animals, climate and civic education

Training for teachers
Module 3
Teaching animal ethics and the climate crisis

Imprint

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Module 3: Teaching animal ethics and the climate crisis

Total duration: 3.5 hours.

Learning objectives for the module:

1. Participants understand the basics of emancipatory education and can apply them to the topics of animal ethics and the climate crisis

2. Participants know how to deal appropriately with students' emotions, taking into account the principles of emancipatory educational work

All materials for this module are available under the following link:

https://tinyurl.com/alice-modul-3-en

Part 1: Introduction to the module

Learning objective

- Participants have an emotional connection to and interest in the topic

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Whiteboard and pens

Description

After a brief overview of the module, the participants are divided into groups of two. In pairs, they share and discuss their hopes, concerns and experiences of teaching animal ethics and the climate crisis in the classroom. They have 10 minutes to do this.

They then share ideas in the whole group. The facilitator writes the points on the whiteboard, categorising them as "hopes", "concerns" and "experiences".

Possible points / questions:

- Reactions of the parents / staff

- How to present the information without overwhelming the students?

- Dealing with students' emotional reactions

- Presenting positions - how to deal with your own position? Opposing positions - which ones need to be presented?

- Reliable sources of information

The facilitator then moves on to the next part by explaining that the approaches of emancipatory education are suitable for addressing the hopes and concerns expressed. Some principles of emancipatory education will now be presented and explored through practical examples.

Part 2: Brief introduction to the fundamental principles of emancipatory education

Learning objectives

- Participants know the most important principles of emancipatory education
- Participants are aware that educational work always (whether consciously or not) follows a certain understanding of education

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Presentation
- Facilitation cards and pens

Description

1. Presentation "Emancipatory education" - 5 minutes

The facilitator explains that there are many different approaches to education. The project consortium has deliberately opted for an emancipatory understanding of education. The facilitator explains the term emancipation and uses the presentation to give a brief historical overview of the history of the term and emancipatory movements.

2. Working out the principles of emancipatory education - 25 minutes

Working individually, the participants first think of some keywords that they associate with emancipatory education. These are then collected in the whole group, written on facilitation cards and sorted on the whiteboard.

Some participants briefly explain what the key words mean to them and how they relate to emancipatory education.

As a minimum, the following terms and principles should be mentioned and clarified:

- Emancipation, empowerment, criticism, agency, participation, Beutelsbacher Consensus, prohibition against overwhelming the student, treating controversial subjects as controversial, giving weight to the personal interests of the student

A few practical examples are collected and discussed for each term to illustrate this.

Reference is then made to further literature:

- Beutelsbacher Consensus:
  https://**www.bpb.de/die-bpb/ueber-uns/auftrag/51310/beutelsbacher-konsens/**

- Frankfurt Declaration for a critical-emancipatory political education:
  https://uol.de/f/1/inst/sowi/ag/politische_bildung/Frankfurter_Erklaerung_aktualisiert27.07.15.pdf

Note: Since "emancipatory education" is not a fixed concept that can be clearly and indisputably defined, it is important to leave enough room for discussion.

Part 3: Putting the principles of emancipatory education into practice

Learning objective

- Participants apply their knowledge of the principles of emancipatory education to concrete examples

Time

120 minutes

Materials

- **Exercise 1:** Flipchart paper and pens, instructions - 1 per group

- **Exercise 2**: Selection of visual material, flipchart paper, pens and instructions - 1 per group

- **Exercise 3**: Instructions with text - 1 per person

- **Exercise 4**: Facilitation cards and pens, instructions - 1 per group

Description

Exercise 1, Influencing opinions: What strategies can be chosen to prevent teachers from unduly influencing students' opinions? - 30 minutes

The participants are divided into small groups.

Each group is assigned one of the following topics:

- Animals in agriculture

- Animal testing

- Keeping animals for entertainment purposes (zoo, circus, etc.)

First, the participants briefly discuss their personal opinions on the topic within their group.

The groups then discuss the following questions and note down key points:

1. How can students be consciously or unconsciously influenced by the teacher when the topic is discussed in class?
2. What strategies can be used to prevent the teacher from unduly influencing the opinions of their students?

After 15 minutes, the small groups come together in the whole group and share their results. The facilitator writes them down on flipchart paper. This can be done in the following way Each group contributes one point to question 1. Any questions are briefly clarified. Then do the same for question 2.

Exercise 2, Overwhelming images: What do we need to be aware of in the context of emancipatory education? - 30 minutes

The participants are divided into small groups and given the task to work out criteria for selecting images that are in line with the approach of emancipatory education. (The small groups can either be new or the same small groups as in exercise 1).

