

# EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO EXAMPLE



## Identification of the educational scenario

### 1.1 Title of the scenario

**“ RIGHT TO SILENCE AND FREEDOM OF OPINION”**

### 1.2 Creator

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School: University of Florence

### 1.3 Topics or courses involved

History of the media, Literature, Philosophy

### 1.4 Educational level

Primary school: 9-11 years old

### 1.5 Learning outcomes of the scenario

Based on the Council of Europe Framework, at the end of the course/ scenario, students are expected to have acquired the skills that will enable them to:

- Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
- Valuing cultural diversity
- Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law
- Skills of listening and observing
- Co-operation skills

## 1.6 Time-duration

Class time: 6 hours (3 sessions)

Outdoor preparation: 3 hours

How many hours to be used in total: 9 hours



## Development of the educational scenario

### 2.1 General description

#### 1. Warm up

The following questions aim to open up reflections on the function of information in a society or small community.

#### **Questions to introduce and explore the topic**

What does information mean?

Why does it seem today that especially in social media we feel compelled to express our idea?

Is what we read on Facebook, listen to on radio or television always true?

Is it possible to have an idea about everything?

Are the opinions and opinions of people all the same?

Who is silent and does not express himself on a topic, why does he do it?

What does it mean to be silent?

What does it mean to be informed about something?

How long does it take to inquire?

Who allows citizens to be informed?

And in the group of your friends how does the information arrive?

## 2. Discussion

The facilitators share with the students the reading of *The Emperor's New Suit* by Andersen. (worksheet 1)

### 3 Exploration of binary oppositions

#### Binary opposition 1:

**Is it right to lie publicly, knowing that you are doing it, to safeguard your own and others' good?**

#### 3a. Discussion

The facilitators propose a collective discussion through the use of questions. (worksheet 2)

Division in small groups aimed at re-writing and re-interpreting of fairy tales in a contemporary fashion (worksheet 2)

Collective sharing of fairy tales (worksheet 2)

#### 3b. Theater

Children are asked to represent the fairy tale in the original version and in one of the versions elaborated in the previous phase of working in small groups.

The weavers, the emperor and the child must always be represented (worksheet 3).

In addition to this specific staging, the teacher can choose whether and when, along the entire learning path, to offer students specific short-lived theatrical games (worksheet 4) to facilitate mutual knowledge and interpersonal relationships.

#### 3c Debriefing

Children who will face this path will need a collective moment of elaboration and sharing. Facilitators can guide the collective discussion by imagining the production of materials to leave in the classroom. (worksheet 5)

### **3d. Dialectical Discussion to explore**

The facilitators lead the discussion to bring the participants' attention to the different points of view that are expressed, always underlining in positive terms the parts of the discussion that can lead to a synthesis. (worksheet 6)

### **3e. Personalization and action plan**

At the end of the activity, participants will be asked to write the questions that have been answered in their notebook. After that, the students are divided into couples and each couple hypothesises in writing their own action plan with respect to the exercise of their own and others' right to silence in their context (e.g. class, school, peer groups, etc.). In particular they decide what could be done and who could do it. (worksheet 7)

## **Conclusions**

### **2.2 Worksheets & Resources**

**Worksheet 1** Extract from the *The Emperor's New Suit* by Andersen

**Worksheet 2:** Structure of the discussion activity with materials to be produced and questions.

**Worksheet 3:** Context, materials and setting indications on theatrical improvisation.

**Worksheet 4:** Theatrical games

**Worksheet 5:** questions for debriefing

**Worksheet 6:** questions for dialectical discussion

**Worksheet 7:** materials for personal processing

## **WORKSHEET 1**

*The Emperor's New is the title of a Danish fairy tale written by Hans Christian Andersen and published for the first time in 1837 in the volume Eventyr, Fortalte for Børn (Fairy tales, told for children). The original title is Keiserens Nye Klæder.*

Many years ago lived an emperor, who thought so much of new clothes that he spent all his money in order to obtain them; his only ambition was to be always well dressed. He did not care for his soldiers, and the theatre did not amuse him; the only thing, in fact, he thought anything of was to drive out and show a new suit of clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and as one would say of a king "He is in his cabinet," so one could say of him, "The emperor is in his dressing-room."

