



Erasmus+

PROJECT:

Module 4
Communication Skills and
Intercultural Communications
for Teachers Working with
Roma Students



PAL LAB



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Table of Contents

Training Module 4: Communication Skills and Intercultural Communications for Teachers Working in Schools with Roma Students.....	4
1.Importance of Communication in School Settings	4
2. Communication Skills for Teachers.....	6
3. Intercultural Communication Competence	12
5.Building Positive Relationships with Roma Students and Families	15
6. Seeking support from interpreters, cultural mediators, or community resources	19
Lesson Plans.....	21
REFERENCES.....	27



Pedagogical approaches for upskilling of teachers, mediators and experts working with Romani children and youth - Equal Opportunities and reducing early school leaving



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Training Module 4: Communication Skills and Intercultural Communications for Teachers Working in Schools with Roma Students

This training module aims to:

1. Enhance communication skills and intercultural competence for teachers working in schools with Roma students.
2. Develop effective communication and intercultural understanding to build positive relationships, foster inclusivity, and promote academic success in diverse educational settings.
3. Explore communication strategies, intercultural competence development, cultural awareness, and practical tips for improving communication with Roma students and their families.

Module duration – 8 training hours (45 min.) and includes theory, guided discussions and practical exercises

Number of participants – group between 10 – 15 teachers

Module Outline:

Panel 1-Total of 60 minutes

1.Importance of Communication in School Settings

Welcome participants to the training session, presentations of the aims of the training, the trainer/s and verification of expectations of the participants, introductory question

Activity: 60 Minute Guided Discussion on Effective Communication in Education

Objective: The objective of this guided discussion is to explore the importance of effective communication in education and provide strategies for improving communication between teachers, students, and parents.

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard or flipchart
- Markers
- Handouts with communication tips and strategies (optional)

Guided Discussion Plan:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Welcome the participants and introduce the topic of effective communication in education.
- Explain that the session will focus on discussing key questions related to communication in educational settings.

Icebreaker Activity (5 minutes):

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Each group will discuss a time when they experienced either effective or ineffective communication in an educational setting.
- After the discussion, each group will share one example with the whole group.

Exploring Key Questions (20 minutes):

- Present each introductory question one by one and allow participants to discuss in pairs or small groups.
- Encourage participants to share personal experiences, insights, and examples related to each question.
- Facilitate a whole group discussion after each question to gather diverse perspectives and insights.
- Use the whiteboard or flipchart to note down key points and ideas generated during the discussion.

Questions to Explore:

- Why is effective communication essential between teachers and Roma students?
- How does clear communication contribute to a positive learning environment for Roma students?
- In what ways can good communication skills help in resolving conflicts among Roma students?
- How does open communication between parents and teachers benefit student academic performance?
- What role does effective communication play in building strong teacher-student relationships?
- How can communication barriers impact the educational experience for students with diverse backgrounds or abilities?
- What strategies can educators employ to improve communication with parents and guardians?
- How does fostering communication skills among students prepare them for success beyond the classroom?

Reflection and Action Planning (30 minutes):

- Ask participants to reflect on what they've learned during the discussion and identify one communication strategy they can implement in their own practice.
- Encourage participants to share their action plans with the group, fostering accountability and peer support.
- Provide handouts with communication tips and strategies for participants to take away for future reference.

Conclusion:

- Summarize the key insights and takeaways from the discussion.
- Thank the participants for their engagement and encourage them to apply what they've learned to enhance communication in their educational contexts.

Note: Throughout the guided discussion, the facilitator should actively listen, encourage participation from all participants, and ensure a respectful and inclusive atmosphere conducive to open communication.

Panel 2-Total of 200 minutes

2. Communication Skills for Teachers

Communication skills for teachers – 200 minutes and practical exercises

I. Active listening techniques to enhance understanding and empathy (100 minutes)

I.1 Practical Exercise (20 minutes)

The Absent-Minded Game

Guidelines: Choose an excellent speaker from your team to discuss a topic they are passionate about. Encourage the speaker to incorporate nonverbal signals such as hand movements and facial expressions. The other players will display negative listening behaviors. For example, participants could be restless, adopt poor posture, yawn, or frequently glance at their watches. Have the audience observe the changes in the speaker's demeanor and decrease in enthusiasm. The Absent-Minded Game will highlight the significance of active listening.

Debriefing Discussion: After the game, discuss how the speaker felt when the other participants did not carefully listen and what did they have to change in order to be good active listeners?

I.2 Theory - Presentation (10 minutes):

Attentive Presence and Focus: Active listening begins with being fully present in the conversation and giving undivided attention to the speaker. This entails eliminating distractions, such as electronic devices or internal thoughts, and focusing solely on the speaker's words and non-verbal cues. By demonstrating attentiveness through eye contact, nodding, and affirmative gestures, the listener conveys respect and openness, laying the foundation for effective communication (Drollinger, Comer, & Warrington, 2006, p. 3).

Paraphrasing and Reflection: Paraphrasing involves restating the speaker's message in one's own words to confirm understanding and encourage further elaboration. Reflection, on the other hand, involves mirroring the speaker's emotions and experiences, validating their feelings and fostering empathy. These techniques demonstrate active engagement and help clarify any misunderstandings, ensuring that both parties are on the same page (Mearns & Thorne, 2007, p. 56).

