Session Guide: Debating Values and Social Responsibility

Session Outline

Description

In the first part of this session learners will be brought to reflect on the concept of values and to identify three core personal values that define them as persons. They will then be asked to debate in small groups around the relative importance of different values, and choose only three to represent the group.

In the second part of this session, learners will be introduced to the idea of social responsibility and will be asked to reevaluate their choice of personal values at the light of this concept, that is reflecting on how their chosen core values relate to the welfare of society. Finally, they will continue to debate within the same small groups, to reassess the choice of values for the group, and will be asked to explain whether the group's defined values have changed or not, and why.

Session Objectives

The objectives of this session are to:

- Lead the learners to reflect on their own personal values.
- Enable learners to reflect on the concept of social responsibility and to what extent their values relate to this concept.
- Develop the learners' debate and public speaking skills.
- Encourage teamwork.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the session learners will have:

- Increased their own self-awareness, by reflecting on their personal core values and the concept of social responsibility.
- Acquired some debating skills, which may touch one or more of the following areas:
  - confidence and self-esteem
  - higher order and critical thinking skills
  - the ability to structure and organise thoughts
  - analytical and note-taking skills

○ ability to form balanced, informed arguments and to use reasoning and evidence
○ effective speech composition and delivery.

Areas involved

- Citizenship
  - Values formation
  - Social responsibility
- Life skills
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-esteem
- Language
  - Debates
  - Public speaking

Activity: Understanding Values

Objectives

To understand the concept of personal values. To be able to identify one's own personal core values.

Expected Outcomes

Students should have understood the concept of personal values, and be able to contribute to a general list of values. They should also have made a list of three personal values which they consider to be at the centre of their values system.

Teaching Instructions

The learners are provided with a very short definition of values (Values are principles or standards of behaviour that reflect what is important in one's life). They are then asked to reflect on the definition and write in a few lines their own understanding of the definition, and possibly expand it. Some are asked to share their writing with the rest of the group.
Each learner is then asked to provide one or more examples of values. At the end of this brainstorming the group will have come up with a list of values. This can be expanded on if any particularly important values were missed.
Learners are then asked to choose three values that they consider their most important core values, and order them by importance: the first in the list will therefore be the value that they consider the most important. Each of them is then asked to share their list with the whole group.

Suggested Guidelines

Below is a (not complete) list of possible values. These are some of the values that the learners might mention. If learners are struggling with the definition or identification of values you could provide some examples.

List of values: Dependability, Reliability, Loyalty, Commitment, Open-mindedness, Consistency, Honesty, Efficiency, Innovation, Creativity, Good humor, Compassion, Spirit of adventure, Motivation, Positivity, Optimism, Passion, Respect, Fitness, Courage, Education, Perseverance, Patriotism, Service to others, Fairness, Spirituality, Success, Integrity, Environmentalism.

Student Instructions

- Each of you has one or more personal values. Today you will identify your personal values and debate about their relative importance. Before you start, consider the following definition of values:

  Values are principles or standards of behaviour that reflect what is important in one's life.
- Write a in a few lines an explanation of how you understand the definition, and expand on it to make it as clear as possible. Share your explanation with the rest of the group.
- Write down a list of all the possible values you can think of.
- Choose three values from your list that you believe are the most important in your life, and order them by importance. Share your list with your colleagues. To get a sense of what your core values are, ask yourself what activities bring you the most joy, or what you couldn't live without. What gives your life meaning or what do you want to achieve? If you can articulate those answers, you will likely see a pattern that you can boil down into a single concept, such as a consistently positive attitude.

Activity: Initial Debate

Objectives

To be able to debate about personal values.

Expected Outcomes

Learners should have organised their ideas, brainstorming and taking notes to come up with arguments to defend their choice of values. They should also have prepared and structured a short speech.

Teaching Instructions

Learners are divided into small groups (4 to 5 members) and asked to debate around the relative importance of their chosen values. Each group should come up with three values that represent the group.

Learners discuss within their groups the relative importance of the values they have chosen. For instance, learners should discuss whether patriotism is more or less important for the group than, for example, respect. In your discussion learners should consider:

- Take quick notes using key words rather than full sentences. Think about why the values you have chosen are high up in the list of values of your group, or why they are considered the most important values in your life, and the life of the other members of your group.
- Write down as many arguments you can think of to support each of the values you have chosen; then choose a few of the strongest or more convincing arguments.
- Prepare a short speech. This is usually structured in five parts:
    - Introduction. Express your message and why it's important to your audience, as well as yourself.
    - Statement of fact. Break down the general thesis of your argument into smaller parts. This is where you name reasons why the current issue exists.
    - Confirmation, or proof. Craft your main argument here, as well as reasons why your argument is a successful one.
    - Refutation. Acknowledge your opposition, giving some credence to their argument, before challenging their point-of-view.
    - Conclusion. Wrap up your main points of your argument and give instructions on what you want your audience to do or think.
- Deliver your speech:
    - Speak slowly and enunciate
    - Make eye contact
    - Differentiate the tone of your voice and interest your audience.
- Learners will then vote for the values to become the group's values. Each member will score the values that have been discussed, from 0 to 10, and the total score will be computed per each value. The three values with the highest score will be elected group's values. Each group will then be asked to share their chosen values with all the others.

Activity: Social Responsibility

Objectives

To understand the concept of social responsibility. To reflect on how one's own personal core values relate to the idea of social responsibility.

Expected Outcomes

Learners should have understood the concept of social responsibility, and reflected on how their personal values relate to this concept.

Teaching Instructions

Learners are given a definition of social responsibility (Social responsibility is an ethical theory in which individuals are accountable for fulfilling their civic duty, and the actions of an individual must benefit the whole of society). They are then asked to reflect on it and write in a few lines their own understanding of the definition. They are then asked to reflect on the extent to which their chosen personal values relate to social responsibility.

Student Instructions

- Let us now introduce the concept of social responsibility. Here is a definition:
    Social responsibility is an ethical theory in which individuals are accountable for fulfilling their civic duty, and the actions of an individual must benefit the whole of society.
- Write a few lines to explain your understanding of social responsibility. Afterwards share your interpretation of the definition with the rest of the group.
- Look back at your personal list of three values. Ask yourself: Do my values relate to social responsibility? How? How many do and how many do not? To get a sense of how your core values relate to the idea of social responsibility, ask yourself whether the thing that gives your life meaning or that you want to achieve also benefits the wider society. After you have reflected on this, would you change your list or would you leave it as it is?

Activity: Reviewing Values

Objectives

To be able to debate about personal values and how these reflect the idea of social responsibility.

Expected Outcomes

Learners should have further reorganised their ideas, and some even their personal choice of values. In light of the new concept of social responsibility they should have come up with new/stronger arguments to defend their choice of values. In this second debate they should have more confidence in giving a speech.

Teaching Instructions

Learners will work within the same small groups as earlier, to reassess the relative importance of their chosen values in the light of the concept of social responsibility.

Activity

- In the same group as before and discuss again with your colleagues the values you have chosen to represent your group, taking into consideration the definition of social responsibility.
- At the end of the discussion, you will have finalised your group's list of three values. Share your chosen values with the others, particularly explaining whether the list has changed or remained the same, and why.