



Teachers' Guide

Version 4.0

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1. OVERVIEW

Evidence shows that the long term solution to tackling violent extremism lies in prevention. The most effective way to prevent young people from turning to violence is to encourage open and honest conversations on attitudes, ideas and choices in a safe and positive environment.

This guide is developed for a set of interactive games in which young people are encouraged to explore different points of view and make a range of decisions. The aim is to counter the spread of misinformation, negative ideas and attitudes by offering an interactive session in which students are presented with a series of choices, encouraging them to develop their understanding of consequences.

At specific points in the scenarios, students are presented with challenging decisions that form the focal point for class discussion. Positive messages are woven into the narrative throughout, and group discussions will encourage students to extract the positive ideas and to reflect on their merits.

Choices & Voices has been supported by the Police, developed by PlayGen in collaboration with Birmingham University's School of Education and relevant academics, the DCSF and a number of regional schools.

It has been rigorously researched and is in full accordance with the National Curriculum, DCSF's National Strategy, and covers specific areas within the Citizenship, PSHE and SEAL curriculum.

Learning objectives

- To promote understanding and critical conversation on belief systems, as well as social and economic inequality.
- To encourage productive teamwork in response to difficulties and grievances to get students to learn together, develop their social skills and empathy and work towards a safe and cohesive community
- To emphasise commonality and respecting differences between students.

This interactive session will enable students to engage with a wide range of material from key stage 3 and 4 of the Citizenship, PSHE Personal well being, and SEAL as outlined in the Curriculum and by the DCSF in the National Strategy. The following areas are exemplified within the two scenarios.

Key Stage 3: the effects of all types of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying, racism and discrimination, and how to challenge them assertively.

Key Stage 4: to challenge offending behaviour, bullying, racism and discrimination assertively; to take the initiative in giving and receiving support.

Resources required

- A computer for one or two pupils working alone or in pairs.
- Choices and Voices is available online or offline. If played online, each computer will need to be connected to the Internet. If accessed offline, the game must reside on each computer.

Breakdown of the Game

'Choices and Voices' is divided into two short scenarios, with each scenario divided into a series of acts and scenes. The scenarios take place in a diverse multicultural community in the West Midlands and the player is a local resident and school pupil.

Scenario 1

In Scenario 1 the player is led through the interactive story. A new, relatively unknown group of people have settled within the player's community and the player's friends, who have negative opinions of the unnamed group, are planning to attack their community meeting with eggs.

They want the player to participate and have told the player not to tell anyone. The player will have an opportunity to warn authorities about this attack and a more dangerous attack that follows.

Scenario 1 includes issues of peer pressure and the seductive power of adventure and the sense of belonging it can engender.

Players will encounter examples of theological distortion and misrepresentation and the characters display a need for cognitive closure. In response to these negative features, the scenario emphasises the characters' commonality and the importance of contributing to a safe and cohesive environment. These are all possible discussion points.

Scenario 2

In the second scenario, the player is leading the group. With this responsibility, he/she must consider each choice on offer very carefully, as the success of the group depends entirely on his/her choices.

A large-scale regeneration is planned for a local park and the young people are unhappy. The player wants to stop the development and so must decide between violent or peaceful protest.

Scenario 2 includes examples of an unquestioning respect for a self-proclaimed authority and the characters exhibit a need to feel unique or special. Positive aspects include working together for a common goal and committing to honest and critical dialogue. Again these are the primary discussion points from this scenario.

Citizenship Curriculum Links

Level	Units	Programme of study reference
KS3	<p>4: Britain – a diverse society? 7: Local democracy 9: The significance of media in society 13: Citizenship and RE: How do we deal with conflict? 14: Developing skills of democratic participation</p>	<p>1b the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding 1g the importance of resolving conflict fairly 1h the significance of the media in society 2a think about topical political, spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, problems and events by analysing information and its sources, including ICT-based sources 2b justify orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events 2c contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in debates 3a use their imagination to consider other people’s experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own 3c reflect on the process of participating</p>
KS4	<p>1: Human rights 3: Challenging racism and discrimination.</p>	<p>1b the origins and implications of the diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding 1d the importance of playing an active part in democratic and electoral processes 1f the opportunities for individuals and voluntary groups to bring about social change locally, nationally, in Europe and internationally 1j the wider issues and challenges of global interdependence and responsibility, including sustainable development and Local Agenda 21 2a research a topical political, spiritual, moral, social or cultural issue, problem or event by analysing information from different sources, including ICT-based sources, showing an awareness of the use and abuse of statistics 2b express, justify and defend orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events 2c contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in formal debates 3a use their imagination to consider other people’s experiences and be able to think about, express, explain and critically evaluate views that are not their own.</p>

PSHE Curriculum Links

Key stages 3 & 4

Personal identities:

- Reflect on and evaluate their achievements and strengths in different areas of their lives.
- Recognise strong emotions and identify ways of managing these positively.
- Recognise that external factors, such as relationships, achievements and setbacks, can affect emotional wellbeing, and identify how they can take this into account.