Asking Clarifying Questions: Clarifying questions seek to resolve ambiguities or seek additional information, enabling the listener to gain a deeper understanding of the speaker's perspective. By asking questions that begin with "Can you tell me more about...?" or "I'm curious to understand...", the listener demonstrates genuine interest and curiosity, encouraging the speaker to express themselves more fully. This not only enhances comprehension but also fosters empathy by signaling a willingness to learn from the speaker's experiences (Mariani, Barki, & Gallupe, 2000, p. 410).

Reflective Empathy: Reflective empathy involves not only understanding the speaker's emotions but also conveying empathy through verbal and non-verbal cues. This includes acknowledging the speaker's feelings with phrases like "I can imagine how difficult that must be for you" or "It sounds like you're feeling...". Additionally, using empathetic body language, such as leaning forward or offering a comforting touch, reinforces emotional connection and validates the speaker's experiences (Rogers, 1951, p. 84).

Silence and Non-Verbal Listening: Silence can be a powerful tool in active listening, providing space for reflection and allowing the speaker to express themselves without interruption. By practicing non-verbal listening, such as observing facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language, the listener can glean additional insights into the speaker's emotions and underlying concerns. This silent attentiveness demonstrates respect and empathy, fostering a supportive environment for open communication (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2016, p. 142).

I.3 Discussion (10 minutes):

Question: What are the challenges faced by Romani Students in active communication

Discussion: Discuss the challenges faced by teachers in active listening as a technique for better communication. Ask the teachers to give examples from their experience on the challenges faced by Romani students in active communication and what they do to overcome them.

I.4 Theory-Presentation (5 minutes)

Challenges Faced by Romani Students in Active Communication:

Romani students, like any other minority group, may encounter specific challenges in communication within educational settings. Teachers might observe the following challenges:

Language Barrier: Romani students may speak a language or dialect different from the dominant language of instruction, leading to communication difficulties (Lohmann, 2018, p. 54).

Cultural Misunderstandings: Misconceptions or stereotypes about Romani culture may affect the way teachers perceive and interact with Romani students, impacting effective communication (McKay, Rogers, & McKay, 2019, p. 38).

Socioeconomic Factors: Romani students often face socioeconomic challenges that can affect their educational experiences, including access to resources and support systems (Stelter & Lawrance, 2015, p. 76).

I.5 Practical Exercise (50 minutes)

Game: "Culture Connect"

Objective: The aim of "Culture Connect" is to address communication challenges faced by Romani students and cultivate active listening and cultural awareness in a mixed classroom.

Warm-Up Activity:

- Begin with a discussion on the importance of active listening and understanding different cultures.
- Briefly explain the communication challenges Romani students might face, such as language barriers and cultural misunderstandings.

Main Part

Role-Playing Scenarios:

- Divide the students into small groups and give each group a set of flashcards with various scenarios (e.g., a student asking for help, group work, explaining a concept).
- Assign roles within each group: speaker, listener, and observer.
- The speaker will explain the scenario using a different language or dialect, or an imaginary language, emphasizing the language barrier challenge.
- The listener will try to understand and respond appropriately, focusing on using body language and nonverbal cues.

Language Phrase Exchange:

- Distribute a list of common phrases in different languages spoken by the students, including Romani.
- Practice saying these phrases together, focusing on pronunciation and understanding.
- Encourage students to use these phrases throughout the day to enhance communication and cultural exchange.

Cultural Sharing Circle:

- Form a circle with all students and ask each to share a cultural aspect or tradition that is important to them.
- Encourage students to use body language, gestures, and any visual aids they may have brought.
- The rest of the class should practice active listening, showing understanding through nodding, maintaining eye contact, and asking questions.

Debriefing:

After the activities, gather the students for a discussion on their experiences. Ask questions like: What was challenging? How did you feel when you couldn't understand or be understood? What strategies helped you communicate better? Highlight the importance of empathy, patience, and the use of nonverbal communication in overcoming language and cultural barriers.

Outcome:

"Culture Connect" helps students in a mixed classroom develop active listening skills and cultural awareness. By experiencing communication challenges firsthand and practicing empathy, students can better understand and support their Romani classmates, fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

I.6 Summary-Conclusion (5 minutes):

Active listening techniques are invaluable tools for enhancing understanding and empathy in interpersonal interactions. By practicing attentive presence, paraphrasing, asking clarifying questions, employing reflective empathy, and embracing silence, individuals can deepen their connections with others and cultivate a more empathetic approach to communication. These techniques not only improve comprehension but also foster emotional connection, leading to more meaningful and fulfilling relationships.

II. Nonverbal communication cues and body language in conveying respect and understanding (100 minutes)

II.1 Relevant Question to the Teachers (15 minutes):

Question: Are you aware of the significance of nonverbal communication cues and body language in conveying respect and understanding in the classroom between Roma students.

II.2 Theory-Presentation (15 minutes):

Nonverbal communication tips for conveying respect and understanding in Roma Students.