In particular, the participants should explore the tension that arises from the need to provide enough facts to allow students to form their own opinions, but at the same time to avoid overwhelming and unduly influencing them.

The small groups can be provided with a range of different visual material, for example on animals in agriculture:

- Material from farmers' organisations
- Traditional picture books
- Critical picture books
- Images from Module 1 on the life of bovines in dairy farming

A selection of Animal Rights Watch research photos and a selection of free images from Unsplash and Pixabay can be found here:

https://tinyurl.com/alice-modul-3-en

Either all groups are given visuals on the same topic, or different groups are given different topics, for example, 'animals in agriculture', 'animal testing', 'climate crisis', 'animals in zoos'.

The participants should think about what they would choose for each age group and write down their criteria. They can also research further images material on the internet.

They then share their results with the whole group. Questions are clarified.

Input can be given if needed, e.g:

- People react very differently to the same image - what some find interesting and informative shocks others. People with traumatic experiences may be triggered by images. A trigger warning should be given beforehand.

- Students should be given space to share/show their feelings. Before showing visual material, it should be emphasised that it is right and important to feel moved and affected, and that no one should be ashamed of this.

- Shock reactions should be avoided in the classroom. Even in the case of relatively harmless visual material, students should be warned in advance and given the opportunity not to look at it (go outside, cover the pictures, etc.).

- At the same time, it is important to show reality. It is important to remember that we quickly make an emotional connection with images and that they are easily remembered.

- Sequences and context are important.

Exercise 3, Dealing with comparisons: How can we deal with inappropriate comparisons and discriminatory comments? - 30 minutes

The facilitator first gives a short presentation on how to deal with inappropriate comparisons.

The participants then work individually to read a text on the topic and consider how they can deal with inappropriate remarks in an age-appropriate and sensitive way in a classroom situation or in conversation with others. They make a note of any questions. They have 10 minutes to do this.

The questions will then be answered by the whole group. Tip: Before the whole group session, point out that the focus is not on whether the comparisons are inappropriate, but on how to deal with them.

 At the end, the facilitator summarises the results and refers to materials on the topic:

- Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte - "Schweigen ist nicht neutral – Menschenrechtliche Anforderungen an Neutralität und Kontroversität in der Schule"

- Marcel Sebastian - Chapter on the Holocaust comparison, Lexikon der Mensch-Tier-Beziehungen

- Ashitha Nagesh - "Vegans need to stop comparing the treatment of animals to slavery" **https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/meat-free-monday-vegans-need-to-stop-comparing-the-treatment-of-animals-to-american-slavery-10319301.html**

- Christopher Sebastian McJetters - "Animal Rights and the Language of Slavery " **https://strivingwithsystems.com/2015/12/27/animal-rights-and-the-language-of-slavery/**

Exercise 4, Agency: How can we help students develop agency in relation to animal ethics and the climate crisis ? - 30 minutes

The facilitator introduces the topic with a short talk:

When dealing with issues such as animal agriculture, animal testing and the climate crisis, many negative feelings can arise in students, such as powerlessness, overwhelm, shame, anger and rejection. It is important to allow space for feelings and reflection and to respond appropriately to

these reactions. It is also important to organise lessons on this topic in such a way that students develop a sense of agency and feel empowered to act. This enables them to deal constructively with the ways in which they are affected and to play an active role in shaping society.

The facilitator gives some examples of how students can be encouraged to think about possibilities for change, their own agency and opportunities for action:

- Example 1 (Presenting role models): After looking at facts about the climate crisis, a film can be shown that introduces young people who are actively doing something about the climate crisis. This can be followed by a discussion in which the students discuss what they think and what they could do themselves.

- Example 2 (Concrete experience): After learning about the situation of animals in agriculture, the students could bake animal-free muffins and then distribute them in the schoolyard for tasting.

- Example 3 (Interdisciplinary cooperation): After discussing the conditions under which "laying hens" are kept, art lessons could be used to redesign egg packs to make them more realistic. The designs could then be displayed in an exhibition at school, with the best design being selected and sent to the Ministry of Agriculture - combined with the demand for realistic representations, as with tobacco packaging.

The participants are divided into groups of three and consider further ideas and examples of methods and activities that could be used to encourage action on animal ethics and the climate crisis. Participants write their ideas individually on facilitation cards.

The ideas are then shared with the whole group and the cards are pinned to the board to record the results.

Part 4: Reflection and conclusion

Learning objective

- Participants reflect on the information from the module and link it to their hopes and concerns from the introduction

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- None

Description

Participants work in silence to consider which points/ideas they will take away from the module and where there is a need for clarification.

Any open questions are first clarified in the group. Then each person shares a thought or idea that they will take away.

All links in files belonging to module 3 were last checked on 15/03/2024.