Healthy Lifestyle:

- Demonstrate effective ways of resisting negative pressure, including peer pressure.

Risk:

- Describe the positive and negative impacts of risk-taking on their health and wellbeing.
- Assess and manage risks associated with personal lifestyle choices and situation, try new ideas and face challenges safely.

Relationships:

- Identify the importance of having a variety of social and personal relationships and how these can impact on their lives and wellbeing.

Diversity:

- Describe differences and diversity and demonstrate respect and empathy towards others who live their lives differently from them.
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination in an appropriate manner.
- Demonstrate recognition of the achievements, strengths and worth of others.

SEAL Curriculum Links

Choices & Voices can be used effectively as a resource to help better deliver on 'Learning to be together – Social skills and empathy' in particular:

- Conflict resolution - sessions 1 to 6
- Managing strong feelings - sessions 1 to 5

Character Profiles



Name: Athena

Characteristics: Unstable home with lack of parental contact. Looks for ways to rebel to substitute purpose. Easily swayed to take part in unlawful activities, often under the radar as good at covering her tracks.

Primary Traits: Intelligent, rebel

Secondary Traits: Lacks purpose, deceptive



Name: Han

Characteristics: Aggressive and can create havoc. Constantly on the lookout for confrontations to prove his power. Deprived background, violent parents and traumatic childhood.

Primary traits: Angry, judgemental

Secondary traits: Self-justified, reactionary



Name: Rua

Characteristics: High achiever but feels isolated due to racial background or religion. They feel they have something to prove.

Primary traits: Intelligent, dogmatic.

Secondary traits: Suspicious of authority, misfit.



Name: Jaffar

Characteristics: Takes pleasure in making people laugh and is good at defusing arguments with humour. A confident teenager who generally gets on with a variety of people, including bullies.

Primary traits: Laid back, creative

Secondary traits: Confident, unassuming



Name: Mike

Characteristics: Loud, centre of attention, thrill seeker. Bullies others for own enjoyment. Assumes leading positions. Underneath he is unsure and lacks real confidence and good judgment.

Primary traits: Extrovert, Adventure driven.

Secondary traits: Manipulative, uncaring.



Name: Lucy

Characteristics: Stable and inquisitive, not taking things at face value. Can see a situation from many viewpoints, offering solutions and trying to help others.

Primary traits: Inquisitive, logical.

Secondary traits: Empathizes, positive outlook.



Name: Linden

Characteristics: Has not been exposed to a varied life and looks to those with a similar background to lead them. Susceptible to being bullied into situations or doing things to fit in.

Primary traits: Introvert, vulnerable.

Secondary traits: Lack of belonging, easily lead



Name: Soraya

Characteristics: Moderate personality with traditional tendencies. Follows rules without questioning because they look up to authority. Does not like confrontation.

Primary traits: Conformist, stable.

Secondary traits: Lacks confidence, team player.

2. LESSON PLANS

Introduction (5 mins)

- Position each pupil at a computer (or in pairs if they are sharing) and explain that the game play is based on choices.
- Explain to pupils that they may be exposed to a degree of violence and peer pressure within the game and they may be dealing with issues such as bullying, peer pressure and religious and cultural intolerance. That they will also be faced with potentially difficult decisions which need careful consideration.
- It would be useful for the pupils to be made aware of the key concepts within the curriculum as guidance.
- Encourage students to think about their choices carefully and be ready to talk about their decisions openly.

Scenario 1 - Individual or pairs (10 to 15 mins)

- Ask students to play scenario 1 and if in pairs to discuss options and decide on the best course of action together.
- Monitor game play to ensure students are on course to complete the game in the allotted time.

