

Me and the World – Me and My Emotions

Understanding Negative Emotions and Overcoming Them Responsibly

Lesson Plan

1. Theme: Negative Emotions in Personal and Social Life: Understanding, Managing, and Transforming Difficult Feelings

Key thematic axes:

Emotional complexity and self-awareness

Negative emotions and social responsibility

Emotional regulation and ethical choice

Self-control, accountability, and repair

Peaceful conflict resolution

Impact of emotions on others and on oneself

2. Grade: 6th Grade

3. Target Group: Students attending a Greek primary school in a multicultural and multilingual environment, including students from Muslim families and diverse cultural, religious, and social backgrounds.

The lesson is designed to:

- respect cultural and religious values
- avoid moral labeling of emotions
- treat negative emotions as human experiences, not failures
- support emotional dignity and psychological safety
- encourage reflection, responsibility, and growth

4. Lesson Type: This is a conceptual, analytical, and ethical SEL lesson, focused on:

understanding negative emotions

examining their causes and consequences

developing responsible coping and regulation strategies

The lesson emphasizes real-life dilemmas, ethical reasoning, and self-reflection, not therapy or psychological diagnosis.

5. Duration: 45 minutes

6. Key Terms and Concepts: Anger, frustration, resentment, jealousy, shame, guilt, emotional trigger, emotional escalation, regulation strategies, impulse control, responsibility, intention vs. impact, ethical response, repair, reconciliation

7. Pedagogical Methods:

Guided analytical discussion

Complex case study analysis

Ethical dilemma exploration

Small-group reasoning

Role-play and simulation

Reflective writing and dialogue

8. Teaching Aids (Means):

Printed complex case studies

Emotion–trigger–response charts

Reflection worksheets

Role-play scenario cards

Whiteboard / flipchart

Power Point Presentation

9. Goals

Educational Goals

Students will learn to:

- ✓ Identify and distinguish complex negative emotions
- ✓ Understand emotional escalation and triggers
- ✓ Analyze the link between emotions, choices, and consequences

Formational Goals

Students will:

- ✓ Develop emotional regulation strategies
- ✓ Practice responsible expression of negative emotions
- ✓ Strengthen ethical decision-making
- ✓ Learn repair and reconciliation skills
- ✓ Increase awareness of emotional impact on others

10. Cross-Curricular Connections: Citizenship Education, Ethics, Language Arts, Social Studies, Digital Citizenship, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

11. Expected Results

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- ✓ Explain how negative emotions arise
- ✓ Identify emotional triggers in social situations
- ✓ Describe escalation vs. regulation
- ✓ Propose calm, responsible responses
- ✓ Reflect on repairing harm after emotional reactions

12. Preparation for the Teacher

The teacher prepares:

complex case studies with no easy answers

guiding ethical questions

clear role-play rules (respect, no mockery)

a calm and reflective classroom atmosphere

Teacher emphasis:

- Negative emotions are normal
- Responsibility lies in behavior, not feelings
- Reflection matters more than speed
- Repair is part of emotional maturity

13. Lesson Structure

A. Introduction – Activating Prior Knowledge (6 minutes)

Teacher scenario:

“You feel treated unfairly and react strongly. Later, you realize someone else was hurt by your reaction.”

Teacher questions:

Which emotions might appear first?

Which emotions might appear later?

Can emotions change over time?

Transition statement:

“Today we will explore negative emotions and how we can manage them responsibly instead of being controlled by them.”

14. Core Concepts – Theoretical Framework

Negative Emotions as Signals

Negative emotions are not bad or wrong. They are signals that something feels threatening, unfair, painful, or important.

Examples:

Anger signals injustice or boundary violation

Frustration signals blocked effort

Jealousy signals fear of loss

Shame signals fear of social judgment

Guilt signals awareness of harm

Understanding the signal helps students pause before reacting.

Emotional Escalation

Negative emotions can escalate when:

they are ignored;

they are judged or suppressed;

they are expressed impulsively.

Escalation often leads to:

hurtful words

broken trust

regret

Emotions, Choice, and Responsibility

Emotions arise automatically, but actions are chosen.

Key principle:

Strong emotions explain behavior, but they do not excuse harm.

Students learn:

intention does not cancel impact

responsibility includes repair

Overcoming Negative Emotions

Overcoming does not mean eliminating emotions.

It means: recognizing them, regulating intensity, choosing ethical responses, repairing damage.

15. Theoretical Notes for the Teacher

1.1 What Are “Negative” Emotions?

In educational psychology and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), the term negative emotions does not mean bad, wrong, or undesirable.

Rather, it refers to emotions that are unpleasant, intense, or challenging to manage, especially in social contexts.

