

5.2 Rights and Responsibilities – Your Ideas on Your Rights

Objectives

- To allow students to identify, discuss and categorise their rights with a view to eventually comparing their situation with students in other countries.

Output

- Chart outlining the rights taken for granted, rights that you appreciate and rights that you ought to have.
- Forum posts on the rights of the child.

Previous Preparation

- Draw up on a big piece of paper a chart with three big overlapping concentric circles the first which is entitled 'rights that should be taken for granted', the second 'rights that we appreciate' and the third 'rights we ought to have.'
- Copies of the simplified version of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Introduction (30%)

Whole Group – *Explanation by teacher*

Explain the concept of rights and a brief history of children's rights.

For example that a right is something that everyone is entitled to. That it confers duties on others to ensure they do not impinge on others rights as well as ensure that all rights are provided for ... that there is quite a lot of contention on whether it is naturally given, but there is a consensus that it is universal

How do individuals/society/national governments and international organisations decide who should have which rights?

For example, families with teenagers negotiate curfew times, societies have evolved to be matriarchal or patriarchal, national governments may or may not regulate minimum wages, the World Trade Organisation determines the extent to which countries can subsidise their products.

You can discuss briefly an accessible news item or locally relevant issue that demonstrates a particular right and the way in which it benefits some and maybe restricts others.

For example, in the UK according to the 2003 Anti-social Behaviour Act, the police have the authority to disperse groups of two or more people and escort home young people under the age of 16, who are unaccompanied after 9.00 pm in a designated dispersal zone, whether or not they have engaged in anti-social or criminal behaviour.

On the one hand the local authorities and police argue that having these "curfew zones" reduces the intimidating and potentially trouble-making impact of large groups of youths in certain areas, which can prevent other people from going to those areas due to fears of theft, abuse, assault etc.

On the other hand, young people and human rights groups argue that it is not fair to treat all young people under the age of 16 as potential suspects before they have done anything wrong, that most young people are law-abiding, that it prevents them from engaging in legitimate activities such as going to the cinema and attending clubs and that young people will be alienated by this law.

In fact, in July 2005 a 15 year old boy took this law to court and achieved a ruling by High Court judges that the police could not forcibly accompany young people away from the zones back to their homes, unless they were already doing, or had already done something wrong.

Explain that the focus of the lesson will be to brainstorm, learn about and discuss Children's Rights. Mention the right to have an identity and its importance in order to receive many other rights. Emphasis should be made on Children's Rights not just a concept but also as a way of life.

Development (50%)

Small group *Discussion* *Recording ideas*

Everyone thinks they have the right to something or other in their personal lives and local area.

What rights do you have that you don't even think about and take for granted every day?

What rights do you have that you really appreciate?

What other rights do you really think you ought to have (for your age group)?

List these rights on pieces of cards or post its and place them on the chart.

Make sure one student is responsible for recording this chart so that it can be represented on Gemin-i Plus. If it is easier, the rights can be written in the form of a table rather than a concentric circled chart.

Conclusion (20%)

Whole group *Feedback*

Compare a few of your opinions with the rest of the group. Which of these rights overlap?

Thinking Ahead

If you are doing the module on the UN Convention on the rights of the child, give each student the summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child or show them how to access it.

<http://www.therightssite.org.uk/html/kyr.htm> Unicef Youth Voice

Ask them to look through it before the next lesson to save time at the beginning of the module.

