Professional learning activity: Teacher approaches to contemporary issues

**Activity suggested duration:** 30 minutes

**Activity description:** This reflective activity can be undertaken as a group, in pairs and individually. The goal is to understand six teaching approaches that can be used when facilitating learning about contemporary issues, and for participants to reflect on their own practice in relation to these.

**Required sources:** sticky notes, whiteboard or butcher’s paper and markers (or digital alternative)

**Learning leader preparation:**

* Read 2.3.
* On the whiteboard, butcher’s paper or digital alternative, create a six-section chart with the following headings:
* neutral chairperson
* devil’s advocate
* ally
* balanced
* stated commitment
* official line.

(See the sample chart below.)

**Participant preparation:**

* Read 2.3.
1.

Activity steps

1. The learning leader asks participants to share what they noticed about the different categories in the reading. Record the responses in the summary row of the chart. (5 minutes)

Alternatively, in a small group this can be done collaboratively with all participants writing down their observations or recording them on butcher’s paper.

1. In pairs, participants choose one or two of the reflection questions below to discuss the categories and record their thinking. (10 minutes)
2. Share ideas that were discussed in pairs. (5 minutes)
3. Whole-group discussion: What implications of these different teaching approaches can participants see for their teaching? Appoint a scribe to record this conversation on the whiteboard, butcher’s paper or digital alternative. (10 minutes)

Note: If time allows, an exit ticket can be used with the prompt ‘Which teaching approach are you least likely to use and why?’ This can help the learning leader to understand doubts or disinclinations within the group.

Sample chart for learning leader preparation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Neutral chairperson | Devil’s advocate | Ally | Balanced | Stated commitment | Official line |
| **Summary** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Implications for teaching** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Reflection questions

Use these questions to reflect and share which of the six teaching approaches you’ve used before.

* When might you use different approaches in the classroom?
* Which teaching style are you most comfortable with? Why?
* Which do you find challenging? Why?
* Which of these approaches support vulnerable students in your classes?
* Which of these approaches are helpful when addressing student misconceptions or misunderstandings?