SHAPING THE FUTURE

How can technology enhance participation?

Using technology to study at home during the recent pandemic has given young people the experience of being more responsible for their own learning. Many will want to continue this experience when they return to school after the pandemic is over. This lesson looks at ways in which young people can play a more active role in their education when they return to school, and how technology can help with this.

Learners will be able to:

► Reflect on the experience of studying at home and the new responsibilities this has given them;

► Analyse opportunities for them to become more involved in decisions which affect them at school;

► Identify ways in which technology can help them become more active participants in their own education;

► Develop their sense of democracy and autonomous learning skills.

STIMULUS

Reflective exercise:

Learners reflect on how they spend their learning time now they are in isolation at home. They compare an average day of learning at home now with one at school before the pandemic. They think about the different things they do and who decides how and when they should study. They record their thoughts in the form of a table or mind-map and share these with classmates.

> Paired work would be ideal for this, e.g. talking via WhatsApp. But it is not essential.
>
> There are various free online tools that can help with this, e.g. Coggle for mind-maps.

DISCUSSION

After the reflective exercise:

► What would you say are the main differences between an average learning day at home and at school?

► Who makes the decisions about what and how you learn at home? Who makes them at school?

► What about doing schoolwork at home? Who makes the decisions about that?

► When you go back to school would you like to make more of your own decisions there? Why or why not?

► What things do you think young people could play more of a part in deciding at school? What things could they decide by themselves?

► How could schools use technology to get more young people involved in making decisions in school?

> Paired- or small-group work would be ideal, but not essential. You could try using an online discussion tool, like Padlet.
>
> You may need to prompt with examples, e.g. online voting for the pupil council, an electronic student-newsletter, a digital school survey on bullying.

CONCLUSION

Introduce the concept of children's rights, in particular the right of children to express their views on matters affecting them and to have their views respected. Sometimes, this means being able to decide things for themselves, and sometimes, sharing the decision with other people. It depends who is involved. It is definitely not a right to get everything they want.

Connect this right to the idea of democracy. Explain how having the right to play a part in decision-making is central to democracy, but it has to be shared with other people.

> Article 12, Convention on the Rights of the Child.

ASSIGNMENT

Learners think of a way technology could be used in their school to help young people play more of a part in decision-making there when the pandemic is over. They develop a visual presentation explaining their idea and why they think it is a good one.

> Small-group work would be ideal for this, but not essential.
>
> For free online tools learners, see: https://www.codemom.ai/best-online-presentation-tools-for-students/

FOLLOW-UP

Learners make their presentations to the class. Class members think about the advantages and disadvantages of the different proposals, and decide which they think is the best.

They consider whether they might make this presentation for real when they go back to school, e.g., to the school board.

> You may want to prepare a simple on-line peer-evaluation template for this, or ask learners to devise one themselves.

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Active participation

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