Examples include: anger, frustration, jealousy, resentment, shame, guilt, fear of rejection.

These emotions often arise when: personal needs are blocked, expectations are violated, social belonging feels threatened, identity or dignity feels challenged

From a pedagogical perspective, negative emotions are adaptive signals, not failures. They alert the individual to internal or external imbalance.

Social Emotions and Identity Formation

1. Socially Constructed Emotions

Many negative emotions are social emotions, meaning they arise primarily in relation to others:

jealousy involves comparison

shame involves perceived judgment

pride involves recognition

guilt involves awareness of harm

These emotions are deeply connected to: identity development, sense of belonging, moral self-image

Emotional Triggers and Escalation

An emotional trigger is not the emotion itself, but the situation or interpretation that activates it.

Common triggers (in Grade 6) include:

perceived unfairness

public correction or humiliation

exclusion from peer groups

comparison with others

lack of recognition

digital interactions (messages, group chats)

Emotional Escalation

When emotions are: ignored, dismissed, judged, suppressed they tend to escalate rather than disappear. Escalation often follows this pattern:

Trigger

Emotional reaction

Impulsive behavior

Social consequence

Secondary emotions (shame, regret, anger at self)

Teaching students to interrupt escalation is more effective than focusing only on consequences.

Emotions, Choice, and Responsibility

Intention vs. Impact

At this age, students often focus on intention:

“I didn’t mean to hurt anyone.”

Pedagogically, students must learn that:

intention does not erase impact

responsibility includes acknowledging harm

repair is part of ethical maturity

Emotional Regulation as a Learnable Skill

What Emotional Regulation Is (and Is Not)?

Emotional regulation is:

not emotional suppression

not emotional control through fear

not emotional perfection

It is the ability to manage intensity, not to eliminate emotion.

The Regulation Process (Teacher Model)

A developmentally appropriate regulation model includes:

Awareness – noticing the emotion

Naming – putting words to it

Pausing – creating space before action

Choosing – selecting a response

Repairing – addressing harm if it occurred

Teachers should model this process verbally and behaviorally.

Overcoming Negative Emotions: A Transformational View

What “Overcoming” Means?

In this lesson, overcoming negative emotions does not mean:

eliminating them

ignoring them

“being positive”

It means:

understanding the message of the emotion

regulating its expression

transforming reaction into reflection

Negative emotions can become:

sources of self-knowledge;

opportunities for ethical growth;

foundations for empathy.

The Role of Empathy and Repair

Empathy as Ethical Action

Empathy is not only emotional understanding.

It includes: recognizing impact, taking responsibility, repairing relationships.

Teaching repair shifts the focus from punishment to growth.

Repair and Reconciliation

Repair may include: apology, explanation without excuses, changed behavior, rebuilding trust

16. Case Studies

Case Study 1: “Anger and Public Humiliation”

A student is corrected harshly in front of classmates and reacts with anger and sarcasm.

Discussion focus:

emotional trigger

escalation

alternative responses

Case Study 2: “Jealousy and Sabotage”

A student feels jealous of a friend’s success and spreads a rumor.

Discussion focus:

jealousy vs. insecurity

intention vs. impact

repair possibilities

Case Study 3: “Shame After Failure”

A student fails publicly and withdraws socially.

Discussion focus:

shame and identity

supportive peer responses

dignity and empathy

Advanced Case Study Variations

(You may reuse and adapt The Invisible Effort, Loyalty or Honesty, and The Group Chat Conflict, but now with deeper focus on repair, accountability, and long-term impact.)

18. Role-Play Activities

Role Play 1: “Pause – Name – Choose”

Students practice stopping emotional escalation.

Focus: self-regulation

Role Play 2: “Expressing Strong Emotions Ethically”

Students express anger, jealousy, or frustration without harm.

Focus: language and respect

Role Play 3: “Repair and Reconciliation”

Students role-play apologizing, acknowledging impact, and rebuilding trust.

Focus: accountability and growth

19. Reflective Activity

Written reflection:

Which negative emotion is hardest for me to manage?

What usually triggers it?

What strategy could help me next time?

20. Conclusion – Reflection and Closure (5 minutes)

Teacher closing message:

“Negative emotions are part of being human. What defines us is how we respond, take responsibility, and repair.”

21. Optional Extensions

Personal emotional trigger maps

Emotional regulation toolbox

Class agreement on respectful emotional expression

22. Additional Resources

Goleman, D. Emotional Intelligence (1995)

Goleman, D. Social Intelligence (2006)

CASEL (2020). SEL Framework

Council of Europe (2018). RFCDC

OECD (2021). Social and Emotional Skills