The great city where he resided was very gay; every day many strangers from all parts of the globe arrived. One day two swindlers came to this city; they made people believe that they were weavers, and declared they could manufacture the finest cloth to be imagined. Their colours and patterns, they said, were not only exceptionally beautiful, but the clothes made of their material possessed the wonderful quality of being invisible to any man who was unfit for his office or unpardonably stupid.

"That must be wonderful cloth," thought the emperor. "If I were to be dressed in a suit made of this cloth I should be able to find out which men in my empire were unfit for their places, and I could distinguish the clever from the stupid. I must have this cloth woven for me without delay." And he gave a large sum of money to the swindlers, in advance, that they should set to work without any loss of time. They set up two looms, and pretended to be very hard at work, but they did nothing whatever on the looms. They asked for the finest silk and the most precious gold-cloth; all they got they did away with, and worked at the empty looms till late at night.

"I should very much like to know how they are getting on with the cloth," thought the emperor. But he felt rather uneasy when he remembered that he who was not fit for his office could not see it. Personally, he was of opinion that he had nothing to fear, yet he thought it advisable to send somebody else first to see how matters stood. Everybody in the town knew what a remarkable quality the stuff possessed, and all were anxious to see how bad or stupid their neighbours were.

"I shall send my honest old minister to the weavers," thought the emperor. "He can judge best how the stuff looks, for he is intelligent, and nobody understands his office better than he."

The good old minister went into the room where the swindlers sat before the empty looms. "Heaven preserve us!" he thought, and opened his eyes wide, "I cannot see anything at all," but he did not say so. Both swindlers requested him to come near, and asked him if he did not

admire the exquisite pattern and the beautiful colours, pointing to the empty looms. The poor old minister tried his very best, but he could see nothing, for there was nothing to be seen. "Oh dear," he thought, "can I be so stupid? I should never have thought so, and nobody must know it! Is it possible that I am not fit for my office? No, no, I cannot say that I was unable to see the cloth."

"Now, have you got nothing to say?" said one of the swindlers, while he pretended to be busily weaving.

"Oh, it is very pretty, exceedingly beautiful," replied the old minister looking through his glasses. "What a beautiful pattern, what brilliant colours! I shall tell the emperor that I like the cloth very much."

"We are pleased to hear that," said the two weavers, and described to him the colours and explained the curious pattern. The old minister listened attentively, that he might relate to the emperor what they said; and so he did.

Now the swindlers asked for more money, silk and gold-cloth, which they required for weaving. They kept everything for themselves, and not a thread came near the loom, but they continued, as hitherto, to work at the empty looms.

Soon afterwards the emperor sent another honest courtier to the weavers to see how they were getting on, and if the cloth was nearly finished. Like the old minister, he looked and looked but could see nothing, as there was nothing to be seen.

"Is it not a beautiful piece of cloth?" asked the two swindlers, showing and explaining the magnificent pattern, which, however, did not exist.

"I am not stupid," said the man. "It is therefore my good appointment for which I am not fit. It is very strange, but I must not let any one know it;" and he praised the cloth, which he did not see, and expressed his joy at the beautiful colours and the fine pattern. "It is very excellent," he said to the emperor.

Everybody in the whole town talked about the precious cloth. At last the emperor wished to see it himself, while it was still on the loom. With a number of courtiers, including the two who had already been there, he went to the two clever swindlers, who now worked as hard as they could, but without using any thread.

"Is it not magnificent?" said the two old statesmen who had been there before. "Your Majesty must admire the colours and the pattern." And then they pointed to the empty looms, for they imagined the others could see the cloth.

"What is this?" thought the emperor, "I do not see anything at all. That is terrible! Am I stupid? Am I unfit to be emperor? That would indeed be the most dreadful thing that could happen to me."

"Really," he said, turning to the weavers, "your cloth has our most gracious approval;" and nodding contentedly he looked at the empty loom, for he did not like to say that he saw nothing. All his attendants, who were with him, looked and looked, and although they could not see anything more than the others, they said, like the emperor, "It is very beautiful." And all advised him to wear the new magnificent clothes at a great procession which was soon to take place. "It is magnificent, beautiful, excellent," one heard them say; everybody seemed to be delighted, and the emperor appointed the two swindlers "Imperial Court weavers."