Discussion whole class (15 to 30 mins)

- Encourage a quick recap of the narrative to pull out the major features.
- Open a discussion on the most difficult problems, why they are difficult and what is the best response.
- Possible topics include: Peer pressure; Contributing to a safe and cohesive environment; the need for cognitive closure; theological distortion and where to find the facts; issues of commonality and respect.
- Potential questions relating to these topics have been suggested in the Additional Notes within this document.

Scenario 2 - Individual or pairs (10 to 15 mins)

- Again encourage students to think through their choices carefully and be ready to report back on their outcomes.

Recapping pairs (5 mins)

- Have students recap their narratives. This time in pairs.

Discussion (10 to 30 mins)

- Ask students to discuss methods they can use to voice their opinions, such as letters to the press, blogs and the like.
- Open a discussion on the problems they faced in Choices and Voices and the methods they could use to respond to them in real life.
- Ask the students about where extremism may rise, such as Animal Rights, Green Peace, Pro-Life movements, and extreme sports fans. This could also be set as homework.
- Topics may include: An unquestioning faith in a self-proclaimed authority figure; the need to be unique and special; working together for common goals and the importance of critical dialogue.
- These topics are covered in the additional notes.

Extended Lesson and Home study suggestions

- For an extended lesson, each scenario can be played in a separate lesson. Asking the students to take more in-depth notes and to explore particular issues that are raised in more detail. Each topic such as bullying or peaceful protesting can present potential discussion and homework themes.
- Students can be set to play the game again at home, this time making a range of different decisions and writing a short comparative report.
- For a more in depth exploration, students can be asked to research a current issue in relation to the game, collect media coverage and present alternative solutions to resolve the situation in response to their learning.

SCENARIO 1

Social and Economic Exclusion, Isolation

At the beginning of Scenario 1, Han talks about experiencing economic exclusion – his mum can't find a job and blames the religious community, which they can't relate to. Han says, 'My mum ain't had a job since we moved from London, coz they take them all.' The actions are spurred on by Han and Athena's false accusations that make distorted and untrue statements about the people at the community centre. Mike says: 'It's one of their beliefs innit? - thou shalt stink.' The player is given the option of adding to the list of false accusations.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- How much do you think that group know about the religious community?
- How could misinformation about an individual or group be damaging for the entire community?
- What might they have done differently if they had gathered facts about the group?

Peer Pressure and being Seduced by Adventure, Secrecy or Belonging

Athena comes up with the idea to throw eggs at people from a religious community. The group's focus is on being brave enough to do it – Athena says 'you need to have a bit of guts' (- peer pressure and being seduced by adventure, secrecy). They're also excited by what it will mean for the community they belong to – 'we'll be doing the ends proud' (belonging).

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- What do you do if a friend has a bad idea that they want you to go along with?
- When do you speak up if you don't agree with something your friends are saying or asking you to take part in?

The need for purpose and respect:

Mike and Han have a very rigid world view and this affects the choices they are able to make. Although this world view is not of a religious nature it controls the group in Scenario 1 when they are in charge. When they are challenged by the player or others they become adamant about their view of the world. If the player says that they don't want to throw the egg at the boy, Jaffar agrees and says that the group only want another victim. Han responds defensively with his own distorted view of the situation – 'Nah, it's coz this kid thinks he's better than us, and he ain't.'

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- How often does Han listen to the people around him? What happens when they disagree with him?

Feelings of Underachievement

Athena says her dad blames this religious community for bringing the area down. Like Mike, her dad also blames them for a lack of employment opportunities. This leads to the player's group making false and distorted accusations about the religion, which leads to their plan to attack the community centre.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- What do Athena and Han blame the religious community for? How much of that do you think is true?
- What things stand in the way of getting what you want in life? (You may want to give an example like 'I want to get a good job' etc.)
- How can you get around things that do stand in your way?

The unquestionable respect in an authority figure

Han asks the player if they're ready to go along with the egging plan. The player can choose to go along with what the leaders are saying about the religious group and join in - 'Yeah, course. We got to defend our ends against those chicken haters' or refuse to take part - 'I ain't throwing eggs at old ladies and little kids and stuff. It's embarrassin'.'

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- What did you think of Mike and Han as leaders in this scenario?
- How would you do things differently if you were the leader?

The need for cognitive closure

In the middle of Scenario 1, Lucy and Rua arrive to challenge the idea of throwing eggs at the religious community. They ask questions and make statements that challenge the group's plans. In one instance, Lucy asks, 'Does everybody have to be the same as you, is that it?' and in another Rua says, 'They got just as much right as us to do what they want. Why you lot eggin' them?' Han's response is aggressive and he refuses to answer their questions: 'Shut up with your "why this" and "why that"... just watch and learn yeah?'