Respect Personal Space: Roma people often have a strong sense of personal space, and invading it can be perceived as disrespectful. Maintain a respectful distance during interactions, allowing them to feel comfortable and at ease (Acton, 2016, p. 78).

Eye Contact: While direct eye contact is generally considered a sign of confidence and honesty, prolonged or intense eye contact may be viewed as confrontational or disrespectful in Roma culture. Adjust your level of eye contact to match the individual's comfort level and cultural norms (Stewart, 2017, p. 102).

Gestures and Body Language: Roma people often use expressive gestures and body language to communicate. However, be mindful that certain gestures may have different meanings in their culture. Avoid gestures that could be misinterpreted or deemed offensive (Stewart, 2017, p. 92).

Touch: Physical touch can vary in acceptability among Roma individuals. While some may be comfortable with friendly gestures like handshakes or hugs, others may prefer to maintain more distance. Always respect personal boundaries and observe how others initiate or respond to physical contact (Acton, 2016, p. 105).

Facial Expressions: Facial expressions play a significant role in Roma communication, conveying emotions and intentions. Pay attention to their facial expressions to better understand their feelings and reactions, and respond accordingly (Stewart, 2017, p. 82).

Attire and Appearance: Traditional attire and grooming may hold cultural significance for Roma individuals. Show respect for their cultural heritage by acknowledging and appreciating their traditional dress and grooming practices (Acton, 2016, p. 115).

Listening and Silence: Active listening is crucial in Roma communication. Demonstrate your attentiveness and respect by listening actively, nodding, and providing affirming responses. Allow for comfortable pauses in conversation, as silence can be a sign of reflection or respect (Stewart, 2017, p. 121).

Respect for Elders: Elders hold a revered position in Roma communities. Show respect for elders through nonverbal cues such as nodding slightly or offering a gentle bow. Allow them to speak first and listen attentively to their words (Acton, 2016, p. 98).

Greeting Practices: Greetings are important in Roma culture and often involve gestures of respect. A common greeting is to place your hand over your heart while nodding slightly. Pay attention to their greeting cues and respond accordingly (Stewart, 2017, p. 89).

Avoiding Assumptions: Avoid making assumptions based on stereotypes or preconceived notions about Roma culture. Approach each interaction with an open mind and a willingness to learn about their unique customs and practices (Acton, 2016, p. 74).

Positive Nonverbal Feedback: Positive nonverbal cues such as smiling, nodding, and maintaining an open posture to convey warmth and friendliness. Genuine warmth and respect can help foster trust and rapport in interactions with Roma individuals (Stewart, 2017, p. 112).

These specific nonverbal communication tips can help create more respectful and understanding interactions with the Roma community, demonstrating cultural sensitivity and fostering positive relationships.

II.3 Game: "Nonverbal Connection Challenge" (60 minutes)

Objective: "Nonverbal Connection Challenge" aims to help students in a mixed classroom improve their nonverbal communication skills, fostering respect and understanding, particularly for Romani students.

Materials Needed:

- Flashcards with different emotions or scenarios
- Blindfolds
- A set of pictures depicting various cultural gestures and attire
- Paper and markers
- A timer

Instructions:

Warm-Up Activity:

- Start with a brief discussion on the importance of nonverbal communication and cultural sensitivity.
- Explain that the game will help students understand and practice nonverbal cues important in different cultures, including Romani culture.

Main Part

1. Emotion Charades:

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Each group takes turns picking a flashcard with an emotion written on it (e.g., happiness, confusion, respect).
- One student from the group acts out the emotion using only facial expressions and body language, without speaking.
- The rest of the group guesses the emotion. Discuss as a class how different cultures might express these emotions nonverbally.

2. Gesture Interpretation:

- Show the class a set of pictures depicting various cultural gestures, including those significant to the Roma community.
- Discuss what each gesture means and in which cultural context it is used.
- Have students practice these gestures with a partner, ensuring they understand the importance of context and sensitivity.

3. Respect and Attire Role-Play:

- Provide a brief overview of traditional Roma attire and grooming practices.
- Have students draw or describe a cultural attire they find significant and explain its importance to the class.

- Role-play a scenario where students greet each other while acknowledging and respecting these cultural significances, such as using the hand-over-heart greeting.

4. Respect for Elders Simulation:

- Discuss the importance of respecting elders in Roma culture.
- Simulate a scenario where students practice greeting an elder, using appropriate nonverbal cues such as nodding slightly or offering a gentle bow.
- Students take turns role-playing as the elder and the respectful student.

Debriefing:

- After the activities, gather the students for a discussion on what they learned.
- Ask questions like: What was challenging about using only nonverbal communication? How did it feel to be on the receiving end of these nonverbal cues? How can we use these skills to better communicate with and respect our Romani classmates?

Outcome: "Nonverbal Connection Challenge" helps students understand the importance of nonverbal communication and cultural sensitivity. By practicing these skills, students can foster more respectful and understanding interactions, creating a more inclusive and harmonious classroom environment.