The whole night previous to the day on which the procession was to take place, the swindlers pretended to work, and burned more than sixteen candles. People should see that they were

busy to finish the emperor's new suit. They pretended to take the cloth from the loom, and worked about in the air with big scissors, and sewed with needles without thread, and said at last: "The emperor's new suit is ready now."

The emperor and all his barons then came to the hall; the swindlers held their arms up as if they held something in their hands and said: "These are the trousers!" "This is the coat!" and "Here is the cloak!" and so on. "They are all as light as a cobweb, and one must feel as if one had nothing at all upon the body; but that is just the beauty of them."

"Indeed!" said all the courtiers; but they could not see anything, for there was nothing to be seen.

"Does it please your Majesty now to graciously undress," said the swindlers, "that we may assist your Majesty in putting on the new suit before the large looking-glass?"

The emperor undressed, and the swindlers pretended to put the new suit upon him, one piece after another; and the emperor looked at himself in the glass from every side.

"How well they look! How well they fit!" said all. "What a beautiful pattern! What fine colours! That is a magnificent suit of clothes!"

The master of the ceremonies announced that the bearers of the canopy, which was to be carried in the procession, were ready.

"I am ready," said the emperor. "Does not my suit fit me marvellously?" Then he turned once more to the looking-glass, that people should think he admired his garments.

The chamberlains, who were to carry the train, stretched their hands to the ground as if they lifted up a train, and pretended to hold something in their hands; they did not like people to know that they could not see anything.

The emperor marched in the procession under the beautiful canopy, and all who saw him in the street and out of the windows exclaimed: "Indeed, the emperor's new suit is incomparable! What a long train he has! How well it fits him!" Nobody wished to let others know he saw nothing, for then he would have been unfit for his office or too stupid. Never emperor's clothes were more admired.

"But he has nothing on at all," said a little child at last. "Good heavens! listen to the voice of an innocent child," said the father, and one whispered to the other what the child had said.

"But he has nothing on at all," cried at last the whole people. That made a deep impression upon the emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought to himself, "Now I must bear up to the end." And the chamberlains walked with still greater dignity, as if they carried the train which did not exist.

## Worksheet 2

Attention is drawn to the reasons why the characters decide to lie and accept the convention created cunningly by the weavers:

- Why didn't anyone in the fairy tale say what they saw?
- When you express an opinion about something by saying if you like or dislike it, like the prime minister in a suit, why do you do it?

- Is there a reason, in your opinion, that at the end of the fairy tale it is a child who says that the king is naked?
- What is the truth?
- Do we always tell the truth?
- Does anyone who says nothing, as in the fairy tale, always have the same reason for being silent?
- Who in the fairy tale did the right thing in your opinion? Why?
- Who in the fairy tale has always done the wrong thing in your opinion? Why?
  - Why did the weavers invent the news of the invisible dress?

**Suggestions for work settings:**

- In this phase it is important to build a non-frontal setting. The optimum would be to place students in a circle, a spatiality that facilitates confrontation and discussion, and places boys and girls in a freer dimension.
- To have an active participation it is essential to clarify that this activity does not fall within the usual evaluation process taking place at school.
- If the activity takes place with the co-presence of both teachers and assistant, it is desirable that one of the two leads the activity and the other chooses whether to observe or actively participate. Of course, this decision must be taken in advance, in the planning phase.
- It is very important, in conducting the activity, to leave as much space as possible to the responses and interventions of boys and girls, accepting any observation without any form of judgment.

**Small group discussion supported by the facilitator**

Pupils try to rewrite the fairy tale by imagining a reason why weavers could lie for good.



### **Plenary sharing of work in small groups**

Sharing of both fairy tales and analysis by answering the following questions:

- In your fairy tales, what are the motives that motivate weavers to lie and what have you considered for good?
- Because in the original fairy tale the weavers are called crooks and rascals?
- What has changed in your fairy tales when the child reveals the lie that was said for good?
- Imagine the days after the parade, after the child said "The king is naked" in the original fairy tale, what did you think happened?
- And in your fairy tales when the lie was said for good, what has changed?

