

Positive Guidance on Aspects of Personal, Social and Health Education

Stephen De Silva and Simon Blake

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Foreword

The debate on the effectiveness of all forms of education remains lively and ever-changing. These discussions are vital, as it is quite right and proper that the educational experiences for all children and young people should be the best they can possibly be.

The quality of the teaching of literacy and numeracy remains key to enabling pupils to achieve their full potential; the role of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is important in helping young people make healthy decisions in their complex and challenging world.

Reports show that planned programmes of PSHE have increased steadily in schools over the last two decades, and parents and teachers of pupils report positively on what has been achieved.

It is only when teachers feel confident and competent that they can engage fully with their pupils and help them learn what is needed to take them safely into the world of young adults.

However, recent research reports tell us that there is a skills and knowledge gap on effective classroom teaching by some PSHE teachers. This gap needs filling; this publication contributes to enabling our teachers to increase the effect of their classroom practice, thereby helping young people to lead happier and healthier lives.

Ruth Joyce OBE

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Stephen De Silva and Simon Blake
October 2006

Introduction

This publication is aimed at teachers and all those involved in delivering Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). It has been funded by the Home Office, whose Drug Education Research Programme, Blueprint, had found that teachers needed more support in delivering PSHE.

They wanted more help in:

- creating a positive context and approach for PSHE through using ‘normative’ approaches (to be explained later)
- developing good group work routines and using active learning methods
- understanding how best to use role-play and drama as an active learning method.

This booklet was prepared following a series of consultation events that brought together teachers and those who support them, LEA PSHE Advisors and Healthy Schools Consultants. They participated in a series of seminars organised by the National Children’s Bureau with support from the Drug Education Forum and the Sex Education Forum.

Forthcoming Home Office research publications will provide additional practical examples from Blueprint and background to the issues covered in this booklet.

Positive approaches to PSHE

What is Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)?

PSHE, as described by the QCA, helps to give children and young people the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy and independent lives. It aims to help them understand how they are developing personally and socially, tackling many of the moral, social and cultural issues that are part of growing up. It includes three elements:

- acquiring and understanding accessible, relevant information
- developing attitudes and values that underpin self-esteem, health and well-being, learning and achievement
- developing personal and social skills to build emotional development, lifelong learning and interaction with others, as well as positive health choices and active participation in society.

This publication focuses on PSHE in a public health context, but its benefits are much broader, enabling children and young people to achieve in their personal development as well as in all subject areas.

PSHE is one of four elements of the National Healthy Schools Programme, a joint initiative by the Department of Health (DH) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to reduce health inequalities. Healthy Schools advocates a whole school approach to PSHE, involving pupils, the leadership team, governors and the relevant parts of the local community.

A positive approach to PSHE

PSHE has sometimes been driven by ‘problems’ which need to be solved, such as teenage pregnancy, substance misuse or obesity. In a desire to ‘solve the problem’, children and young people become targets of interventions, which, in many cases, they find irrelevant or detached from their experiences.

In a discussion on substance misuse, one young man said: ‘By the way they talk about young people you would think we were having a spliff for breakfast and ecstasy at lunch and actually alcohol hardly gets any time at all.’

PSHE lessons might focus on the exceptional in case studies, for example, by highlighting the case of a pregnant teenager rather than the strategies successfully used by the overwhelming majority of teenagers to avoid pregnancy. This can unintentionally lead pupils to a belief that becoming pregnant is more common than in fact it is, which does not enable pupils to learn from the positive successes of others.

There are four different approaches currently used for working with children and young people on health issues:

- *Health education* focuses on information about the effects on the body, both short and long term. It looks at potential harm and encourages people to consider the risks and change their behaviour accordingly.
- *Health terrorism* (the 'shock horror' model) involves presenting worst possible scenarios but, the more extreme these are, the less relevant or probable they seem to children and young people. So the message is not believed and adults are increasingly distrusted as a source of authoritative and credible information.
- *Social controls* involve school policies, policing and legislation.
- *Social norm/normative* approaches establish the norms amongst population groups, based on the realities of children and young people's lives and experiences. This information is then used to correct myths and misinformation and to promote positive behaviour change.

PSHE is much more likely to be successful if it starts with positive beliefs in children and young people, and their desire to be healthy. Emphasising positive social norms from the outset presents an exciting new approach to delivering PSHE.

What is a social norms approach?

Normative approaches help children and young people understand what their peers are doing, and these are generally positive behaviours. This approach has been developed to counteract findings which show that people of all ages generally think there are fewer healthy and more risk-taking behaviours than is actually the case.

The *perceptions* that young people hold about their peer's behaviour are often misperceptions. Common misperceptions amongst young people are:

- the healthy majority think they are in a minority – this has the potential to weaken their resolve or negatively affect their choices
- the unhealthy minority think they are in a majority, which can reinforce their already unhealthy behaviours.

Children and young people tend to under-estimate the healthy choices that they and their peers undertake and, at the same time, over-estimate risk behaviours. There also tends to be an over-estimation of 'anticipatory behaviour'. For example, most college students assumed that the year above them was more sexually active than was in fact the case.