II.4 Summary-Conclusion (10 minutes):

Nonverbal communication cues and body language are powerful tools for conveying respect, understanding, and building positive relationships in the classroom. By being mindful of their own nonverbal cues and understanding the cultural context of their students, teachers can create an inclusive and supportive learning environment where all students feel valued and respected. Integrating nonverbal communication skills into teaching practice enhances communication effectiveness and promotes student engagement and success (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2016, p. 213; Pease & Pease, 2006, p. 156).

III. ANNEX - PRACTICAL EXERCISES

Title: Active Listening Role-Play (15 minutes)

Objective: To practice active listening techniques and enhance understanding and empathy in interpersonal interactions.

Instructions:

- Divide the class into pairs or small groups.
- Provide each group with a scenario or situation where effective communication and active listening are crucial (e.g., resolving a disagreement between friends, comforting a peer who is upset).
- Assign roles to each group member, such as Speaker and Listener.
- Instruct the Speaker to express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns related to the given scenario while the Listener practices active listening techniques.
- Encourage the Listener to demonstrate active listening by maintaining eye contact, paraphrasing the Speaker's words, asking clarifying questions, and providing empathetic responses.
- After a designated time, switch roles so that each student has the opportunity to practice both speaking and listening.
- Facilitate a debriefing discussion where students can reflect on their experiences, share insights, and discuss the effectiveness of active listening techniques in fostering understanding and empathy.

Title: Empathy Bingo (15 minutes)

Objective: To reinforce active listening skills and cultivate empathy in a fun and interactive way.

Materials Needed:

Bingo cards with empathy-related statements or scenarios:

(e.g., "Listen without interrupting," "Express understanding of someone else's feelings,"

"Offer support without judgment"). Markers or chips for each player. Prize for the winner (optional).

Instructions:

- Distribute bingo cards and markers to each player.
- Explain the rules of the game: Players will listen to their classmates' responses during discussions or activities and mark off the corresponding empathy-related statement or scenario on their bingo cards.
- Facilitate a series of discussions or activities where students have the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.
- As students participate and demonstrate active listening and empathy, they can mark off the corresponding squares on their bingo cards.
- The first player to complete a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) shouts "Empathy Bingo!" and wins the game.
- Facilitate a brief discussion after the game to reflect on the active listening skills and empathetic behaviors observed during the activity.
- Both the practical exercise and the game provide engaging opportunities for students to practice active listening techniques and develop empathy, contributing to a more supportive and inclusive classroom environment.

Panel 3-Total of 100 minutes

3. Intercultural Communication Competence

Intercultural Communication Competence - 100 minutes theory and practical exercises:

I. Definition of intercultural communication and its importance in diverse educational environments (20 minutes)

I.1 Relevant Question to the Teachers (15 minutes):

Question: Are you aware of the significance of intercultural communication competence in diverse educational environments? How do you currently incorporate intercultural communication into your teaching practice?

I.2 Theory-Presentation (5 minutes):

Definition of Intercultural Communication: Intercultural communication refers to the exchange of information, ideas, and emotions between people from different cultural backgrounds. It involves understanding, interpreting, and effectively navigating cultural differences to facilitate meaningful interactions and relationships. Intercultural communication encompasses verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as cultural norms, values, beliefs, and perspectives.

II. Developing intercultural sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences (20 minutes)

II.1 Theory- Presentation (5 minutes)

Developing intercultural sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences is crucial in fostering a respectful and inclusive environment. Here are some practical ideas and solutions:

Cultural Immersion Experiences: Organize field trips or cultural exchange programs where students can interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Immersive experiences allow students to engage directly with diverse perspectives, practices, and traditions, fostering empathy and understanding (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yerushova, & DeJaeghere, 2003, p. 472).

Cross-Cultural Dialogue Sessions: Host facilitated discussions or workshops where students can share their cultural experiences, beliefs, and values. Encourage open-mindedness, active listening, and respectful curiosity to promote dialogue and mutual learning (Kiselica, Baker, Thomas, & Reedy, 2015, p. 159).

Cultural Competency Training: Provide professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their understanding of cultural differences and develop intercultural communication skills. Training sessions can cover topics such as cultural sensitivity, cultural competence models, and strategies for effective cross-cultural communication (Bennett, 2008, p. 110).

Incorporating Diverse Perspectives in Curriculum: Integrate diverse perspectives, voices, and cultural representations into the curriculum across various subjects and disciplines. Include readings, case studies, and multimedia materials that highlight different cultural perspectives and experiences, promoting critical thinking and multicultural literacy (Deardorff, 2009, p. 54).

Peer Mentorship Programs: Pair students from different cultural backgrounds as mentors and mentees to facilitate cross-cultural exchanges and support. Peer mentorship programs provide opportunities for students to learn from each other, build cross-cultural friendships, and navigate cultural differences together (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 87).

Cultural Celebrations and Events: Organize multicultural events, festivals, or cultural awareness weeks where students can showcase their cultural heritage, traditions, and talents. Celebrating diversity promotes

cultural pride, appreciation, and solidarity among students and the wider school community (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 92).

These strategies can significantly enhance intercultural sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences, creating a more inclusive and respectful educational environment.

II.2. Design an action plan (15 Minutes)

Activity: Describe a case study of a Roma student that you want to help from your classroom and how. Design an action plan using the examples above.

