

Example 28

Learning through enquiry in a lesson of a junior secondary PSHE subject

At Lok Sin Tong Young Ko Hsiao Lin Secondary School, Ms Lo Ching Man uses an enquiry approach in her Secondary 3 lessons to help students understand the effects of World War I (WWI) on the countries involved and the content of the Treaty of Versailles (the Treaty). In response to the questions posed by the teacher, students work individually to search for the needed information and identify the demands of the countries they are representing. They then come together in groups to debate the terms of the Treaty and present their group decisions together with reasons. The lesson engages students in the enquiry process and in consolidating the results, which are two key components of enquiry learning.

Design of the lesson

Topic:	Outbreak and Impact of WWI - Paris Peace Conference: Treaty of Versailles
Grade Level:	Secondary 3
Lesson Time:	55 minutes
Prior Knowledge:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of the causes of WWI
Expected Learning Outcomes:	<p>At the end of the lesson, students should be able to:</p> <p><u>Knowledge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the conditions of the countries involved in WWI and their different standpoints• Understand the content of the Treaty of Versailles• Reflect on the negative effects of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany <p><u>Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extract relevant information from sources• Analyse and organise main points• Adopt different perspectives to understand issues• Express viewpoints• Communicate and negotiate with others• Present findings

	<p><u>Values and Attitudes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Empathise with others ● Respect others ● Be willing to negotiate for settling differences
Enquiry Procedures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revision: Causes of WWI and the countries involved. 2. Set: Based on the content of a short video and pictures, students answer short questions on the effects of WWI. The teacher provides further elaboration. 3. Development: Paris Peace Conference (Role-play) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The teacher introduces the Paris Peace Conference. ● Students work in groups of four, with the members of each group taking on the roles of France, Britain, the US and Germany respectively. ● At the start, students work individually on what they would demand at the Conference on behalf of the country they are representing, and decide whether they would adopt a harsh or conciliatory approach. ● Members of each group come together to debate the terms of the Treaty. ● Students present their discussion results, and the teacher writes the main points on the board. ● The teacher presents the Treaty of Versailles and guides students to understand the demands from the perspectives of different countries and think about the effects of the Treaty on Germany. 4. Conclusion: The teacher summarises the effects of the Treaty on Germany.
Assessment:	A writing task on the question “What were the effects of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany?” to consolidate and assess learning

Teacher's Reflection

Ms Lo reflects that using the enquiry approach in teaching WWI has the following benefits for students:

- A deeper understanding of the topic – for example, the situations of different countries after WWI, the Treaty of Versailles and the influence of the Treaty on World War II;
- A higher level of involvement in enquiry learning activities; and
- Increased learning motivation and interest in finding answers and learning the actual terms of the Treaty.

She also points out that as it may be difficult for students to have a fruitful discussion because of a lack of sufficient background information on the historical period, teachers should be prepared to supplement the relevant information before the start of the role-play.

Students' Responses:

It is more interesting to have discussions and role-plays. I can put myself in other people's shoes. I can express my own opinions in the class. I'm happy that I can contribute to my group.

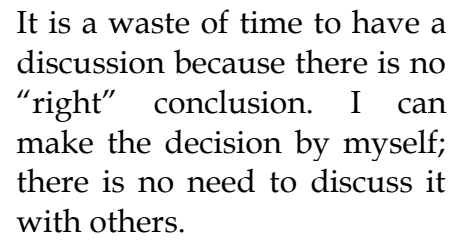
I easily get bored in lessons when the teacher teaches in a didactic way. I find lessons more interesting when we are assigned to different groups and have discussions. I'm more confident in answering the teacher's questions after the discussion, and I can get help from my groupmates.

I got a deeper impression of the Treaty discussed because I thought about and discussed the terms. I was also more involved in the lesson.

I can think more in this enquiry approach. I love thinking and don't like being given answers.

Food for thought:

How would you respond if a student gave the following feedback after the enquiry lesson?



It is a waste of time to have a discussion because there is no "right" conclusion. I can make the decision by myself; there is no need to discuss it with others.

If you are interested in enquiry learning, read also Examples 29 and 30.