In another study, 25 per cent of secondary school students believed that drinking alcohol on a daily basis was the norm. The research concluded that in fact only 5 per cent of those students drank daily (Perkins, 2003).

Normative or social norms approaches within PSHE promote positive behaviours in a unique way because they tackle so many of the issues often addressed in a negative way.

Great Lakes Middle School Students *about bullying:*

STALL WALL

Most Great Lakes Middle School students (9 out of 10) agree that “students should always try to be friendly with students who are different from themselves.”

97% of Great Lakes Middle School students say students should NOT tease in a mean way, call others hurtful names, or spread unkind stories about other students.

96% of Great Lakes Middle School students believe students should NOT shove, kick, hit, trip, or pull another student's hair.



Results are from a May 2006 survey of 180 Great Lakes Middle School boys and girls in all grades.

did you know that
North East Students
make great choices?

Most North East students
(3 out of 4)
DO NOT exclude
someone from a group
to make them feel bad.

Results are from a June 2006 survey
of 759 North East Middle School
boys and girls in all grades.



Promoting positive messages

Social norms approaches use a range of localised data sources to identify the social norms amongst a population and to promote a positive message about children and young people's behaviour.

This approach:

- Offers legitimacy to choices which some children and young people would feel are unacceptable, without knowing their peers are making the same choices. For example, ensuring that children and young people know that most children do not think bullying is a good idea, or most children think smoking is uncool.
- Reduces the power of longstanding myths and misunderstanding. As one 14 year old young woman said: 'When I heard that most young people don't have sex before 16 I sort of relaxed and realised there wasn't any rush.'
- Builds on the tendency for human beings to want to be 'part of the crowd' by promoting positive messages about the 'usual' behaviours, rather than trying to convince children and young people not to do something by trying to scare them with the potential consequences.
- Promotes publicly accepted norms that can make it easier for children and young people to negotiate; for example, messages about using condoms or limiting alcohol use.
- Promotes trust amongst adults, children and young people because adults do not rely on scaring children about the consequences.

A step-by-step guide to a social norms approach

1. *Assess the prevailing norms – what do children and young people believe about behaviours?*

Be as local as possible to make it relevant. If there is good local data (for example, via a primary care trust) use this. Data can also be collected and compiled locally; for example, through a survey carried out by the school council or a school health profile carried out by a school nurse.

2. *Select the normative message(s) – what do children and young people want to know and what is the message for them?*

Think about the messages to highlight. Think about what will be most effective in achieving the purpose.

3. *Test the normative message with the target group*

Check the message is clear, understood and relevant. It is vital that the comparison between different behaviours is clearly explained.

4. *Select a 'delivery strategy'*

This might include work in PSHE activities and/or an awareness-raising activity in assemblies; for example, with posters and a postcard campaign in the school.

5. Undertake the message delivery

Carry out plans over an agreed period of time.

6. Evaluate effectiveness

Try to evaluate whether children and young people have benefited from understanding the social norms amongst their peers.

If a social norms approach is applied to health work around illegal drugs, it would:

- Build on the relationship amongst staff, children and young people to support positive learning through collaboration and enquiry.
- Use a range of data sources to ensure interventions are specific to the local context; for example, what really happens in my school, my age group, and my neighbourhood? Results could be very different amongst sub-groups.
- Use the data to explore and challenge common misconceptions about the prevalence of illegal drug use and the belief that many people think it is acceptable.
- Emphasise that most young people do not smoke or drink as much as they imagine others do.
- Emphasise that most people do not use illegal drugs as it would encourage clear, non-use norms.
- Develop life skills such as seeking and giving help, assertiveness and decision-making which are important for making and carrying out positive choices.
- The social norm may not always be positive; for example, not all young people will be eating five portions of fruit or vegetables a day. But, establishing the social norm will give the teacher a good starting point for building positive messages.

Effectiveness

Most research to date has taken place at tertiary education level, but the principles are being successfully applied to secondary education too, in the USA and UK.

Messages need to focus on a majority behaviour or belief. Only one message should be chosen for maximum impact.

Working with a younger population group makes it, potentially, easier to reach a clear agreement about messages. Narrowing the frame for campaign or intervention will help focus the messages. Conversely, taking too big a time frame is likely to be less effective – more of the target are likely to have ‘done it’ already. Different studies have shown there is no ‘one size fits all’ message that can be transferred across contexts. Understanding and working within the local context is critical to success. Working in partnership with children and young people across health, education and the voluntary sector to find answers to the question ‘What are the norms here on different behaviours?’ is important.

Local context is key to success, so considering specific local factors is crucial. In general, studies have indicated that the following points influence the success of including normative approaches:

- Were children and young people actively involved and consulted in the process of developing the messages?
- Are the messages positive?
- How relevant and believable is the data? This can be an issue ... pupils and some teachers do not always believe the data, so teachers should check the source, talk to the relevant researcher and feel comfortable with the information.
- How consistent are the messages across the population?
- Are there competing 'scare' or marketing/consumer messages?
- Does the wider population, for example, at home and in the community, hear, receive and support the messages?

