

Working with Students around Current Affairs in the Classroom

Organising institution:

University-College Thomas More Mechelen

Faculty/Department/Programme/External partners:

Primary education teacher training

Abstract:

Working with students around current affairs using the skills 'systems thinking' and 'philosophising'.

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Description:

Within the framework of the module 'Kind in de wereld' (Child in the World), students work with current affairs. Two approaches are used to that end: 'systems thinking' and 'philosophising'. Each year, Djapo fleshes this out in consultation with the lecturers.

The sessions have a two-fold purpose: Students experience, themselves, how they can use methodologies regarding systems thinking and take part in a philosophical conversation. In addition, they learn how they can apply both skills in their classroom practice to work with pupils around current affairs and sustainable development.

- Part 1:

Students are introduced to systems thinking and establish the link with Education for Sustainable Development and the importance of current affairs. Systems thinking is an important skill for teachers because it is very valuable to make complex themes comprehensible. Methodologies regarding systems thinking encourage them to look for connections: between cause and effect, between different perspectives, between the overall picture and the smaller details.

The students apply various methodologies to newspaper articles. They use these methodologies later on in the module to explore and examine their field of action.

During short brainstorming sessions they look for ways to make methodologies concrete for the different age groups in primary education.

- Part 2:

Philosophising is introduced to students as a skill within Education for Sustainable Development. During a philosophical conversation they experience the power of questioning themselves and each other. Philosophising about sustainability topics requires everyone to be open and to participate. It makes sure that there is no moralising, but that everyone is genuinely asked after their opinion.

Students themselves use newspaper articles to draw up a discussion plan, formulate philosophical (and other) questions and draw their own conclusions which may inspire them later on in their own practice.

Lecturers continue to teach the skills 'systems thinking' and 'philosophising' throughout the module and ask students to apply them at their own levels. The sessions provided by Djapo are not just intended to assist students, but also to reinforce lecturers: from ready-made teaching frameworks and teaching material to coaching which offers lecturers footholds to assist the students themselves with regard to Education for Sustainable Development.