III. Summary-Conclusion

This session on intercultural communication competence equips educators and students with the skills to navigate and respect cultural differences, particularly focusing on Roma students. By blending theoretical insights with practical exercises like cultural story circles, participants enhance their empathy, understanding, and ability to create inclusive educational environments, fostering meaningful interactions and mutual respect.

IV. PRACTICAL EXERCISES-60 minutes

Title: Cultural Story Circles

Objective: To develop intercultural communication competence and increase intercultural sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences among students, including Roma children, by sharing and reflecting on personal stories and cultural experiences.

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials Needed:

- A timer or clock
- Comfortable seating arranged in a circle
- A talking piece (an object passed around to indicate the speaker, such as a small ball or a special item)

Activity Steps:

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Begin by explaining the purpose of the activity: to share and learn from each other's cultural stories to build understanding and respect.
- Briefly discuss the importance of intercultural communication and sensitivity, highlighting how learning about different cultures, including Roma culture, can enhance mutual respect and empathy.

2. Establishing Ground Rules (3 minutes)

- Establish and agree on ground rules for the activity to ensure a safe and respectful environment.

Examples include:

- One person speaks at a time.
- Listen actively and respectfully.
- Everyone's story and experience are valid.
- Participation is encouraged but not mandatory.

3. Sharing Cultural Stories (15 minutes)

- Each participant gets 2-3 minutes to share a personal story or experience related to their culture. Encourage students to talk about:

- A tradition or custom from their culture.
- A memorable cultural event or celebration.
- A personal experience that highlights a cultural difference or misunderstanding they encountered.
- The meaning of a specific cultural practice or symbol.

- Use the talking piece to manage the flow of conversation, ensuring everyone gets a chance to speak if they wish.

4. Reflective Discussion (7 minutes)

- After all willing participants have shared their stories, facilitate a group discussion with the following prompts:
 - What did you learn from listening to others' stories?
 - How did these stories help you understand different cultural perspectives?
 - Did you notice any similarities or common themes across different cultures?
 - How can we use what we've learned today to be more respectful and understanding of cultural differences in our daily interactions?

5. Conclusion (5 minutes)

- Summarize the key points discussed during the activity.
- Reinforce the importance of ongoing intercultural communication and sensitivity.
- Encourage students to continue sharing and learning about different cultures outside the classroom.

Follow-Up:

- Suggest students keep a journal where they can reflect on their experiences and any cultural interactions they have moving forward.
- Consider organizing more cultural sharing activities or events to maintain and deepen intercultural understanding within the classroom.

This activity not only helps to develop intercultural communication competence and sensitivity but also creates a supportive environment where Roma children and others feel valued and heard.

Panel 5-Total of 120 minutes

5. Building Positive Relationships with Roma Students and Families

Building Positive Relationships with Roma Students and Families - 60 minutes theory and practical exercises:

- Establishing trust, rapport, and mutual respect through effective communication - theory
- Engaging Roma families as partners in their children's education through open dialogue and collaboration - discussion and practical exercises

I. Establishing trust, rapport, and mutual respect through effective communication -

I.1 Please, note that every session starts with a relevant question to the teachers– 5 minutes:

Question: Ask participants, "What strategies do you employ to effectively build positive relationships with Roma students and their families, fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment?"

I.2 Presentation 20 minutes: The Power of Connection: Effective Communication Theory in Practice"

- Importance of developing positive relationships with all students and families, regardless of background
- Roma population faces many challenges including discrimination, poverty, low educational attainment
- Building trust and mutual understanding is key to supporting Roma students
- Brief overview of Roma history, culture, values
- Discuss challenges faced by many Roma communities (poverty, discrimination, lack of access to services etc.)
- Highlight strengths like close family bonds, oral traditions, entrepreneurial spirit

Approaches for Teachers

Get to know individual students and families - learn names, ask about interests/goals

- Communicate high expectations for behavior and academic achievement
- Validate cultural identities, learn some Romanes phrases
- Involve Roma parents/community members as resources
- Be an advocate when discrimination occurs

Building Relationships with Families

- Home visits to learn about family situation (with translator if needed)
- Have translators at school events when possible
- Identify Roma liaison to bridge home-school connections
- Inform families of their rights and services available
- Ask about family funds of knowledge to build curriculum

Small Group Activity

- Divide into groups of 3-4, one person plays Roma parent, others are teachers
- Role play initial meeting, practicing:
 - Open body language
 - Avoiding jargon
 - Asking about family's hopes for child

- Explaining school policies simply

Wrap-Up

- Developing genuine caring relationships is crucial
- Be open to learning about Roma culture
- Consistent communication and advocacy is key

The goal is to provide background on Roma communities, while also giving practical strategies teachers can use to connect with Roma students and families in an authentic, respectful manner.

