. Teaching the importance of asking for help

Not asking for help can affect students' academic performance and self-esteem. The good news is that there are strategies that can help them become self-advocates and improve their learning.

Students must first acknowledge that they are struggling. This requires **honesty** and **self-awareness** since some students do not believe they need help.

Once students recognise that they are struggling, they may feel embarrassed. They fear that asking for help indicates weakness or failure of character, even though teachers tell them that asking for help is instead a sign of maturity and strength.

3 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ASKING FOR HELP SKILLS

1. Asking open-ended questions about their learning helps students learn to assess their progress and identify areas in which they are strong and those in which they need support.

For example, some examples of questions that encourage self-awareness are questions with these approaches:

- How do you think you are doing in this subject? How do you know? How does this compare with the grades you have received so far?

- Can you identify a strategy you have been using that has helped you succeed? Can you identify a strategy you would like to try more often?

2. Help students understand that teachers want to help.

To raise awareness, you can directly ask students why an adult chooses to teach as a career, which can be an eye-opening activity.

Have students pause and reflect in small groups on why they think you became a teacher. Guide students to the final answer: Teachers become teachers because they like to help.

3.Create a safe environment. Students must feel safe to be honest enough to ask for help.

As a teacher you should foster a climate of curiosity, risk-taking and openness. You can use team-building activities to increase the sense of community in the classroom, create posters that reiterate classroom rules and values, or hang inspirational quotes on the walls.

3. Additional resources and practical activities to start the conversation in the classroom about cyberbullying.

At the end of this document, you will find two practical dynamics to introduce the topic of cyberbullying in the classroom and raise awareness about this sensitive issue. The exercises are as follows:

1. MYTHS ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

2. A SITUATION OF REJECTION

In addition, some videos and articles have been included to share with students in order to bring the topic of cyberbullying to the table, discuss it, and mainly raise awareness and prevent it.

Test

1. For establishing a positive classroom atmosphere, teachers should:

a)   build open communication

b)   foster empathy and emotional intelligence

c)   both options are correct

2. Emotional intelligence can be developed:

a)   By thinking and not listening to body language messages.

b)   By not judging the way we feel and identifying our thoughts to control our behaviours.

c)   None of the above

True/False Questions

3.To be familiar with empathy, one must be committed to one's own growth and self-knowledge

True

False

4.One of the biggest and best benefits of maintaining an open communication system with teachers and schools is that everyone feels valued

True

False

5.Students are not required to first acknowledge that they are struggling.

True

False

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES and PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES to start the conversation in the classroom about cyberbullying

PRACTICAL EXERCISES: Extended Version

DYNAMIC NAME: MYTHS ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

SOURCE: http://ehu.eus/ikastorratza/12_alea/taller.pdf

Objectives:

- To make students aware of the danger involved in the use of new technologies.

 - To reduce the vulnerability of adolescents and young adults to new technologies.

- To make young people aware of the consequences of cyberbullying.

- To stimulate the search for help when users find themselves in a compromised or uncomfortable digital situation.

-To encourage communication about cyberbullying in the classroom.

Group organization: individual student decision activity within the group. After each sentence, the teacher asks each student to justify his/her answer. When all have done so, the teacher facilitates a discussion among them about their ideas, and clarifies and explains the meaning of the sentence.

Development of the activity: This dynamic requires the users to stand up and move around the classroom. The teacher should say a statement about cyberbullying and the students will stand on the left side of the class if they agree with it, or on the right side if they think the statement is false. The answers must be justified, and the person in charge of the activity will explain the answers. If necessary, concepts will be clarified.

Materials: Student handout and pens.

MYTHS ABOUT CYBERBULLYING: MATERIAL FOR STUDENTS

Read the following sentences carefully and decide if you think they are true or false, providing a reason for your answer. Afterwards, the teacher will read them and students will have to stand on the left side of the class if they agree with the sentence, or on the right side if they disagree. They will then have to justify their decisions out loud and discuss them with the teacher as a whole class, one by one.

Statements about cyberbullying:

➢ *Cyberbullying is a crime.*
➢ *If someone is bullying or insulting you, you can block the sender as unwanted and you will not receive any more messages.*
➢ *If cyberbullying is done anonymously, it is impossible to know who is doing it.*
➢ *If someone insults or threatens you on the Internet, the best thing to do is to reply or delete the messages.*
➢ *Cyberbullying ends with the passage of time. If you report it, it will be worse.*
➢ *Cyberbullying has consequences for the aggressor and the victim.*

MYTHS ABOUT CYBERBULLYING: MATERIAL FOR THE TEACHER

Claims about cyberbullying:

 - *Cyberbullying is a crime.*

True. It is not a joke, not funny. It is a crime that can have legal consequences for whoever does it.

-If someone is bullying or insulting you, you can block the sender as unwanted and they will not receive any more messages.

 True, you need to act as soon as possible. This type of behavior should not be tolerated. Both social networks and chat rooms have blocking devices to prevent annoying users.

 -If cyberbullying is done anonymously, it is impossible to know who is doing it.

False, it is true that on the Internet many people use nicks - nicknames - and often invent false profiles and personal characteristics. Sometimes this anonymity can encourage aggressive attitudes on the part of people who believe themselves to be

anonymous. However, it is quite easy to identify the address from which messages are sent. The IP address of our computer is like our ID card. Moreover, even if the messages are sent from Internet cafés or school computers, it is still easy to recognize the person behind them, since real data is always requested to use public computers.

- If someone insults or threatens you on the Internet, the best thing to do is to reply or delete the messages.