### **Worksheet 3**

The space must be well delineated with a clear division between the place dedicated to the scenic action and the place that will be destined to the public (just simply a line drawn on the ground with chalk), or in the circular dimension the space of the action will be the space in the center of the circle. We look for symbolic objects that represent the character (Paper crown for the emperor, scissors for weavers, balloon for the child)

### **Worksheet 4**

Along the learning path, facilitators, at their discretion, can propose one or more of the following theatrical games:

#### **1. Introductory game of knowledge among the participants**

Circle of chairs with participants seated. Just an empty chair. Whoever has the free chair on their right starts the game: moving on it will say "I'm sitting". The partner who is in the empty chair on the right again will move saying "on the grass", the next one will say "With my friend" and the last one, moving, will have to say the name of one of the participants

who are in the circle who will rush to the empty chair. Now a new participant will have the empty chair on the right and will restart the game with a fast pace.

## 2. Game of knowledge and improvisation

In circle. The first participant takes a static position at will. The classmate on his right asks, "what are you doing?". The first responds, in total freedom, to an action without any connection with the position taken. Given the answer, the first melts from the position, while the second takes on the pose of the action indicated by the first. The next participant will formulate the same question and position himself according to the indications. And so on.

Variant: in addition to the question "what are you doing?" It is interesting to add "what are you feeling?", so that you can also take an emotional expression to the static action.

## 3. Improvisation game

Given a clear delimitation of the stage space, the game begins with a volunteer who enters the stage and takes a static pose by declaring out loud who or what he is and what he is doing. The other participants are added to the first one, who always insert themselves in the "picture" with a fixed pose by declaring who / what they are, what they are doing and in the second phase also what they are feeling. Obviously anyone who takes part will have to bond with what others are already doing. This exercise can be carried out freely or themed on various generic and specific topics.

The children will be asked to prepare a poster with the answers that most impressed them and that seem to them to be more correct. They will be asked to summarize the experience with a word. The words will be written on another billboard. It is important that the materials remain in the classroom. To reflect on the activity, the questions and the highlighted words will be followed.

## **Worksheet 5**

Once the representation of the various fairy tales is finished, the group is asked to answer the following questions with a single word to be written on a billboard that remains in the classroom:

- How did you feel in the shoes of the emperor?
- How did you feel in the shoes of the weavers in the original version of the fairy tale?
- How did you feel in the shoes of the weavers in the representation of the modified fairy tales, that is, when the weavers told lies for good?
- What about the child in the original fairy tale?
- And in the shoes of the child when he reveals the lie told for good?

### **Worksheet 6**

We suggest some questions:

- Have you ever invented lies thinking about doing it for good?
- How can you build your own opinion, your own idea, on a topic?
- Is saying your opinion always correct?
- Is telling your opinion to everyone different than telling your friend?
- Is being silent always incorrect?
- Is being silent, like the crowd in the fairy tale, always wrong?
- When is it correct to be silent?
- Why are you silent?

### **Worksheet 7**

At the end of the activity, each participant will be asked to describe, in his notebook, a situation in which he has decided not to tell the truth thinking about doing the right thing. If it has never happened, he will be asked to report a situation where, even if he had an opinion, he preferred to remain silent. Finally, the students are divided into couples and each couple hypothesizes in writing their own action plan with respect to the exercise of their own and others' right to silence in their context (e.g. class, school, peer groups, etc.) . In particular they decide what could be done and who could do it.



### **2.3 Infrastructure & Materials needed**

Cardboard, paper, markers. A space collected, but free from the desks or with the possibility of being freed, a sound system for listening to audio materials, the possibility of using the internet connection.

### **2.4 Versions-adaptations**

#### **2.5 Challenges**

During the first part of the activity, tensions could arise which risk diverting the reflection and turning it into a debate. It will be important that the facilitators who act as guides and mediation adopt a conciliatory approach, trying to give space to the different possibilities and guiding the class group's gaze on the different interpretations.

Rewriting a fairy tale in a short time could be an unintuitive and complex task, especially in a context where there is no habit of doing it. At this stage it is important that facilitators give inputs to stimulate imagination and understanding through small group rewriting work.

The theme involves a good ability to abstraction, requiring to make a conceptual transition from the fantastic dimension of the fairy tale to reality; It is important that facilitators support this step to trigger the right dialectical dimension.

### **2.6. Further reading**

### **Evaluation of the educational scenario**

Students are given a sheet of paper with the following sentences to complete:

Before class I already knew that ...

But I didn't know that ...

I learned to ...

Still not clear to me....