Evidence from a range of sources, small and large scale studies, quantitative and qualitative, suggests that the most effective PSHE:

- involves children, young people and their families in planning and delivery
- starts early and is developmentally appropriate
- is delivered by well-trained and supported adults
- is positive about children, young people and their behaviours
- takes account of the local context and the social norms in that context
- develops positive skills and values as well as imparts information
- uses active and participatory learning methods and embeds assessment for learning into the process
- is well-linked to health services and one-to-one support and advice.

Including social norms messages

Studies have looked at a variety of ways of including social norms, or normative approaches, in PSHE and the wider school context. Schools have used social norms messaging in a range of ways, including:

- poster and postcard campaigns developed both in the school and in the wider community
- paid advertising by health and/or education agencies
- curriculum activities
- targeted workshops for vulnerable or at-risk groups
- counselling and other one-to-one interventions
- information on websites
- email campaigns or the development of a screen saver demonstrating positive behaviours
- TV and radio programming
- newspaper and journals
- a whole-school approach involving several of the above elements
- text messaging.

Developing good group work and using active learning

Normative approaches provide a positive context and approach for PSHE. This section describes the importance of developing a safe and supportive group environment in which active learning methods can be used successfully to promote emotional and social development in PSHE.

The first stage is the development of an effective working group in which pupils can safely explore, learn, reflect and practise. Good PSHE actively teaches and develops children and young people's competence in participating in groups. Where group work and the use of active learning methods are commonplace across the school, children and young people are much more likely to gain maximum benefit from the PSHE provision.

Working with groups

Building a group where work and enjoyment can take place

Make sure the learning environment is bright, exciting and inspiring. Display good posters and artwork, plus details of national help lines and local services.

Exploration and learning is best done within a safe learning environment, where everyone can positively contribute to a discussion without fear of ridicule or attack.

Setting up a working agreement ensures students 'opt in' and take responsibility for the way in which the group is going to work.

This agreement is negotiated between the group (including the teacher) and displayed clearly during each lesson. It is most effective when it is used as a contract from the very beginning, and should be reviewed and amended over time.

Examples of working agreements

Example from a primary school

Everyone in this group:

- will listen to each other (one person talks at a time)
- will work with others in a friendly way
- can choose not to speak (if anyone feels uncomfortable)
- will try to be sensitive to people's feelings.

Example from a secondary school

In this group we will:

- listen to each other (only one person talks at a time)
- keep to time
- challenge a statement but not the person making it
- participate but also have the right to pass (we can opt out but we don't cop out!)
- make stories and examples anonymous
- respect a person's privacy
- allow everyone a right to his or her own space.

Another way of developing and framing an agreement is to encourage pupils to think about Rights and Responsibilities within the group. See below for an example.

Each person in the group has:

- the right to speak – and the responsibility to listen to others
- the right to express their views – and the responsibility to hear the views of the others
- the right to pass on an individual question if uncomfortable – and the responsibility to participate in discussions.

Forming the group

Good group work happens when everyone feels safe and valued and expects their opinions and contributions to be heard. Teachers need to find the likeable and praiseworthy in everyone to help them feel a valued group member. If teachers and pupils spend time getting to know each other (including their names) and actively working together, this will improve relationships – not just in PSHE, but across the whole school. When bringing a group together for the first time (or to work in this way for the first time), there are structured activities to do this.

Children and young people need encouragement as well as recognition and feedback for working hard and well. They also need support to offer each other feedback and develop skills of self assessment and reflection. In an active learning classroom with a

clear sense of purpose, the skill is not *to like everyone* but *to work with anyone* – so the facilitator's task is to:

- Encourage pupils to work in different groups and gradually vary these groups to encourage different learning experiences and new experiences.
- Positively challenge negative behaviour as groups are forming; for example, eye-rolling, turning away, shrugging at having to work with someone they may not know or like, or explicit put downs.
- Continue to address negative behaviours if they appear when groups are at work.
- Model emotionally intelligent responses and a commitment to ensure that the group finds a positive way of working. Ensure 'That's wrong' isn't the only feedback that is given. Why is that wrong or unhelpful? What is the reason? What would take the work forward? Or, have you noticed what is happening here? Why not give authentic praise and say, 'That's really helpful ... you've helped us see there is another way of looking at this.'

The most important resource here is the quality of the relationship. Each pupil needs to know that they are respected so they can participate, seek help, support and clarification and genuinely learn from feedback. As one young woman said: 'Well, it's not criticism if you know they care for you, it's feedback to help you learn!'

Getting groups working

To work well, groups have to explore and resolve a number of issues. One or more individuals may:

- not cooperate or follow the task, or be rude about the task
- dominate the group and not allow members to choose or speak
- be too critical of others' efforts or views
- not offer praise
- opt out by remaining silent or not participating
- get left out or excluded
- shout out in frustration, disagreement or embarrassment
- disturb another group.

Teachers need to observe, then decide whether or not to intervene. They can help the group be part of the active learning process by using reflective questions:

- 'Have you noticed what's going on in your group?'
- 'How will you sort it out in the group?'

Teachers should encourage positive comments from the pupils about each other's work – help the group learn how to identify targets, monitor their progress and celebrate successes. It is helpful to intervene with relevant sharing of experience and knowledge.

Some groups will find it easier to work well together than others. It is the facilitator's role to develop the active learning ethos in each different group.