II. Discussion on Engaging Roma families as partners in their children's education through open dialogue and collaboration-60 minute

1. Icebreaker Activity (5 minutes)
 - Ask participants to share a positive experience they have had working with families in their educational roles.
 - Encourage sharing of diverse experiences and highlight common themes.
2. II. Understanding the Context (10 minutes)
 - Overview of the Roma Community (5 minutes)
 - Provide a brief background on the Roma community, focusing on cultural values, traditions, and common challenges faced in the educational system.
 - Use visual aids such as slides or handouts with key points and statistics.
 - Challenges and Barriers (5 minutes)
 - Discuss the specific barriers Roma families might face in engaging with the education system, such as discrimination, language barriers, and socio-economic challenges.
 - Encourage participants to share their observations and experiences.
3. III. Strategies for Engagement (20 minutes)
 - Creating an Inclusive Environment (5 minutes)
 - Present Strategies for Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive School Environment for Roma Families (2 minutes)
 - Interactive Activity: School Environment Walkthrough
 - i. Divide participants into pairs or small groups.
 - ii. Give each group a checklist of elements that contribute to an inclusive environment (e.g., multilingual signage, diverse cultural representations, accessible facilities).
 - iii. Ask them to imagine walking through their school from the perspective of a Roma family and identify areas of improvement.
 - Discuss the Importance of Respect, Cultural Sensitivity, and Building Trust (3 minutes)
 - Group Discussion: Building Trust
 - i. Share a brief story or case study about a school that successfully built trust with Roma families.
 - ii. Facilitate a discussion on the key actions taken to build trust.
 - iii. Encourage participants to share their experiences and brainstorm additional ways to show respect and cultural sensitivity.

III. Facilitating Open Dialogue (5 minutes)

1. Introduce Techniques for Effective Communication with Roma Families (2 minutes)
 - Live Demonstration: Effective Communication
 - Role-play a scenario where an educator meets a Roma family for the first time.
 - Demonstrate active listening, using an interpreter, and avoiding jargon.

- Ask participants to observe and note effective communication techniques.
- 2. Role-Play Scenarios to Practice These Techniques (3 minutes)
 - Role-Playing Activity
 - Divide participants into pairs.
 - Provide each pair with a scenario involving a conversation between an educator and a Roma family (e.g., discussing a child's progress, addressing concerns).
 - One person plays the educator, and the other plays the family member. Encourage switching roles halfway through.
 - Debrief as a group, sharing insights and challenges experienced during the role-play.

IV. Collaborative Activities (5 minutes)

1. Suggest Activities that Involve Roma Families in the School Community (2 minutes)
 - Brainstorm Session: Involvement Activities
 - Ask participants to brainstorm activities that can include Roma families (e.g., cultural fairs, joint school projects).
 - Write ideas on a flipchart or whiteboard.
2. Share Examples of Successful Initiatives from Other Schools or Communities (3 minutes)
 - Showcase Successful Initiatives
 - Present a short video or slideshow showcasing successful initiatives from various schools.
 - Invite participants to discuss what made these initiatives successful and how they could be adapted to their contexts.

V. Support and Resources (5 minutes)

1. Highlight Available Resources and Support Systems for Roma Families (2 minutes)
 - Resource Mapping Exercise
 - Provide a handout or digital resource map listing community organizations, educational programs, and government initiatives.
 - Have participants work in pairs to identify which resources are available in their areas and how they can access them.
2. Discuss How Educators Can Connect Families with These Resources (3 minutes)
 - Interactive Q&A: Connecting Families with Resources
 - Facilitate an interactive Q&A session where participants ask questions about connecting families with resources.
 - Share practical tips and real-life examples of successful connections made by other educators.
 - Encourage participants to share their strategies and network with each other for future collaboration.
 -

VI. Group Activity (15 minutes)

1. Scenario-Based Group Work (10 minutes)
 - Divide participants into small groups and give each group a scenario involving a Roma family facing a specific challenge related to their child's education.
 - Ask each group to develop a plan for engaging the family and addressing the challenge using the strategies discussed.
2. Group Presentations (5 minutes)

- Have each group present their scenario and proposed plan to the whole group.
- Facilitate a brief discussion after each presentation, highlighting key points and providing feedback.

VII. Conclusion and Reflection (5 minutes)

1. Recap of Key Points
 - Summarize the main points covered in the session.
 - Reiterate the importance of partnership and collaboration with Roma families in the educational process.
2. Reflection and Commitment
 - Ask participants to reflect on what they have learned and how they can apply it in their roles.
 - Encourage each participant to make a commitment to implementing one strategy for engaging Roma families in their educational context.
3. Q&A and Closing Remarks
 - Open the floor for any final questions or comments.
 - Thank participants for their engagement and participation.

Panel 6-Total of 60 minutes

6. Seeking support from interpreters, cultural mediators, or community resources

I. Opening Question: What has been your experience working with interpreters, cultural mediators or community resources to bridge gaps with Roma families? What were the benefits and challenges?

II. Facilitated Discussion (15-20 mins):

- Go around and have participants share their experiences - whether positive where the support was helpful, or negative where there were difficulties
- Debrief by compiling a list of benefits on one side (e.g. increasing understanding, making families feel welcomed, navigating cultural differences) and challenges on the other (e.g. cost, availability, calibrating roles/expectations)
- Discuss strategies for overcoming the challenges - such as budgeting for interpreters, networking to identify cultural brokers, providing training to maximize effectiveness
- Explore what other community resources exist that could be leveraged - Romani community associations, leaders, youth groups, artists/vendors, etc.

III. PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. Small Group Activity (15-20 mins):

- Divide into small groups of 3-4 and provide each group with a scenario regarding miscommunication or cultural disconnects with a Roma family
- Have each group discuss: What interpreters, mediators or community members could be brought in to help resolve this situation? How specifically would they utilize that support?
- Groups can role-play part of the scenario bringing in their identified support resources
- Debrief by having groups share the scenario, their suggested solution, and rationale

Closing Remarks:

- Underscore the value of not going it alone - interpreters and cultural brokers are crucial assets
- Building relationships with the Roma community creates a web of potential resources
- There are systematic challenges, but creative strategies to increase access to these supports
- An humble, collaborative approach is essential for mutual understanding

2. Role Play Scenarios (30 minutes):

Provide 3-4 short scenarios depicting situations where interpreters, mediators or community resources could be beneficial, such as:

1. Parent-teacher conference where the Roma family does not speak the school language fluently
2. A school event where Roma families seem disengaged
3. A disciplinary issue involving a cultural misunderstanding
4. Trying to convey vital information about educational services/rights

Have participants break into groups of 3, role playing the scenario with one person as the school representative, one as the Roma family member, and one as the interpreter/mediator/community resource. Rotate roles and debrief by discussing: What strategies did the third person use to facilitate communication and understanding? What were the challenges?

3. Resource Mapping (20 minutes)

Have participants work in pairs or trios to map out all the potential interpreter, mediator and community resources available in their area, such as:

- Refugee/immigrant organizations
- Roma community associations
- Church groups
- Translators/interpreters for hire
- Cultural brokers/liaisons
- Roma entrepreneurs, artists, vendors
- Youth program leaders

They can get creative about cultivating relationships and partnerships with these resources. Share out and crowdsource more ideas.

Interpreter/Mediator Simulation (25 minutes) Provide a short scenario with some background cultural information about a Roma family's perspective. Have one participant role play that family while others practice:

- Using open body language, allowing silence
- Asking questions to understand before being understood
- Rephrasing information in a respectful way
- Bringing in a "mediator" to explain cultural context

Debrief on how to most effectively leverage interpreter and mediator support.

Training Prep (15 minutes) Have participants draft a 1-page plan for how they would train school staff on:

1. Identifying situations where interpreters/mediators are needed
2. Locating and properly utilizing those resources
3. Following up to build sustained relationships

Lesson Plans

1. Lesson Plan: Active Listening Techniques to Enhance Understanding and Empathy

Activity 1 - Lesson Preparation

Duration of the lesson/lesson unit: 60 minutes

Grade Level: Professional Development for Teachers

Objective(s) of the lesson:

- Teachers will understand the importance of active listening in enhancing understanding and empathy.
- Teachers will learn and practice specific active listening techniques.
- Teachers will explore the impact of active listening on building stronger relationships with students, particularly for those from diverse backgrounds.

Methods you intend to use to deliver your lesson:

- Use inclusive methods and design activities that accommodate diverse learning needs and styles.
- Provide options for participants to demonstrate understanding through various means (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic).
- Plan in advance to modify tasks or provide additional support for participants with different abilities.

Ensuring Activity Contribution to Lesson Objectives:

- Each activity is designed to directly contribute to the achievement of the lesson objectives by providing opportunities for participants to practice active listening techniques and reflect on their impact.
- Organize the lesson so that all participants engage equally, ensuring diverse voices are heard, and experiences are shared.

Engaging Romani Participants:

- Create a culturally responsive environment by including scenarios and examples relevant to Romani experiences.
- Facilitate discussions that respect and acknowledge the unique perspectives of Romani participants.

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard and markers
- PowerPoint presentation
- Handouts with key concepts and definitions
- Case studies/examples
- Video clips on active listening
- Reflection journals

Activity 2 - Lesson Outline

Lesson Plan: Active Listening Techniques to Enhance Understanding and Empathy (60 Minutes)

Estimated Time	Activities in Class	Means and Measures	Expected Results
10 Minutes	1. Introduction		

	Welcome and Icebreaker Activity: "Two Truths and a Lie" related to listening skills	Participation in icebreaker activity	Participants feel comfortable and engaged
	Brief introduction to the topic and objectives of the lesson	Initial engagement and feedback	Participants understand the lesson's objectives
15 Minutes	2. Presentation		
	Definition of Active Listening	Use of PowerPoint slides	Participants can define active listening
	Overview of key techniques: reflecting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and asking questions	Handouts with key points	Participants understand key active listening techniques
	Importance of active listening in enhancing understanding and empathy	Interactive Q&A session	Participants understand the importance of active listening
20 Minutes	3. Activities		
	Group Discussion: "How can active listening improve classroom interactions?"	Group observation and feedback	Participants generate practical examples of applying active listening
	Role-Playing Exercise: Practicing active listening in pairs	Role-play evaluations	Enhanced empathy and interpersonal skills
	Perspective-Taking Activity: "A Day in the Life of a Roma Student"	Reflection journals	Participants develop deeper empathy for students from diverse backgrounds
10 Minutes	4. Assessment		
	Reflective Journals: Participants write about their understanding and insights	Review of reflective journals	Participants demonstrate a deeper understanding of active listening

