

A lesson inspired by Valentine's Day

This is a lesson plan on the theme of love, inspired by Valentine's Day and designed for intermediate level and above students of English aged 15-18.

The Stories that Move website gives access to a wide range of film clips of young people talking. Even without logging in we can benefit from these rich sources that provide great opportunities for genuine communication. One of the voices in Learning Path 2, Facing discrimination, is Nick (Ukraine, 18). His clip is available with subtitles in several languages.

In this activity, which is based on Nick's clip, learners consider what makes love stories successful and happy. They discuss the visible signs of blissful love between two people and think about what might ruin a loving relationship. Learners reflect on the role social injustice plays in the individuals' lives. They practise thinking from several different perspectives and develop critical thinking and communication skills.

<https://www.storiesthatmove.org/en/videos-2/facing-discrimination/>

Step 1

The educator writes or projects the word "V-a-l-e-n-t-i-n-e's" vertically like an acrostic. Learners are asked to find nouns, verbs or adjectives beginning with each letter. These should be related to the themes of 'love' and 'relationship'. Learners can work individually or in pairs, depending on language ability. When they have found at least one word for each letter, the educator asks to hear at least one of each.

Step 2

A spelling or vocabulary revision may now be needed. Then the educator asks learners to think about happy love stories. "What happens when the love is fulfilled? How can two people show their love? How can others see if two people are in love?" Learners brainstorm and record ideas in pairs.

Step 3

Having considered joyful love stories, learners are asked to think about factors that can ruin a loving relationship. Working in the same pairs they again brainstorm and write down ideas. This is followed by a whole-group discussion, when the educator asks for ideas and writes them on the whiteboard or projects them. The ideas are then divided into 'external' and 'internal' factors.

Step 4

Learners are now shown a first excerpt of the film clip of Nick talking about his life (0:00-1:08). With the subtitles on, learners are asked to identify a few factors that hindered the fulfilment of Nick and his partner's love and answer the question "How do you think they've reacted in this situation?"

The educator plays the next excerpt of the clip (1:08-1:31) to listen to Nick's reaction.

Before watching the third excerpt (1:32-2:08), learners are given two guiding questions to answer:

(1) What feelings and emotions occur to you from this excerpt?

(2) What form of social injustice is revealed by his experience? After watching the excerpts, the whole class discusses the answers. In the final excerpt (2:09-3:44), Nick talks about the way people can stand up and counter discrimination. Learners are asked what

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Nick, 18, from the Ukraine

examples he gives. “Highlight one element of what he says and reflect on it. Why is it important to have events like the ones he mentions and to take part in them?” Individual reflection and then learners share their opinions in small groups of 3 or 4.

Step 5

A possible follow-up to this activity is when learners do Learning Path 2: The machinery of discrimination in the toolbox. They may choose another voice to learn about how discrimination works and how it influenced the speaker's life.

During the activity we foster communication skills while using a wide variety of language functions (e.g. deduction, formulating hypotheses, sharing opinions and reflecting).

My students enjoyed discussing the important topic of countering discrimination based on Nick's clip. The activity served as an appetiser for them to immerse themselves in Learning Path 2.

Credits

Photo: Stories that Move

Contextual information

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