Practising different groupings

Through working in different groups, such as pairs, or threes or fours, children and young people can develop empathy, creativity and learn to understand different approaches. The pupils should be offered different tasks, such as timekeeper, scribe, chair and presenter. These are important elements of an active learning classroom.

Ending – assessment for learning – reflection and feedback

Feedback provides time for the individual or group to think and speak about their experience, or what they learnt. When done well, feedback helps pupils make connections between their experience and its application in their lives. Supporting children and young people to make these connections helps complete the learning cycle and is likely to provide significantly better learning retention and potentially influence behaviour.

The facilitator makes observations and summarises learning at the end of a session, encouraging pupils to identify for themselves what they have learned.

Some tips for enabling effective reflective feedback include:

- Open questions; for example, 'What did you learn about...?'
- Questions that refer back to the task; for example 'Today we have been talking about What did you learn that will help you cope with...?'
- Providing enough time in each session for each person who wants to speak.

The following sentence starters are helpful reflection aids:

- I have learned that...
- I was surprised that...
- I enjoyed...
- What I liked most about this activity was...
- What I didn't like about this activity was...
- During this activity I felt...

Tips for effective group work

1. Have materials prepared. Having task sheets or board displays set up and ready to use helps groups move quickly into tasks.
2. Vary groupings on a regular basis, rather than in every lesson. Use random ways of grouping from time to time; for example, get pupils into birthday order or alphabetical order and then divide them into threes and fours. Although it is much easier for pupils to work with those they know and like, they can more easily go 'off task'. Part of PSHE is for them to learn how to cooperate with all their classmates, not just their immediate friends.
3. Give clear roles for members of a small working group – writer, reporter, etc. – and rotate these roles around the group so that different individuals can practise and try new skills.
4. Change the groups – if it starts going wrong and the groups are big, make them smaller. Quiet members are more likely to be heard and dominant members more easily challenged in smaller groups. If working in groups isn't producing a productive discussion, then try pairs, instead.
5. While small groups are working, circulate and monitor their progress. Ask if they have any questions, or if they need help. Deal with it quickly and move on so that the teacher (or a support worker) is available to all groups equally.
6. Find a method of communication that enables the teacher to get the group(s) sufficiently quiet to hear instructions; for example, by raising a hand as a signal. Shouting over group discussions or blowing a whistle adds to the noise and promotes feelings of chaos and lack of safety.
7. Deal with group and individual problems in an open, accepting and non-judgemental manner but remember that it is better to address some individual concerns on a one-to-one basis at the end of the lesson.
8. During whole-group discussions, encourage good listening by asking individuals to remember what others have said. Acknowledge and praise good listening skills. Encourage quiet individuals to speak by using praise for participation. Acknowledge that it is sometimes difficult to share thoughts and feelings or to speak in a group.

Active learning

What is active learning?

Active learning is one of the most effective ways of teaching PSHE. It has these stages:

Doing: pupils take part in an activity, formulate a response and hear how other groups responded.

Reviewing: pupils review and reflect, asking 'What do you think the different characters in the scenario were feeling or thinking?' or 'What advice would you give the different characters to help them reach an answer?'

Learning: pupils identify the positive strategies or messages that emerge from the discussion.

Applying: pupils apply learning to their own situations such as 'What would you recommend a friend to do in a similar situation?' or 'What would you now plan to do in a similar situation?'

This approach is similar in many respects to approaches in English, Science or Maths. It is the element of 'doing' followed by processes of facilitated reflection and learning that makes the learning memorable and applicable in their lives.

Living the active learning cycle

Active Learning is a circular process. Opposite are some suggestions to help at each stage.

DOING

For example:
Practising skills
Reading and responding
Listening and discussing
Quizzes, games, exploring

- engage pupils in activities with clear learning outcomes
- be open to change through the process
- use pupils' existing skills to reinforce their learning and self-esteem
- use exploratory tasks
- don't expect or demand "right" answers - be sure to maintain equal opportunities and respect for diversity
- value the process as well as the outcome.

REVIEWING

For example:
Thinking about attitudes
Assessing skills
Identifying new knowledge

- remember the working agreement
- allow time to think and a structure in which to do it
- think about skills used or attitudes shared
- use self/peer review to identify how and what happened in the activity
- consider learning styles – what works best for groups and individuals
- get pupils to say what they like about other people's contributions
- participate with pupils in the exercise
- ask specific questions; for example about values, different beliefs/ideas and the impact of emotions on behaviour.

LEARNING

For example:
Identifying and understanding new knowledge/skills/attitudes

- find the right resources to support content and teaching styles
- expect pupils to find things out by research (active learning outside the class)
- look at who already has knowledge and skills, and how to engage them
- correct preconceptions and misconceptions; for example, addiction doesn't mean it's impossible to stop – think of people who have stopped smoking
- address pupils' needs and interests when they arise in order to plan further or extended work

APPLYING

For example:
Taking the learning to other contexts
Considering how new learning could affect change

- create the context for learning by using pointers from both the review and learn stages
- make it appropriate and relevant to children and young people
- try problem solving/exploring dilemmas
- use role play to transfer ideas to other situations

Matching activities to learning outcomes

There is a range of active learning methods which are listed below. When using active learning methods, facilitators need a repertoire and range of skills, approaches, ideas and resources, and to ensure the activities are suitable. Activities are selected that take account of the stage of group development, the composition of the group and the desired learning outcomes.

