

Developing Rights

Lesson plan 8: Choose your own teacher!

Age group: 11 - 14

Aims:

To encourage pupils to formulate their own ideas of what constitutes a 'good' education.
To examine how one group of pupils have taken responsibility to ensure that they have the right to a 'good' education and a say in their own future.
To show that exercising a right also involves taking responsibilities.

What to do:

Preparation: make enough photocopies of the **worksheet: Choose your own teacher!** (below) so that you have one for every pair of pupils. Be prepared to write up questions and pupils' responses on a board or flip chart.

Ask each pupil to think about and write down their responses to the following question: 'What is your idea of a good education?' Now ask them to share their ideas with a partner and respond to the following questions together:

- 'What do you have a right to expect from your teachers in order to get a good education?'
- 'For each of these rights, what responsibilities do you have?'

Ask each pair to feed back their responses to the whole class. Write the responses up on the board in two columns. Now ask pupils to imagine that they have been given the responsibility to help to choose a new teacher. They should think of three qualities that they would look for in a new teacher and three questions they would ask candidates at an interview.

Finally, hand out copies of the 'Choose your own teacher!' sheet, asking pupils to compare the two sets of qualities and questions. Round up this activity with a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of choosing your own teacher. What responsibilities does this right involve? What skills do the pupils develop in choosing a teacher? Are these skills part of a 'good' education?

Extension work:

Pupils may wish to pursue the idea of setting up pupil panels in their school, if these do not exist already. This issue may be added to key issues identified from other activities in the unit and worked on further using activities from unit 3.

Curriculum links:

England	Scotland	Wales
<p>English: - Group discussion and interaction - different contributions; different views into account; sift, summarise and use the most important points.</p> <p>Citizenship/PSHE: - To communicate confidently with peers and adults; consider social and moral dilemmas.</p>	<p>English: - Listening in groups; talking in groups; talking about experiences, feelings and opinions; reading for information.</p> <p>Religious and Moral Education: - Relationships and moral values.</p> <p>PSD: - Social development.</p>	<p>English: - Group discussion and interaction - different contributions; different views into account ; sift, summarise and use the most important points.</p> <p>- Reading - extract meaning; analyse and discuss.</p> <p>PSE: - Communicate confidently one's feelings and views</p>

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Worksheet: 'Choose your own teacher!'

Pupils at City School, Sheffield, have been actively involved in selecting new teachers since 1990.

How does it work?

Candidates are invited to the school for a full day which runs as follows:

- Informal discussions with staff on arrival
- A guided tour around the school by pupils
- A formal interview by pupils
- Pupils feedback to recruitment staff at lunch time
- An interview by recruitment staff in the afternoon.

A teacher's view

'Every single time the student panel has interviewed, without exception, the kids have got it right. On several occasions the teachers' instincts said "No, the kids are wrong," but when it came to the afternoon interviews with staff we could see what the kids meant.' Andrew Swift, Head of English.

A pupil's view

'I think it's a good thing for the students to have an input into choosing teachers. I think in some cases some of the teachers have made their minds up about who they want to get the job before we interview them. But they are open and willing to change their minds.' Claire Wardly, Year 10, who sat on a panel for an English teacher post.

What qualities do pupils look for when selecting a new teacher?

'We look for someone with enthusiasm for their subject and someone who is positive about what they can do within the school. We also look at a teacher's body language, the way they talk to us, and the tone of their voice. We chose a teacher who spoke to us as they would speak to an adult. It was a matter of choosing the person who we thought communicated best and who had the better ideas.' Claire Wardly

What sort of questions do pupils ask?

'We asked teachers a few questions like what methods they use in teaching, how they treat children, what they use for punishments.' David Campbell, Year 11.

'We gave teachers an imaginary situation. We asked them what they would do if a pupil was naughty persistently; talking when the teacher was talking, messing about, and not concentrating or listening. We wanted to find out how the teacher would handle it.' Katie Hill, Year 11.

'We asked teachers what they would do if someone was injured or worried. For example, if a child was panicking because they had fallen down and hurt themselves, or if something had happened at home. Most teachers said that they would reassure the child, which is what we were looking for.' David Hayworth, Year 11.