# 04 #Active learning

As you are aware CSPE aims to encourage, enable and empower students to become active participative citizens. Active learning methodologies are central to the successful experience of CSPE, as students will not become active citizens if their learning about citizenship has been passive. The diagram below illustrates the balance required for a meaningful CSPE experience, with a greater emphasis placed on the methods of teaching/learning and the development of skills and taking action, rather than getting overwhelmed with course content and information.

Content   Methodology   Action
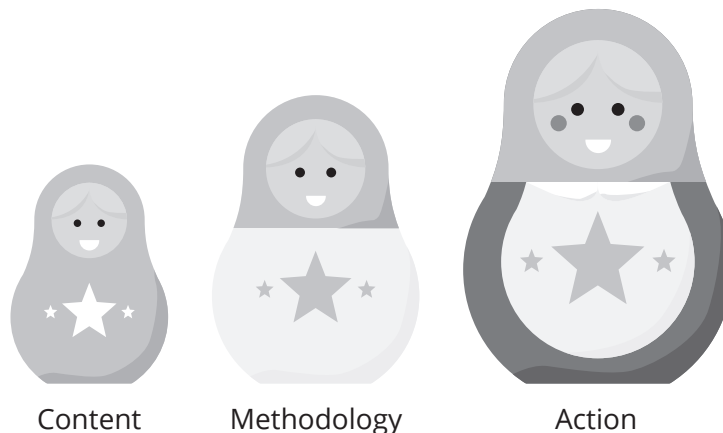
Citizenship education is a combination of approaches which can be summarised as:

1. Education *about* citizenship – knowledge of our local community and society in Ireland, Europe and the world.
2. Education *for* citizenship – the development of skills, values and attitudes as a way of developing active citizens.
3. Education *through* citizenship – emphasis on learning by doing through activities, experiences and actions in and out of school.

How do I prepare my students for active participatory citizenship?
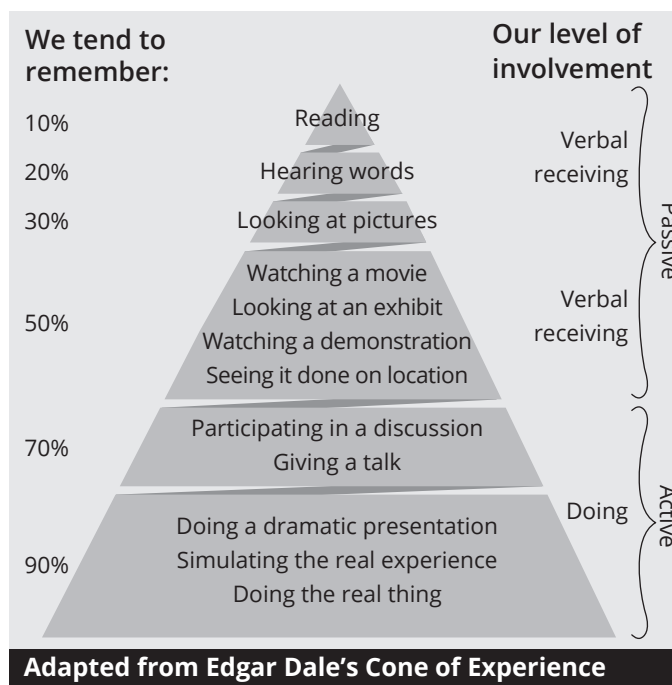
To learn something well, it helps to hear it, see it, ask questions about it and discuss it with others. Above all, to become active citizens, students need to do it – they need to figure things out for themselves, come up with examples, try out their skills and do tasks that depend on the knowledge they already have or must acquire.

Over 2,400 years ago, Confucius declared: What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand.

This simple statement speaks volumes about the need for active learning in CSPE. The accompanying diagram, adapted from Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience, puts Confucius' statement in the context of active learning methods.

General principles for the use of active learning methodologies in a classroom include the following:

- Ensure a foundation of appropriate and sufficient classroom work around the particular topic as a lead-in to the active methodology.

- Ensure that topics are made relevant to the experiences and contexts of all students.

- Ensure that the range of active methodologies chosen reflects the variety of student learning styles.

- Ensure that the active learning methodology takes place in a 'safe' classroom environment where relationships are characterised by trust and respect and supported by a mutually agreed set of ground rules.

We tend to remember:

		Our level of involvement
10%	Reading	Verbal receiving
20%	Hearing words	
30%	Looking at pictures	
50%	Watching a movie / Looking at an exhibit / Watching a demonstration / Seeing it done on location	Verbal receiving
70%	Participating in a discussion / Giving a talk	
90%	Doing a dramatic presentation / Simulating the real experience / Doing the real thing	Doing

Passive / Active

Adapted from Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience

- Identify the specific learning outcomes expected from the exploration of the particular topic and related active methodology, but expect and take note of unplanned learning outcomes.