Activities also need to be chosen which consider the group's:

- skills and abilities – in both physical and learning dimensions
- maturity and cognitive ability
- familiarity with each other
- group and personality dynamics
- gender
- faith and culture
- age, maturity and experience
- abilities and special educational needs
- language skills.

<i>Active learning method</i>	<i>What does it involve?</i>	<i>What can it be used for?</i>
Word storming	Generating lots of ideas in quick succession from a stimulus; for example, a question, picture, proverb, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ considering the depth and range of pupil experience ■ assessing baseline knowledge
Pair discussions	Two pupils work together to share ideas/experiences/responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ identifying quick initial responses to begin a session ■ practising speaking and listening skills
Small group discussions	Pupils work in groups of three to five, each taking a role, for example, chair, time keeper, reporter, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ practising cooperative skills
Whole-group discussions	Class works together in an opening or whole-group session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ reflecting on a wide range of views ■ summarising different experiences ■ practising responses
Listening exercises	Hearing a story/case study/song, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ developing listening and reflection skills
Questionnaires and quizzes	Pupils work in pairs to respond to questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ identifying knowledge and levels of experience ■ assessing levels of understanding

Storyboards	Pupils develop stories through snapshots or scenes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ identifying common experiences ■ practising non-verbal or non-written communication
Case studies or scenarios	Considering a situation which a character has experienced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ reflecting on differing experiences ■ identifying strategies that others have used ■ practising problem-solving
Videos/films/magazines	Viewing or reading material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ acquiring new knowledge
Continuums	Pupils position themselves on a line representing a range of views, for example, strongly agree/agree/neutral/disagree/strongly disagree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ reflect on personal values ■ consider the values of others
Role-playing/practising roles	Taking on the roles of characters who then respond to situations or problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ exploring different attitudes ■ testing out situations to identify new learning ■ practising communication skills
Question boxes	Posting anonymous questions in a box to which the teacher responds at a given point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ acquiring information ■ seeking help or advice
Carousels (variation on this is speed-dating)	Pupils sit in concentric circles facing each other and take part in dialogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ practising speaking and listening skills ■ reflecting on values of others
Diamond nine	Positioning nine cards in a diamond shape, prioritising the most important at the top	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ making decisions, individually or in groups ■ identifying skills ■ reflecting and assessing
Graffiti sheets	Pupils move around the room writing-up simple responses to a range of ideas or questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ establishing levels of experience or knowledge ■ evaluating an activity ■ encouraging review and reflection
Artwork	Pupils working creatively to produce songs, painting, sculpture, ICT and graphics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ using art and getting satisfaction from creating a product to further their emotional and social learning

Preparing to use active learning in the classroom

Teachers can use this tool below to identify their learning needs and consider how this could be implemented in the classroom.

<i>Stage of the group development</i>	<i>What a facilitator/teacher should do?</i>
Beginning a series of lessons/modules	<p>Working agreement</p> <p>Get everyone to speak in an opening round or word-storm</p> <p>Use initial feedback to assess levels of knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Negotiate content</p>
The early sessions	<p>Ensure the activities are easy to engage with; use early wins or guaranteed success for pupils</p> <p>Use clear direction in splitting groups</p> <p>Vary groups from time to time, both in size and in make-up</p> <p>Use the Working Agreement to address issues as they arise</p> <p>Practise group work routines</p>
Middle/working sessions	<p>Help groups reflect on their successes and/or negotiate their problems</p> <p>Select activities that match the intended learning outcomes</p> <p>Look at content and activities to check that the following are addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ knowledge ■ skills ■ attitudes/values <p>Use whole-group feedback to help groups listen to each other</p>

Closing sessions	<p>Use reflection and review activities to help identify and assess new learning</p> <p>Choose activities that help pupils apply learning to their own life situations</p> <p>Encourage individuals and groups to share praise and constructive comments</p> <p>Evaluate with the pupils the success of the lessons and identify further learning needs</p>
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Drama techniques in PSHE

This section includes advice and guidance for the effective use of drama techniques and role-play.

Why use drama techniques in PSHE?

There are many positive reasons for using drama techniques within PSHE lessons, as outlined below.

Distancing and depersonalising helps pupils learn

Being in role as a character allows pupils to explore and experience situations safely because they are not speaking or acting as themselves. Reflection can lead to applying what has been learned to their own experiences.

High levels of engagement

Most pupils engage fully with the activities and are emotionally connected to the stories. Pupils find it an exciting way to learn. The surprises and originality of thought are part of the excitement. It feels like learning without appearing to learn.

Powerful stimulus

The narratives created provide rich stimuli for discussion and other follow-up activities. Many dilemmas can be explored, including moral ones.

Practising life skills

Drama techniques require pupils to practise life skills such as negotiating, persuasion and assertiveness (both in and out of role). One year 10 pupil summed it up: 'You need these skills in every day life when you are debating something with your friends.' These skills will include listening, non-verbal communication and verbal expression, setting out reasoning, responding to others and summing up.