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- How did the group react when Lucy and Rua asked them why they were going to throw eggs?
- Why wasn't Han able to explain why they were egging the community centre?

Migration, Life Change and Theological Distortion

The people who are assaulted at the end of Scenario 1 are targeted because they are viewed as being "different". The negative experiences that the young person gains from the actions of the player's group could help fuel extreme ideas about people outside of his community.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- How will the boy who had the egg thrown at him think about people that aren't part of his religious community now?
- What would you do if you had an egg thrown at you because of who you are?

Positive Attitudes and Behaviours

Jaffar's use of humour also promotes commonality in the group, often diffusing bullying situations and treating the leaders like equals. When Han berates the religious group in the first scenario for not eating eggs he points out, 'I don't like scrambled eggs. Do you have to teach me a lesson too?'

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- How do Mike and Jaffar treat people differently? Who would you rather hang around with?
- Think of two people that you know who are very different. Can you think of any things they have in common?

Promoting honest and critical conversations

Again Jaffar's humour often acts to take the steam out of misleading and false accusations. At the beginning of the first scenario, Mike says that it's part of the religious community's doctrine to smell bad. Jaffar asks (depending on the player's choice) whether Mike is on 'a fact-free diet or something'.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- When do we get an opportunity to talk to people about what we believe in and find out what they believe?
- When you hear people talking about something that you think isn't true do you challenge them about it? If you do, what's the best way to do this?

SCENARIO 2

Bullying, Humiliation and Exposure to Violence

At the beginning of Scenario 2, either Han or Mike (depending on player choices) describes being bullied and intimidated when they go to other meeting places in the city. Han says, 'You go into the wrong part of town and you're likely to get a kicking'. Mike says, 'We're always having older kids starting trouble when we hang out in other ends.' We then see that Mike and Han both have the most aggressive and destructive solutions to the problem of the park development, partly because of this.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- How do you think Linden felt when Mike kept telling him to shut up?
- How do you think Linden feels about Mike?
- How could Linden respond to Mike's bullying?

Peer Pressure and being Seduced by Adventure, Secrecy or Belonging

When the group find out about the City Hall open day, Han and Lucy have very different ideas about how to respond. Han wants to disrupt the event, 'we should just mess the place up' (seduced by adventure, secrecy). Lucy however wants to protest peacefully and openly. Her desire to belong does not motivate her to justify negative actions.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- What do you do if a friend has a bad idea that they want you to go along with?
- When do you speak up if you don't agree with something they're saying?

Belief in an Essentially Bad system

In scenario 2, Mike, Han and Athena are all convinced that the council will not listen to them. This leads to their assertion that they must threaten and humiliate the council in order for it to take them seriously.

Lucy and Rua's attitudes are different. They are confident that the problem is not with the whole political system but with a small section of the council – the Law and Order party. If the player agrees and makes decisions based on this view, they are able to come up with a constructive response which is more successful.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- Why do characters like Mike and Athena think there's no point protesting? Are they right?
- When things go wrong for us who do we blame? (You may want to give an example like 'can't get to school on time because the bus is delayed' etc.)

Belief in a special cultural arrangement between dominant groups and the state

When the flats are targeted as a new site for development the group is certain that the Law and Order party have pushed this through with the council in order to get revenge for ending their plans in developing the park. Linden says, 'It's revenge for the park, pure and simple...'

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- Do you think that the Law and Order party did decide to have the flats knocked down to get revenge for the park?
- What other reasons could there be?

Belief in cultural or religious identity as opposed to modern society

The group's cultural identity is challenged by the plans of the Law and Order party councillors to redevelop their meeting place. The councillors' aim is to reduce their perceived nuisance to society. Mike and others view this targeted threat to the group's culture as an invitation to use aggressive tactics that will define the group and intimidate a negative political system.

Character's like Lucy, Rua and Jaffar are more interested in reaching outside of the group in order to help defeat challenges to their culture. For example, when the flats are threatened with redevelopment, they champion the idea of getting the wider community's help by organising an online petition.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- Who was planning to take away the park from the group? Why?
- How did you react to that? Was it successful or not? Why do you think it worked/didn't work?

