



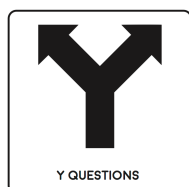
Define it, or lose it!

P4C naturally encourages pupils to question the world. This often involves deconstructing familiar concepts and trying to re-establish meaning. This encourages them to think critically and pose counter-examples. Naturally, pupils also respond incredibly well to issues that affect them directly – such as homework, rules and siblings. This enquiry plan combines concept deconstruction with a highly popular issue. It best explored just before break-up!



Central to the enquiry is the concept of 'holidays.' Begin by posing a light, easy to answer question that they can discuss standing up in pairs, such as 'what is your dream holiday?' or 'what's the best thing about school holidays?' To make it more creative, you could ask one to argue that sunny, hot holidays are best, and the other to argue that cold, wintry holidays are best. If you want to get them really active, they could also freeze-frame a pose from a holiday, or scatter assorted postcards (available on Ebay) on the floor and ask them to pick one up that appeals to them and explain why.

Announce all schools have received a letter from the government and you need to read it to all pupils. Feel free to reprint to ham-up the officiality!



This question is asking pupils to deconstruct a concept rather immediately choose between two or three possible answers.

Start by doing some facilitation in-role, by becoming an official from the Department of Dictionary Definitions, pushing back against their definitions with counterexamples.

Example 1: If a pupil says: 'A holiday is when you don't go to school for a while', see if anyone disagrees, perhaps by asking 'Does a holiday always involve staying away from school?' A possible counter-example is 'What if you're an adult!'

Example 2: A pupil says: 'A holiday is where you rest.' A counter-example could be adventure or working holidays.

It is likely that their posing of counter-examples will lead to contestable questions. For example, 'a holiday is when you go away' may elicit the counter-example 'but what if you stay at home and do gardening?', and may lead to the question 'do holidays require travel?'



The structure of this enquiry lends itself to getting them to self-facilitate, with some children stepping into your role and becoming officials themselves, providing counterexamples and pushing for clearer definitions. If you have started the enquiry sitting in the circle, get them to take your place which allows you to retreat from being a focus of attention.

Will their progress towards a definition keep 'holidays' the dictionary, and keep the thing itself? At some point, you can reach a decision with your other officials!

NEXT STEPS

Can they think of another word that takes central importance in their lives, but the meaning of which can also be contested?