Empathy and understanding

Drama techniques are based on human behaviour, which means pupils can gain valuable insights into how and why people respond as they do.

Different learning styles are accommodated

Pupils who do not respond well to written work often come into their own here, with passionate and reasoned work emerging from their opportunity to take on roles and respond to scenarios.

Role-play

Role-play in the classroom is essentially practising a real life situation in a safe and controlled environment. Role-play describes a range of situations where pupils adopt a role or a character and act out an interaction with one or more other characters. Role-play is often unscripted and provides opportunities for practising communication, making mistakes and addressing these mistakes. For example, the scene could be stopped and rewound as in a film studio with the audience suggesting changes.

Using role-play successfully within PSHE

For role-play to work well and effectively within PSHE, teachers need to be aware of the following issues.

Building confidence for using drama techniques

Teachers need to start with activities that help pupils build characters and situations. As these develop, teachers and pupils gain confidence and can move forward to using role-play or similar activities.

Timing

In PSHE, both drama and role-play are based on exploring relevant issues. They are most effective when time has been allowed over a series of lessons to learn new information, developing new skills, explore feelings and apply learning.

Role-play takes time, involving preparation, practising, performing and, especially, allowing opportunity for discussion and reflection during and afterwards. Work across a sequence of lessons, but never leave pupils in role at the end of a lesson.

Routines

Using role-play in a lesson doesn't require the teacher to be a drama expert. If there is a drama department or member of staff with some more experience, they should discuss what routines they have in the classroom which the pupils already know. For example, the staff member might have a method for starting and finishing role plays, such as a sentence of dialogue to start and a 'freeze' to signal it is over. This is important for setting clear beginnings and endings for the role-play.

Emotional safety

In planning for physical safety, emotional safety also needs to be addressed. Asking children and young people to step into roles is not always easy or a positive experience for them. In addition to the practised and regular use of a working agreement, there will need to be simple ways to take pupils out of role, so that characters and behaviours adopted for the activity are not carried past the lesson.

It is important to distinguish between a character and the person playing that character. The teachers should address the person only by the character's name if they are in role and make sure they use their real name when they come out of role. This helps pupils not feel personally criticised.

Successful implementation of drama techniques

Research and practice have shown that the best PSHE lessons involving drama are well planned, well structured and have interesting sources of stimuli. Teachers bring their own energy to the lessons and make careful use of observation and praise, as outlined below.

Planning

Lessons must be structured, so preparation is essential.

Role-play provides an opportunity to explore and practise desirable behaviours such as resistance skills, negotiating and assertiveness. However, undesirable behaviours such as bullying or persuading someone to take drugs are also acted out and explored in the classroom setting. Careful thought is needed to ensure that children respond in an appropriate manner to the negative behaviour explored and to avoid 'actual' bullying or similar negative consequences.

For instance, one could start in small groups, with drawing and labelling a bully and a victim of bullying. This could address stereotyping through feedback discussion. Moving on to a carousel, in which both partners get to be the victim and the bully, would be an obvious progression. It is important to give each actor clear roles and situation. The rule must be no physical violence (A basic ground rule for all drama activity). It must be a short, snappy experience. Through stopping and having discussions, the emotions, behaviours and motivations of both roles can be explored. This could then move on to looking at ways of spotting bullying/abusive relationships and looking at protective behaviours.

Persuasion scenes are also powerful ways of engaging pupils to explore positive and negative behaviours. For instance, looking at selling techniques or persuading a friend that it would be better for them to ask out someone they fancy instead of asking someone else to do it. Practising the art of persuasion is a life skill, too.

For drama activities to work, there must be a conflict and/or a problem to solve. There need to be characters and a scenario behind it to motivate the characters. A clearly thought out structure in which there are plenty of opportunities to 'unpack' the learning is important. If the result includes complex and surprising responses then the result is being achieved.

Lesson structure

There is a structure for a drama-based lesson in PSHE that will help in lesson planning:

- It is important to engage pupils at the beginning, to ensure enthusiasm and concentration. Always have a warm-up activity and an introduction. Warm-up activities work best when they link to the topic of the lesson. Pair work helps pupils to gain confidence in new and exciting activities.
- run main learning activity
- always ensure that there is time for reflection of learning.

The rules can be adapted when confidence increases. Naturally, discussion and reflection can also happen throughout.

Performing

Role-play and drama in PSHE is more about the quality of the learning than the quality of the drama. If young people are willing to share their work it can be very useful for generating debate. A teacher must also be prepared to stop inappropriate performances. If a teacher does this, the problem should generally be processed and discussed so that it becomes a learning opportunity.

If teachers try to use performance as a means of assessment, they should avoid scenes in which pupils simply practise bullying or unpleasant persuasion. Young people need to be briefed on and supported in making choices and any issues raised will need to be met head on. Teachers should ensure that pupils always practise positive and helpful behaviours that solve the dilemma and/or situation.

Stimuli

A good PSHE drama-based lesson can be built around:

- pictures
- recent local or national newspaper stories
- literature: novel extracts, short stories, plays and poems
- pop song lyrics
- music
- episode extract from a soap
- video clips
- creating characters.

The list goes on. And anything else you or the pupils want.