The unquestionable respect in an authority figure

In Scenario 2 the player's attitudes to authority are exposed in a different way when they are made leader. When Lucy comes up with an idea to save the flats with an online petition, they can aggressively defend their leadership – 'I make the plans!' or encourage people to work with them in an encouraging and inclusive manner: 'Good thinkin' Luce. We can get loads more people interested that way.'

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- How were you different when you were a leader in the second scenario?
- How should we view leaders?

Working together for common goals

Lucy encourages the group to look for solutions which involve the wider community. When the park is threatened with development plans, instead of going along with an idea to keep plans within the group, she suggests that they 'get everyone who uses the park and go protest.'

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- How does Lucy's plan to save the park differ from Han's?
- What situations can you think of where it's better to work together with other people than to just try to do it yourself?

The need to be unique and special

The Choices and Voices material encourages young people to talk openly about their beliefs without the fear of unjustified criticism or complaint.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS:

- Describe the different types of beliefs that each character has.
- What about their non-religious views? How do you think they feel about where they live, for example?

3. ADDITIONAL NOTES

3.1. Understanding Violent Extremism in Young People

For many of us it can be difficult to understand why anyone would turn to violent extremism. What is clear is that violence is often a desperate and misguided response to a negative life experience. For anger and resentment to turn to extremism, an individual must be led by certain negative ideas and attitudes that restrict dialogue and promote violence. Across the world, minority groups are targeting young people and spreading such ideas. As always, prevention is the best response. To do that we need to address these underlying causes by promoting positive ideas and supporting young people in developing their decision making and become effective members of society.

This document outlines some of the life experiences, ideas and attitudes that can contribute towards violent extremism. These are all relevant points to discuss with young people. What is important to remember is that while none of these are certain causes on their own, together they may combine and lead to violent behaviour.

In addition, there is a section on positive attitudes and ideas that can be encouraged through open discussion.

3.2. Life Experiences that may lead to violent extremism

Listed below are a series of life experiences that can lead to violent extremism. In each instance, specific scenes from the game are cited so you can give examples and create starting points for discussion.

3.2.1 - Peer Pressure and being Seduced by Adventure, Secrecy or Belonging

A common complaint for young people is the pressure of 'fitting in'. Young people can be easily seduced by school friends or lifestyles and in some cases this can lead them into anti-social behaviour.

For a young person who feels alone a sense of belonging may be fulfilled simply by a group to which he or she can have a sense of solidarity. This connection may be tenuous and they may be

encouraged to do things they find uncomfortable. As studies have shown, adventure, secrecy, danger and, above all, a sense of 'belonging' can be extremely seductive in desperate circumstances.

Choices and Voices enables young people to immerse themselves in familiar scenarios and realistic moments of peer pressure and respond through the safe medium of an interactive game and discussions in the classroom.

3.2.2 - Social Exclusion, Isolation and the effects of 'Not fitting in'

Being excluded from parties or group events can have profound negative effects and studies have shown that young people will go to extraordinary lengths to 'fit in'.

3.2.3 - Bullying, Humiliation and Exposure to Violence:

Bullying, both in and out of school, can encourage anti-social reactions from the sufferer. They may then direct their anger at another individual altogether to see their victim experience the same humiliation they have suffered.

The need for revenge is often strong and bullied individuals, who have been exposed to violence, are more likely to adopt a violent attitude in response.

The characters in Choices and Voices are created with a clear understanding of the role of bully and bullied within a social situation.

3.2.4 - Feelings of Underachievement:

In this ever-developing age of information technology, young people are bombarded with images of achievement. Many then feel a sense of underachievement (either academic, sporting or social) and some then express this frustration violently towards vulnerable individuals and groups.

3.2.5 - Migration, Life Change and Theological Distortion:

For young people a sudden change in life can lead to feelings of confusion and insecurity. Young people who have migrated from unstable political or social situations can be especially prone to feelings of isolation. As a result, some may develop extreme or negative attitudes that can lead to violence.

Community gangs or religious groups provide a sanctuary for many of these isolated young people and in some groups there is a danger that the spread of distorted ideologies instil a negative and aggressive view of society.

These varied life experiences are important, but they are not the only factors in the development of violent extremism. With this in view the following section briefly outlines some of the prevalent ideas and attitudes that often combine with the feelings of isolation, humiliation, peer pressure and confusion that we have touched on.

