

What is School For?

Task: To generate a discussion concerning knowledge, the internet, autonomous learning and the community of the classroom, through the activity of a spoken word choir.

Objective: To create awareness of the value of school in helping to build a sense of community in the students' lives. To elicit discussion around how knowledge acquirement is not the most important thing in primary school, that the focus is more on developing one's identity through interaction with a peer group in a safe space.

Pre-Task: Ask the students to ask a parent/guardian for a one sentence response to the question: 'What Is School For?' Have the hand-out printed for each student.

Activity: Split the class into small groups. Assign a conductor in each group. Give each group the hand out page, and demonstrate how the students should follow the conductors hand signals. The conductor should use one hand to sign the words to the students, and their other arm should spin in a windmill shape, with each rotation signalling the speed of that particular word. For example, for the word 'WHAT,' the conductor could spin their arm in one rotation quite rapidly, and then for the next word 'IS' the conductor could slow their arm down so the rotation of that spin lasts ten seconds.

Let the students practise in their small groups for ten minutes.

Now introduce the next symbol, tell the students that when the conductor jumps, they must all break from their unison to read the sentences which they brought from their parents.

Let the students practise this in their small groups.

Bring the students back together again into a large group, and elicit conversation about the question 'What Is School For?' Ask them questions like: 'if you want to learn about the Pyramids, what would you do?' or 'if something was in Italian, what would you do?' The goal being to create awareness of the internet, and the availability of free knowledge. It is in this way the teacher should direct the students to recognise the social value of school.

Now ask the students to write their own sentence.

When they have done this, put them back into various sized groups, and allow them to practise/perform the spoken word choir again, changing the role of conductor every now and then. The choir can be performed as one unified group, or as a multitude of groups speaking at the same time.