False. Some recommended guidelines:

- Do not reply to messages that try to intimidate you or make you feel bad. By doing so, you will probably encourage the harasser.
- Save the message. You don't have to read it, but keep it as proof of the harassment. It is vital to have a record of the incident in case you seek help or intend to report it.
- Tell someone you trust. Talking to your parents, friends, a teacher, the school warden, the grade level or an organization that can help you is the first step you should take.
- Block the sender. You don't have to put up with someone who is harassing you. - Report the problems to people who can do something about it. You can take control of the situation by not putting up with offensive content.
- Respect others and respect yourself. Being online means you are in a place where information is made public, even if it doesn't always seem that way. Know your rights.

- Cyberbullying ends with the passage of time. If you report it, it will be worse.

False, it is the lack of denunciation that makes it easier for the aggressor to maintain the harassment. The most effective way to stop cyberbullying is to tell someone who can help you. It is not a practical joke that the aggressor will get tired of after a while.

- Cyberbullying has consequences for both the bully and the victim.

True. We are not only referring to the legal consequences of committing a crime. The victim may suffer from psychological and physical illnesses, such as: depression, school phobia, anxiety, learning disorders, headache, abdominal pain, etc. But there are also

studies that show that the aggressor may also suffer from anxiety, behavioral disorders and low self-esteem.

NAME OF THE DYNAMIC: A SITUATION OF REJECTION

SOURCE: https://convivencia.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/programa_ed-emocionalprevencion_violencia-1c-esocaruana2004322p.pdf

Objectives:

- To reflect on a situation in which one is rejected and to analyse the underlying feelings in that situation.

- To analyse different techniques for resolving problematic situations; different ways of responding to rejection.

- Stimulate empathy with peers who feel rejected.

- Develop emotional skills such as empathy, communication and problem solving.

Organisation of the group: Small groups of 4-5 students (indicative).

Development of the activity: A story is presented to the class. The class is then divided into groups of 5-6 students, who will have to draw up a list of all the ways they can think of to solve the situation presented in the story. They have to reason why they have chosen, from the alternatives proposed, the solution they consider to be the most appropriate. Next, each group, with a previously chosen spokesperson, should comment on: the different solutions proposed, the alternative selected and the reasoning behind the choice. Finally, a debate will be opened among the whole class, where there will be a series of questions.

Materials:

Worksheets with the story and the questions, for each group. Pen for the students and a blackboard for the teacher.

Remarks:

The tutor can create new rejection situations or use situations that have occurred at some point in the classroom, to make them closer to the learner. However, if real situations are used, it is important to guarantee the confidentiality of the people who have been in the refusal situation.

A SITUATION OF REJECTION: MATERIAL FOR THE LEARNER

(1) ROSANA'S STORY Rosana is a student in the last year of secondary school. Although she has never had any problems with her studies, lately she has been distracted but motivated, and is starting to miss some classes. The teachers have noticed that her classmates do not allow her to participate in group activities. They prefer not to sit next to her, they do not want to do work with her and in the cafeteria, she is often alone. When you ask her classmates individually, they all answer that they have no problem with Rosana; they say that if they do not interact with her, it is for fear that the rest of the group will also reject them when they see them together. This situation is not new, but has been going on for several months.

A SITUATION OF REJECTION: STUDENT MATERIAL

Questions about Rosana's Story:

- How do you think Rosana feels about this situation?
- How long do you think a situation like this can be endured?
- What could she do to feel more integrated in her group?
- Are the different alternative solutions proposed equally valid?
- Do you think that an individual solution can be found by a single person, or that it requires the commitment of the whole group?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Below you can find some links to videos and important readings to share with students:

- Video: *Stop Cyberbullying before the damage is done:*
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ps3Cefys0Kc&t=397s
- *Video: Rethink Before You Type:*
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkzwHuf6C2U
- Definitions and Statistics:
  https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/cyberbullying/

Sources

- https://habilidadsocial.com/como-desarrollar-la-inteligencia-emocional/
- https://www.tuclase.cl/2019/08/20/ensenar-a-los-estudiantes-como-pedir-ayuda/#:~:text=Como%20docente%20debes%20fomentar%20un,citas%20inspiradoras%20en%20las%20paredes.
- https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying#11
- https://lamenteesmaravillosa.com/por-que-son-importantes-la-confianza-y-la-autoestima/
- https://www.salud180.com/maternidad-e-infancia/ciberbullying-mata-la-autoestima-de-adolescentes
- https://www.hacerfamilia.com/psicologia/noticia-personas-toxicas-aprende-reconocerlas-20160125100849.html
- https://www.hacerfamilia.com/adolescentes/adolescentes-toxicos-acosadores-bullying-acoso-escolar-ciberbullying-20170612122242.html
- https://www.universidadinsurgentes.edu.mx/blog/como-reconocer-senales-de-bullying
- https://www.psicoactiva.com/test/test-de-inteligencia-emocional.htm
- https://liderazgoparticipativo.anel.es/blog/la-comunicacion-abierta-directa-rapida-genera-confianza-en-la-direccion-y-en-los-empleados-de-la-organizacion/
- https://www.commonsense.org/education/articles/teachers-essential-guide-to-cyberbullying-prevention
- https://blog.up.edu.mx/prepaup/importancia-empatia-alumno-profesor
- https://blog.up.edu.mx/prepaup/importancia-empatia-alumno-profesor

- https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/info-facts.asp
- https://www.proactivehm.com.au/why-is-asking-for-help-a-good-idea/
- https://www.cybersmile.org/advice-help/category/who-to-call

https://www.tuclase.cl/2019/08/20/ensenar-a-los-estudiantes-como-pedir-ayuda/#:~:text=Como%20docente%20debes%20fomentar%20un,citas%20inspiradoras%20en%20las%20paredes.

Fighting cyberbullying by identifying it in the VET classroom

(2021-1-ES01-KA220-VET-000034210)

Co-funded by the European Union