Energy

The teacher's personality is an important tool to be brought to the lesson. Their energy, enthusiasm and commitment will affect the level of pupil willingness to participate in drama-based activities. Teachers shouldn't really be asking a pupil to do something they are not prepared to do themselves. The teacher must be willing to appear foolish, if necessary, too!

Praise

As in all good teaching environments, there must be plenty of praise for behaviour and work, especially in the process of building a new way to work.

Observation

It is useful for the teacher to avoid intervening in group work unless there is a problem or a request for help. Moving around the classroom and listening to and watching the work gives the teacher a sense of what is happening. It can provide more tools for stimulating discussion and gives an opportunity for assessing PSHE learning.

Normative behaviours

The teacher should make sure the role-play task promotes good social norms, rather than normalising misconceptions. For example, if there is a character of a pregnant teenager or a problem drug-user in a scenario, how does this fit with the social norm?

10 top tips from teachers for using drama and role-play

1. Base drama work on existing and established approaches; for example, circle time, ground rules, discussion, pair and group work and the use of character and story.
2. Be confident. The direction of the work can change, never be afraid to stop an activity and explore what is happening with the pupils.
3. Start small and easy. Introduce just one new drama method at a time; for example, getting your pupils to create dialogues and then practise them. Give yourself and your pupils time to learn and practise new methods and skills.
4. Team-teach with a learning or teaching assistant, or health staff, or others from the wider community.
5. Select the right stimulus that is appropriate to the actual lives and experience of your pupils.
6. Performance isn't the end result, new insights and learning of skills is important.
7. Develop drama techniques as part of a planned programme, not as a one-off lesson.
8. Monitor and evaluate; what happened? What worked well? What didn't work well and what could be improved? What did people learn?
9. Don't worry if pupils are noisy – if it is well structured, it will be focused noise.
10. Enjoy it – make it exciting and fun.

Using Theatre in Health Education (TIHE) groups in school

TIHE groups are expensive, but they enhance PSHE provision by offering enjoyment, inspiration, and powerful and memorable experiences. Skilled groups offer opportunities for safe exploration, with discovery and reflection.

Many schools are inevitably challenged by the costs of such work; PSHE departmental budgets are rarely resourced to a sufficient level. However, the use of a TIHE group is so valuable in the wider life of the school that leadership teams are sometimes happy to invest in them. In some regions, imaginative local authorities and primary care trusts may fund these opportunities.

Quality control can be a problem, and schools need clear recommendations or, ideally, the opportunity to see the TIHE group at work. Teachers should get testimonials and make sure Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are in place. Most TIHE groups have a range of adaptable presentations. Good groups will ensure their work is based on accurate and up-to-date research on what is known about young people and on any particular topic (for example, drug use, self-harm, etc). It is advisable to draw up a service level agreement with the company to minimise misunderstandings and disappointment on both sides, and to ensure they are promoting social norms.

It is really important that the teacher plans work, to make the best of the opportunity, and follows it up, to ensure the learning from the activity is embedded. The 'performance' must be followed by an active learning workshop, otherwise TIHE might be seen as 'just entertainment' with no learning attached.

Considering the resources of time, money and the effort needed to organise TIHE into school timetables, it is crucial that the teacher is fully involved to maximise the success and impact. Teachers should see what suggestions for preparation and follow-up are included as part of the package offered by the intended TIHE company, and use them. The teachers doing the preparation and follow-up work should be trained up.

Useful resources and organisations

Resources

Berkowitz, A (2004) *The Social Norms Approach: Theory, Research and Annotated Bibliography*. Accessed at www.alanberkowitz.com

Blake, S and Muttock, S (2005) *Assessment, Evaluation and Sex and Relationships Education: A practical toolkit for health, education and community settings*. London: NCB

Blake, S And Plant, S (2005) *Addressing Inclusion and Inequalities through PSHE and Citizenship*. London: NCB

DfEE (2000) *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance*. Copies are obtainable from the DfES publication line on 0845 60222 60 quoting DfEE 0116/2000

DfES (2002) *Don't suffer in silence* can be downloaded from www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying

DfES (2004) *Drugs: Guidance for schools*. Copies are obtainable from the DfES publication line on 0845 60222 60 quoting DfES/0092/2004

DfES and Department of Health (2005) *National Healthy School Status – a guide for schools*. Home Office and DfES (2005) *PSHE in Practice: A DVD and Resource Pack*. Copies are obtainable from the DfES publication line on 0845 60222 60 quoting DfES/0859/2004 (primary pack) and DfES/0886/2204 (secondary pack)

Job, N and Frances, G (2004) *Childhood Bereavement: Developing the curriculum and pastoral support*. London: NCB

Johnson, DW and Johnson, FP (2005) *Joining Together: Group Theory and Practice*, 9th edition. London: Allyn and Bacon

Larson, R, Bradford, B and Mortimer, J (eds) (2002) *Adolescents' preparation for the future – perils and promises. A report of the study group on adolescence in the 21st century*. [Malden, MA]: Blackwell

Lees, J and Plant, S (2000) *Passport: A framework for personal and social development*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Lynch, J and Blake, S (2004) *Sex, Alcohol and Other Drugs: Exploring the links in young people's lives*. London: NCB