3.3. Ideas that may lead to Violent Extremism

3.3.1 - Belief in an Essentially Bad system:

For many of us, when we suffer an injustice or a misfortune we do not blame society as a whole. For extremists, it is often not a singular misfortune but the sign of a wider problem with the world that they want to put right by any means possible.

In order to prevent the development of such misleading behaviours in young people, Choices and Voices presents relative scenario's that explore such claims and develop their citizenship responsibilities.

3.3.2 - Belief in a special cultural arrangement between dominant groups and the state:

Violent extremists tend to interpret their own disadvantaged position as a sign of a special arrangement between the dominant social/political/religious groups and the state. Viewing their own position as deliberately outside of the special or accepted arrangement.

For example, a young person may be isolated at school because their culture or religion decrees that they cannot go out on Friday nights. Suffering abuse from their classmates, they may start to believe that their own misfortune is a result, again not of the small group of hecklers but of a broader conspiracy by the state.

3.3.3 - Belief in a cultural or religious identity that is opposed to modern society:

Many violent extremists believe they are fighting to defend their culture from a 'global conspiracy' and they take the view that their culture or religion is not compatible with modern society. They feel justified to fight against that society in order to safeguard their own culture.

It is important then to encourage young people who have suffered injustice to see it in perspective of the world as a whole and to discuss the injustice critically and openly.

This game questions the notion of a religious society that is secluded from society and encourages pupils to discuss such assertions critically.

3.4. Attitudes that may lead to Violent Extremism

3.4.1 - The need for cognitive closure:

While promoting critical discussion in the classroom is central to the Choices and Voices activities, some young people may feel uncomfortable with the ambiguous answers and conflicting views of an open conversation. They may demand a definite 'black or white' description of the world. Yet, as this view is incompatible with a modern, multi-cultural state, some may be moved to express their grievances with violence.

Imagine a young person who is dissatisfied with the confusing information they get at school because their father always has much clearer answers. They may disagree with their Father's explanations but they feel compelled to comply. They may then react violently when something or somebody doesn't fit into their system of right and wrong.

3.4.2 - The need for purpose and respect:

Many religions encourage the belief of an unquestionable system in which everything has a purpose. They also often teach a particular code of respect between gender and age groups. For young people who have grown up with these strict ideas, the modern world can be very confusing.

Encouraged by extremist groups, these young people may be lead into anti social activities as they seek to fit their model of the world onto the community they inhabit.

3.4.3 - The unquestionable respect in an authority figure:

Young people are generally encouraged throughout cultures to respect authority figures. However, in some instances the unquestioning respect of a self-proclaimed authority can encourage violence and extremist reaction.

It is important then to instil a culture of respectful questioning with young people.

Players in Choices and Voices experience both a following and leading role and will be encouraged to perform to the best of their ability in both. The contrast between following and leading may raise interesting debates about the nature of authority and respect.

3.4.4 - The need to be unique and special:

Adhering to certain religious teachings can have young people placing their faith in a prescriptive destiny in which there is one true saviour or chosen path. Of course this in itself is not a negative idea; however, among certain individuals it can restrict constructive dialogue and encourage extremist behaviour.

The Choices and Voices material encourages young people to talk openly about their beliefs without the fear of unjustified criticism or complaint.

There are three primary attitudes that can be encouraged in young people to counter the effect of negative life experiences and the spreading of negative ideas and attitudes. They are covered briefly below.

3.5. Positive Attitudes and Behaviours

3.5.1 - Commonality:

It is important to emphasise commonality between young people and to develop an awareness of shared life experiences, grievances and goals. However, although commonality is important, it is vital not to replace theories of difference with impractical and general theories of commonality such as 'Britishness'. Pupils should be encouraged to develop an understanding of their commonality on their own.

3.5.2 - Working together for common goals

Creating opportunities for young people to work cohesively together towards a safe and inspiring community will limit the tendency for violence and the application of extreme notions of difference.

Young people should be encouraged to work together on the grievances and concerns they share. Choices and Voices is designed to encourage cohesion and illustrate the value of working together.

3.5.3 - Promoting honest and critical conversations:

Honest and open conversation about religious groups and cultural differences is essential to the development of positive attitudes within multi-cultural environments. Using interactive games such as Choices and Voices, young people can be engaged and inspired to act positively within their community.

4. CITIZENSHIP AND INTERACTIVE LEARNING

Education for citizenship equips young people with the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in public life. Citizenship encourages them to take an interest in topical and controversial issues and to engage in discussion and debate.

