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SURVEY AND TEACHING GUIDELINES AGAINST ROMAPHOBIA

KITS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS



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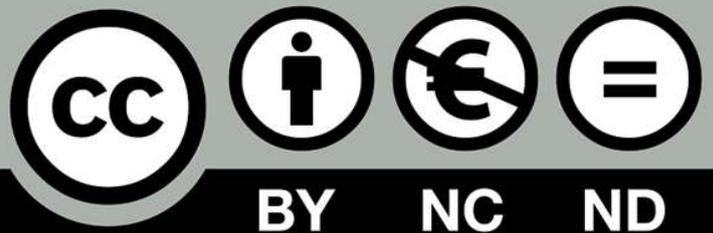
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BRIEF THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION TO SURVEY 9

What is romaphobia?

The European Roma Information Office of 2005, it defines romaphobia (also antiziganism, antigypsyism) as a specific type of racist ideology, different from and at the same time interconnected with other types of racism. Romaphobia manifests in a violent way, in hate speech, in exploitation, and discrimination. Stereotypes and representations in academic life, politics, society, segregation, stigmatization, and exclusion are other forms of romaphobia.

The terms romaphobia and antiziganism appear for the first time around 1920, and their current use is based on the academic debates of 1970-1980. It wasn't until the year 2000 that they began to be used in European institutions, thus recognizing that the roma community is the victim of a specific racism.

What kinds of romaphobia can happen in the classroom?

Romaphobia can manifest in different ways in the classroom, the most common are usually insults, criticism, or harassment of students for belonging to the roma ethnic group, their culture, their customs, or any aspect related to it, whether real or false.

Therefore, you have to be aware of whether there are roma students in the classroom, as well as identify other students who are more vulnerable despite not being roma, due to their appearance, origin, way of dressing, culture, language, skin color, etc.

When speaking about romaphobia, also consider that an average of 16% of roma women in the European Union have never attended formal education. This percentage increases in ages over 45, and only 15% of roma youth in the EU

finishes compulsory education. Therefore, within the fight for the inclusion of the roma population, it is also essential to pay special attention to school leaving.

If a roma student has economic, social, and cultural obstacles that make it difficult for them to succeed at school, it is even more important that they don't suffer harassment or discrimination from their peers (and even their teachers), so stopping bullying related to romaphobia is key to reducing dropout rates.

The problem of romaphobia exists on several levels:¹

- Within people's minds, at the level of attitudes, and it shapes the way they perceive roma.
- In their individual behavior, shaping the way people interact with and talk about roma.
- In society as a whole, in structures and policies that discriminate against the roma.

Each of these attitudes and behaviors promotes romaphobia and in turn feeds off of it.

¹ Espejos - Manual para combatir el antigitanismo a través de la educación en los derechos humanos.

What is the first step to prevent or stop romaphobia?

It is difficult to deny that in our time we educate children and teenagers in fear and rejection of what is different, because we start from the identification of roma people with delinquency, violence, aggression, immorality and evil in society.

That is why one of the first steps to prevent romaphobia is to understand what it is, and to dismantle the stereotypes and prejudices on which it is based, but also to favor equal opportunities and not ignoring the conflicts that can occur between cultures.

"Certainly, diversity enriches us, but it also poses challenges that are difficult to solve: conflicting values - even contradictory ones-, customs and ways of acting that are hardly compatible, opposing attitudes... Accepting cultural diversity is not denying that there are culturally rooted conflicts, so we must learn to live with them, educate ourselves in its analysis and treatment, and extract its educational aspect. If we

are capable of doing so, we will save ourselves the negative cost that poorly handled and poorly solved social conflicts have for the community, or those that, for having been denied, hidden, or not made explicit, end up entrenched and become almost insoluble.”²

Therefore, the first step is to raise awareness on the situation that these people live, their culture, their history, etc., teach about what romaphobia is, and develop values like empathy, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence in the classroom to prevent any type of discrimination. To do this, we recommend to work on the Cultural Diversity Didactic Unit, included in the Kit for Cultural Diversity (OER).



Photo by [Caroline Hernandez](#) in [Unsplash](#)

² SOCIEDAD Y MULTICULTURALIDAD. UNA PERSPECTIVA EDUCATIVA. Xavier Lluch

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TEACHER ON SURVEY 9

How can you detect bullying related to romaphobia?