National Children's Bureau (2005) *Cards for Life: Promoting young people's emotional and social development*. London: NCB

Perkins, W (2003) *The Social Norms Approach to Preventing School and College Age Substance Abuse: A handbook for Educators, Counselors and Clinicians*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Wood, S (2006) *Life Routes: A practical resource for developing life skills with vulnerable young people*. London: NCB

NCB's *Spotlight* series provides practical advice, guidance and support on all aspects of PSHE. A range of briefings are available to download free of charge at www.ncb.org.uk/library/pshecis

All the Spotlight books, videos and practical resources below are available to buy from NCB Book Sales, telephone: 0845 458 9910, fax: 0845 458 9912, email: ncb@centralbooks.com or www.ncb-books.org.uk

www.dfes.gov.uk

www.qca.org.uk

www.socialnorm.org

Useful Organisations

Antidote

3rd Floor
Cityside House
40 Adler Street
Aldgate
London E1 1EE
Telephone: 020 7247 3355
www.antidote.org.uk

Antidote's aim is to create an emotionally literate society, where the facility to handle the complexities of emotional life is as widespread as the capacity to read, write and do arithmetic.

Black Health Agency

Zion Community Health and Resources Centre
 339 Stretford Road
 Hulme
 Manchester M15 4ZY
 Telephone: 0161 226 9145
www.blackhealthagency.org.uk

The Black Health Agency provides a range of health-related services and initiatives for the diverse Black communities locally, regionally and nationally.

Drug Education Forum

Mentor UK
 4th Floor
 74 Great Eastern Street
 London EC2A 3JG
 Telephone: 020 7739 8494
www.drugeducationforum.org.uk

The Drug Education Forum brings together national organisations from health, education, police and voluntary sectors that deliver or support the delivery of drug education. The Forum promotes the provision of effective drug education for all children and young people in England. Their website has a range of useful information and resources for those involved in drug education.

DrugScope

32-36 Loman Street
 London SE1 0EE
 Telephone: 020 7928 1211
www.drugscope.org.uk

DrugScope is the UK's leading independent centre of expertise on drugs, whose aim is to inform policy development and reduce drug-related risk.

National Children's Bureau

8 Wakley Street
 London EC1V 7QE
 Telephone: 020 7843 6000
www.ncb.org.uk

The National Children's Bureau is a leading provider of resources, training and consultancy on all aspects of PSHE.

National Health Education Group

www.nheg.org.uk

The National Health Education Group is an organisation for professionals involved in the personal, social and health education of children and young people in formal and informal educational settings. The Group aims to enhance the quality of health education, within an equal opportunities framework for children and young people. Current members include those with national positions in the Home Office, QCA, NHSS, NCB, Drug Education Forum and DfES, as well as with local responsibilities in LEAs, NHS, police and other organisations, and independent consultants.

National Healthy Schools Programme

National Implementation Unit

Department of Health

Room 630

Wellington House

133-155 Waterloo Road

London SE1 8UG

Telephone: 020 7972 4339

www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

The Unit has responsibility for overseeing implementation of the National Healthy Schools Programme, funded by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health.

NSCoPSE (The National PSE Association for Advisors, Inspectors and Consultants)

Email: info@nscopse.org.uk

www.nscopse.org.uk

NSCoPSE provides a national forum for the views and interests of those with the responsibility for supporting, monitoring and evaluating personal and social education in schools and colleges throughout England and Wales.

PSHE Subject Association

8 Wakley Street

London EC1V 7QE

Telephone: 020 7843 1916

www.pshe-association.org.uk

The association has been set up to help teachers and their schools plan, manage, deliver, evaluate and monitor PSHE and to provide a forum for PSHE teachers.

QCA

83 Piccadilly
 London W1J 8QA
 Telephone: 020 7509 5555
 Enquiry line: 020 7509 5556
 Minicom: 020 7509 6546
www.qca.org.uk

The QCA provides guidance on PSHE including exemplar schemes of work, end of Key Stage statements and assessment guidance. They also provide advice and guidance on Citizenship.

Re-Solv (The Society for the Prevention of Solvent and Volatile Substance Abuse)

30a High Street
 Stone
 Staffordshire ST15 8AW
 Telephone: 01785 817885
www.re-solv.org

The national charity solely dedicated to the prevention of solvent and volatile substance abuse (VSA). Re-Solv operates throughout the United Kingdom.

Sex Education Forum

8 Wakley Street
 London EC1V 7QE
 Telephone: 020 7843 1901
www.ncb.org.uk/sef

The Sex Education Forum is the national authority on sex and relationship education (SRE). It is a unique collaboration of more than 48 organisations. The forum aims to ensure that all children and young people receive their entitlement to good quality SRE in a variety of settings. It provides support and information for effective SRE and an information service.

Wired for Health

www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

Wired for Health is a series of websites developed by the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills. Health information is provided for a range of audiences that relates to the National Curriculum and the National Healthy Schools Programme.

Working With Men

Unit K401

Tower Bridge Business Complex

100 Clements Road

London SE16 4DG

Telephone: 020 7237 5353

www.workingwithmen.org

Working With Men provides training and resources for working with boys and young men.