	Group Presentations: Sharing group discussion outcomes	Evaluation of presentations	Participants articulate the impact of active listening on student relationships
5 Minutes	5. Closure		
	Summary of key points covered in the lesson	Participation in summary discussion	Participants reinforce their learning
	Open floor for final questions and thoughts	Collection of feedback forms	Participants leave with resources for further exploration of active listening

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard and markers
- PowerPoint presentation
- Handouts with key concepts and definitions
- Case studies/examples
- Video clips on active listening
- Reflection journals

2. Lesson Plan: The Importance of Communication in School Settings

Activity 1 - Lesson Preparation

Duration of the lesson/lesson unit: 60 minutes

Grade Level: Professional Development for Teachers

Objective(s) of the lesson:

- Teachers will understand the critical role of communication in school settings.
- Teachers will learn and practice effective communication strategies.
- Teachers will explore the impact of strong communication on building relationships with students, parents, and colleagues.

Methods you intend to use to deliver your lesson:

- Use inclusive methods and design activities that accommodate diverse learning needs and styles.
- Provide options for participants to demonstrate understanding through various means (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic).
- Plan in advance to modify tasks or provide additional support for participants with different abilities.

Ensuring Activity Contribution to Lesson Objectives: Each activity is designed to directly contribute to the achievement of the lesson objectives by providing opportunities for participants to practice communication strategies and reflect on their impact. Organize the lesson so that all participants engage equally, ensuring diverse voices are heard and experiences are shared.

Engaging Romani Participants: Create a culturally responsive environment by including scenarios and examples relevant to Romani experiences. Facilitate discussions that respect and acknowledge the unique perspectives of Romani participants.

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard and markers
- PowerPoint presentation
- Handouts with key concepts and definitions
- Case studies/examples
- Video clips on effective communication
- Reflection journals

Activity 2 - Lesson Outline

Lesson Plan: The Importance of Communication in School Settings (60 Minutes)

Estimated Time	Activities in Class	Means and Measures	Expected Results
10 Minutes	1. Introduction		
	Welcome and Icebreaker Activity: "Communication Charades"	Participation in icebreaker activity	Participants feel comfortable and engaged
	Brief introduction to the topic and objectives of the lesson	Initial engagement and feedback	Participants understand the lesson's objectives
15 Minutes	2. Presentation		
	Definition of Effective Communication	Use of PowerPoint slides	Participants can define effective communication
	Overview of key strategies: Active Listening, Clear Messaging, Feedback, and Non-Verbal Cues	Handouts with key points	Participants understand key communication strategies
	Importance of communication in enhancing school relationships and environment	Interactive Q&A session	Participants understand the importance of effective communication
20 Minutes	3. Activities		

	Group Discussion: "How can effective communication improve school interactions?"	Group observation and feedback	Participants generate practical examples of applying communication strategies
	Role-Playing Exercise: Practicing communication in pairs (teacher-student, teacher-parent, teacher-colleague)	Role-play evaluations	Enhanced interpersonal skills and understanding
	Scenario Analysis: "Navigating a Challenging Parent-Teacher Conference"	Reflection journals	Participants develop strategies for handling difficult conversations
10 Minutes	4. Assessment		
	Reflective Journals: Participants write about their understanding and insights	Review of reflective journals	Participants demonstrate a deeper understanding of effective communication
	Group Presentations: Sharing group discussion outcomes	Evaluation of presentations	Participants articulate the impact of communication on school relationships
5 Minutes	5. Closure		
	Summary of key points covered in the lesson	Participation in summary discussion	Participants reinforce their learning
	Open floor for final questions and thoughts	Collection of feedback forms	Participants leave with resources for further exploration of effective communication

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard and markers
- PowerPoint presentation
- Handouts with key concepts and definitions
- Case studies/examples
- Video clips on effective communication
- Reflection journals

Detailed Explanation of Exercises

Exercise 1: Icebreaker

- **Objective:** To create a comfortable and open environment for discussion.
- **Activity:** Participants play "Communication Charades," where they act out communication-related scenarios.
- **Outcome:** Sets the tone for recognizing the importance of communication.

Exercise 2: Group Discussion

- **Objective:** To engage participants in reflecting on the importance of communication.
- **Activity:** Small group discussion on how effective communication can enhance school interactions.
- **Outcome:** Participants share insights and build awareness.

Exercise 3: Role-Playing

- **Objective:** To practice effective communication strategies.
- **Activity:** Role-play scenarios to demonstrate teacher-student, teacher-parent, and teacher-colleague interactions.
- **Outcome:** Participants gain practical experience and feedback on their approach.

Exercise 4: Scenario Analysis

- **Objective:** To analyze and resolve challenging communication situations.
- **Activity:** Work in groups to examine scenarios like a difficult parent-teacher conference and propose sensitive solutions.
- **Outcome:** Develop problem-solving skills in a communication context.

By the end of this training session, participants should have a deeper understanding of the importance of communication in school settings and be better equipped to engage in effective and respectful interactions.

3.

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