

Activity B:

Concepts about conflict

Teacher's Briefing

Activity B: Nuclear Concepts about conflict

Further notes

Plenary activity

Materials for Students

Scene setting cards

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Activity B:

Concepts about conflict: Activity overview

Concepts to examine

Conflict, conflict resolution, peace personally and within the school community, peace internationally in the world community.

Materials and space needed

Scene setting cards on the following pages (graded according to difficulty), sugar paper, thick markers and enough floor space to move around.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the lesson:

All students should be able to name a reason for and a reason against nuclear weapons.

Most students will be able to identify if they agree with certain statements and why.

Some students will be able to compare weapons held by individuals in schools with weapons held by countries.

Overview

By relating it to an issue that is familiar, weapons in school, students begin to understand the complexities of the nuclear weapons debate. Via small group work and active learning, different perspectives are discussed and explored.

Instructions

Part One

- Divide students into small groups. Give each group a set of 'weapons in school' cards.
- Students then sort the cards into 3 piles: agree, disagree and 'don't know' OR stick them in the aforementioned categories onto a sheet of sugar paper and annotate them with any additional ideas or thoughts.
- Bring the class together to discuss the cards placed as 'don't know'. How did others in the class place the cards?

Part Two

- Mark out (physically with chalk or tape, or imagined) a line from one end of the classroom to the other. This is a continuum: one end is 'strongly agree', the other 'strongly disagree'. The middle can be used for those unsure.
- Read out the statements and students situate themselves along the line as to their view.
- Question students as to their position. Students can move if their minds are changed by hearing fellow students' reasons and ideas.
- Depending on the ability level of the class, use the following cards to increase the difficulty of the activity:
 - Level 1 - mushroom cloud
 - Level 2 - missile
 - Level 3 - submarines

Plenaries

- Split the class into two and ask them to use the concepts they have explored to debate whether Britain should retain nuclear weapons.
- In pairs, students write down arguments for and against nuclear weapons and report back to class with an opinion.
- Explore the similarities and differences between weapons in school and nuclear weapons.

For example:

- Similarity: If lots of people get weapons for their own protection this could lead to many other people getting weapons following their example.
- Difference: If one person gets stabbed at school, it does not kill the whole school and surrounding neighbourhood as a nuclear bomb would.

How effective are measures to try and get rid of both of these sorts of weapons?

Activity B:

Concepts about conflict: Further information

Discussions

Discussions about nuclear weapons often evoke strong emotional reactions. It is generally a subject that people feel very strongly about one way or another. Many reasons for and against disarming nuclear weapons are argued very passionately. Investigating such issues is essential for young people's ability to think critically and explore views other than their own. Yet, the issues can be quite daunting for young people, as the concept of a nuclear explosion can be difficult to grasp straight away. Beginning with weapons in school contextualises another debate about the proliferation of arms in a familiar framework.

Weapons in schools

Weapons have become a big problem in many schools across the country. A Home Office backed report in 2004 found that 10% of boys aged 11 and 12 reported to have carried a knife or other weapon in the previous year and 8% said they had attacked someone intending serious harm. By the age of 16, the figure had risen to 24% who have carried a knife and 16% who had attacked somebody intending harm. Many of these young people reported that these violent incidents often occurred at school.

The reasons for carrying the weapons ranged from viewing it a status symbol to regarding it as a fashion item. However, the main reasons seemed to be fear and victimisation. Approaches to deal with the situation included running conflict resolution and mentoring projects with gang members, educational incentives about the danger of carrying weapons and developing materials on the subject for use in schools and youth groups.

Nuclear weapons

The reasons given for the retention of nuclear weapons are often similar sounding to those given by young people regarding personal arms. Fear of attack is a major one. Other reasons include status, just as with the armed young people.

Former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan stated:

"The more that those states that already have [nuclear weapons] increase their arsenals, or insist that such weapons are essential to their national security, the more other states feel that they too must have them for their security."

This rationale could easily be applied to those who carry knives and guns, for instance, the more young people justify carrying knives for their protection, the more other young people will be inclined to feel they must carry knives for their protection too. This is what makes the two subjects very interesting to compare.

<p>If I brought a weapon into school my teachers would be angry with me.</p>	<p>I would bring a weapon into school to protect myself from others with weapons.</p>
<p>I would bring a weapon into school in case I had to use it in a fight.</p>	<p>Having a gun at school is worse than having a knife.</p>
<p>If nobody had weapons, our school would be a safer place.</p>	<p>Gun/knife amnesties can work (i.e. When everyone turns in their weapons at a special deposit point).</p>
<p>If nobody had weapons, our school would be a safer place.</p>	<p>Gun/knife amnesties can work (i.e. When everyone turns in their weapons at a special deposit point).</p>

<p>If everyone had weapons in school, then no-one would get hurt.</p>	<p>You should be excluded for having a weapon at school.</p>
<p>Hitting people gets my point across.</p>	<p>Teachers should also carry weapons.</p>
<p>Britain needs nuclear weapons because other countries have nuclear weapons.</p>	<p>Britain can never use nuclear weapons because the results would be so horrific. (one of Britain's nuclear bombs could kill over a million people).</p>
<p>Britain should not be the first to use a nuclear bomb in a conflict.</p>	<p>Britain could use the nuclear bomb if one had already been used against itself or its allies.</p>

<p>Britain should take the first step and get rid of its nuclear weapons.</p>	<p>Britain should enter serious discussions with other countries to all get rid of their weapons together.</p>
<p>Nuclear weapons should not be used as they cause illness and deformities in future generations.</p>	<p>Nuclear weapons should not be used as they kill civilians. They cannot just aim at military targets.</p>
<p>If Britain disarms, it will be bombed.</p>	<p>As Britain has about 215 bombs, it should reduce its numbers. It does not need more than 1.</p>
<p>Britain has never used any nuclear weapons, so there is no point keeping them.</p>	<p>I would be willing to campaign against nuclear weapons.</p>

<p>As Britain's biggest threat is from terrorists not from a particular country, our nuclear weapons are useless.</p>	<p>Britain's nuclear weapons should be replaced with other types of non-nuclear weapons.</p>
<p>Up to £2.4bn a year is spent on maintaining Britain's nuclear weapons system. This is too much. (For example, this money would be worth more than 80,000 new nurses and teachers every year).</p>	<p>If Britain gave up its nuclear weapons, it would lose power and its place on the world stage.</p>
<p>Britain's nuclear weapons are not independent as help is needed from the United States to get them and fire them.</p>	<p>Countries that have disarmed their nuclear weapons are secure enough with conventional armies.</p>
<p>Britain should get rid of all its nuclear weapons but remain 'nuclear ready' i.e. technicians on standby who can build a nuclear weapon if necessary in a very short space of time.</p>	<p>Depleted uranium is a by-product of making nuclear weapons and nuclear power and is lethal if it is breathed in or eaten via food. It should not be used in bullets or tanks.</p>