An interactive environment puts students face-to-face with new ideas and attitudes and develops a critical and positive attitude to them. It emphasises a shared experiences and helps to highlight commonality and the power of working together towards a safe and cohesive environment.

As young people play an active role in the life of their schools, neighbourhoods, communities and wider society as active and global citizens, Citizenship and interactive learning is vital to encourage respect for different national, religious and ethnic identities. Together they equip students to engage critically with and explore diverse ideas, beliefs, cultures and identities and the values we share as citizens in the UK.

The importance of Citizenship reflects the three principles of effective citizenship education set out by the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools. These are that citizenship should develop social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy.

4.1. Key Processes of Citizen Education

There are some essential skills and processes in citizenship that have been identified as important to make positive progress.

4.1 Critical thinking and enquiry

Students should be able to:

- Question and reflect on different ideas, opinions, assumptions, beliefs and values when exploring topical and controversial issues and problems.
- Research, plan and undertake enquiries into issues and problems using a range of information, sources and methods.
- Interpret and analyse critically the sources used; identifying different values, ideas and viewpoints and recognising bias.
- Evaluate different viewpoints, exploring connections and relationships between viewpoints and actions in different contexts (from local to global).

4.2 Advocacy and representation

Students should be able to:

- Evaluate critically different ideas and viewpoints including those with which they do not necessarily agree.
- Explain their viewpoint, drawing conclusions from what they have learnt through research, discussion and actions, including formal debates and votes.
- Present a convincing argument that takes account of, and represents, different viewpoints in order to persuade others to think again, change or support them.

4.3 Taking informed and responsible action

Students should be able to:

- Explore creative approaches to taking action on problems and issues to achieve intended purposes.
- Research, initiate and plan action to address citizenship issues, working individually and with others.
- Negotiate, decide on and take action to try to influence others, bring about change or resist unwanted change, managing time and resources appropriately.
- Assess critically the impact of their actions on communities and the wider world, now and in the future, and make recommendations to others for further action.
- Reflect on the progress they have made, evaluating what they have learnt from the intended and unintended consequences of action, and the contributions of others as well as themselves.

Explanatory notes

Critical thinking and enquiry: Using real case studies to explore issues and problems can help to develop skills of critical thinking, enquiry, debate and advocacy. Students should interrogate evidence, develop judgements based on that evidence, and explore, question and reflect on their own ideas as well as those of others.

Topical and controversial issues and problems: Political, social and ethical issues and problems can be sensitive and can lead to disagreement. They should not be avoided, but need to be handled so that students develop skills in discussing and debating citizenship issues and considering points of view that are not necessarily their own. Setting ground rules and using distancing techniques can help to manage the discussion of such issues.

Advocacy and representation: Developing skills of advocacy and representation provides opportunities for students to build on the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing from the English programme of study. In the context of citizenship they learn to take account of different points of view and the various ways in which people express themselves. They need regular opportunities to practise communicating with different audiences within and beyond the school community, including those in positions of power, to encourage them to explore different approaches that can have a positive impact on social and political issues.

Taking informed and responsible action: When taking informed and responsible action, students develop and practice their skills, while applying citizenship knowledge and understanding. Actions could include: presenting a case to others about a concern; conducting a consultation, vote or election; organising a meeting, event or forum to raise awareness and debate issues; representing the views of others at a meeting or event; creating, reviewing or revisiting an organisational policy; contributing to local community policies; lobbying and communicating views publicly via a website, campaign or display; setting up an action group or network; training others in democratic skills such as advocacy, campaigning or leadership.

Take action: Action should be informed by research and investigation into a political, social or ethical issue or problem. Understanding what constitutes citizenship actions can help students to develop their social and political literacy. They should have the opportunity to select issues and problems that matter to them and to recognise that having an influence in the school or a community group is as relevant as having an influence at national or international levels and requires the same skills sets.

5. USEFUL NUMBERS AND RESOURCES

<http://www.choicesandvoices.com>

<http://www.west-midlands.police.uk>

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/violentextremism/>

<http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/>


Challenging Violence in Schools: an issue of masculinities, Martin Mills, Open University Press, 2001.

Education and Conflict, Lynn Davies, Rutledge Falmer, 2004.

Educating against Extremism, Lynn Davies, Trentham, 2008.

Contact Details

For further information or help in understanding or delivering the lesson plans or for any information about 'Choices and Voices', please contact:

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TEACHERS NOTES