1. The first step is to detect if there vulnerable students in the classroom, either because of their skin color, ethnicity, or culture, and monitor them to find out if there is any conflict with the rest of the students.
2. Know how to differentiate between an isolated incident or a case of bullying related to romaphobia. For this, it is usually considered that an abuse or harassment repeated three times or more has become bullying. There must also be intentionality and an imbalance of power, which is evident in romaphobic bullying, since these students are especially vulnerable.
3. Social or cultural obstacles rarely appear alone; they are usually accompanied by economic obstacles, which is why it is necessary to differentiate between romaphobia, racism, xenophobia, and aporophobia. For example: if there are two roma students, one with a good economic position and the other in a situation of poverty, the latter will usually be more vulnerable to bullying, especially bullying linked to aporophobia.
4. Be careful to notice less obvious cases of harassment or discrimination; physical aggression is usually the most obvious, but most bullying is psychological or verbal. Also, pay special attention to cyberbullying, as it is an increasingly frequent and especially serious phenomenon, because vulnerable students can be harassed 24/7, both inside and outside the classroom.
5. In addition to detecting harassment or discrimination, pay attention to other aspects or situations that are a symptom that something is not going well:
 - a) Changes in behavior or habits: it is necessary to notice if the vulnerable student drops their average grades, loses interest in certain activities, has a changing mood, changes their friendships, etc.

- b) If you notice that the vulnerable student becomes isolated and their classmates avoid being with him/her, this is considered a relational aggression: exclusion from the group.
- c) Outbursts of anger, problems with authority, and problems regulating emotions are a symptom that bullying may be taking place, and both harassers and the harassed may have these attitudes.
- d) Leaders and privileges: in a classroom there are usually students who assume the role of leaders, and who usually have other students who follow them; these situations must be watched carefully before the leadership becomes negative, using this situation to harass vulnerable students or to encourage “followers” to harass them.

What can you do with a situation of homophobia in the classroom?

1. The best option is always prevention, which is why it is key to educate the students in values like dialogue, empathy, tolerance, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, especially at younger ages. It is also essential for them to learn what homophobia is, and the main reasons that cause it, in order to avoid it.
2. In cases where prevention is no longer an option (when harassment is already happening), the first step is to investigate and gather information, speaking with the parties involved.
3. Once you have all the necessary information, a sanction is required for harassers, adjusted to the seriousness of their actions, but it is essential that this sanction has an educational and not a punitive nature, meaning that it is necessary to work with the harasser’s empathy and solidarity, and make them understand how their actions can impact other people, especially the harassed person.
4. For the victim, it is advisable to create and maintain a climate of communication, trust, and show support, but also working on assertiveness, on learning to say no, and to set limits, always without resorting to violence. If they have any feelings of guilt, make it clear to them that the aggressors are to blame, never him/her. Lastly, show them that a boost in self-confidence and a change in attitude can also improve things.

5. Regarding witnesses, explain to them that not opposing an unfair situation makes them accomplices, that many times harassers seek their applause, the benefits of being dominant, so if they react with rejection towards a bullying situation, it is much more likely to stop.
6. Lastly, one of the most useful prevention tools is to assign the figure of two or three student observers who identify and report situations of bullying (peer prevention).



CHARRATE

SURVEY 9: ROMAPHOBIA

Two new roma students have arrived this year to your classroom, what do you think?

1. I don't feel comfortable, they are not trustworthy.
2. I don't care.
3. They will surely end up creating trouble.

On the way home from school you find a group of roma boys and girls talking on the street, what do you do?

1. I cross to the other side of the street, I'm sure they'll mug me.
2. I continue my way.
3. I keep my things safe and continue that way.
4. I say hello to them, they are classmates.

What would you do if a friend introduces you to her partner and she is roma?

1. Nothing, I'd be her friend.
2. I would worry about my friend.
3. It is ok if she likes her, but I think it's better if they don't date.

You have to work in a group with a roma student, what do you think?

1. I have no problem with it.
2. I think he/she's going to slow us down, but I won't complain.
3. I ask the teacher to put me in another group.

What would you do if someone messed with your friend for being roma?

1. I would defend him/her.
2. I would never be friends with a roma person.
3. I would stay out of it; I don't want any trouble.



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