- In the main, the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning rather than as a transmitter of knowledge.

- Try to adapt or match the context (e.g. environment and seating arrangements) to the active methodology.

- Ensure sufficient time and space for reflection (by teacher and students) and debrief at the end of each activity in order to evaluate and re-affirm the learning that has taken place and make the appropriate cross-curricular links.

It is also important to remember that although CSPE should largely be driven by active learning methodologies, there is also room for some didactic and content-driven traditional teaching.

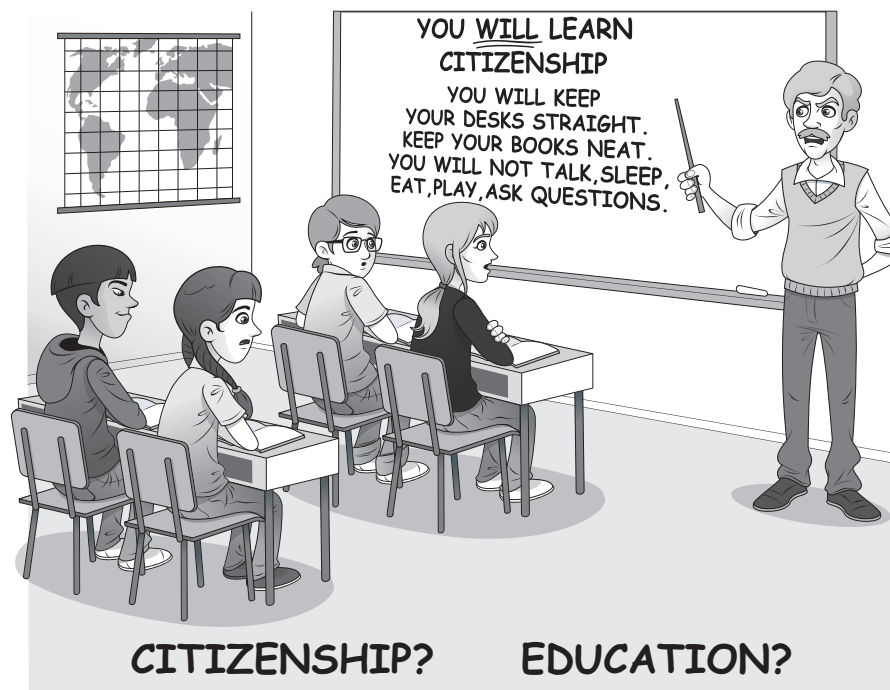Successful active learning methodologies are characterised by the following:

- They are engaging.

- They are student centred and relevant to students' lives.

- They promote the notion of students as agents of their own learning.

- They recognise that students learn from each other and teachers learn from students and vice-versa.

- They cater for different learning styles and intelligences.

- They enhance problem-solving, teamwork and critical thinking skills.

- They are most successful when relationships between all parties in the classroom are based on trust and respect.

- They promote student activity and may result in action.

47

How do I make sure that my students behave properly when engaged in active learning?

We believe that having a set of agreed ground rules is essential when organising and facilitating active learning methods with students. We would recommend that you engage with your students in agreeing a set of ground rules for the CSPE class. A sample set of ground rules might include the following.

Everyone is:

- Shown respect
- Given a chance to voice their opinion in the group
- Listened to, without interruptions
- Entitled to a climate of no put-downs
- Entitled to have their opinion respected
- Expected to support their opinion
- Free to change his/her opinion during the discussion
- Entitled to confidentiality within the group
- Obliged not to use generalisations, e.g. 'All refugees are ...'

What active methodologies should I use in CSPE?

A wide range of active learning methodologies exist and they all have their uses in the CSPE classroom. Some of the most important ones for CSPE are:

- Ice-breakers and games
- Narrative
- Discussion/debate
- Group work
- Visuals (using photographs, video clips)
- Gathering information
- Drama-in-education/simulation/role-play
- Problem-solving
- Questioning
- Generating ideas

Ice-breakers and games

Ice-breakers and games, which should be used as purposeful exercises with clear learning outcomes, are very good tools when trying to create a 'safe space'. The right ice-breaker or game at the right time can effectively increase involvement levels, inspire creative and divergent thinking, accelerate participation, get students interested, and create a common reference point towards which students can work together.

Ice-breakers and games should be fun and help students to relax. They can be a good way to introduce and lead into a particular topic. They can be used either at the start of a lesson or as a closure exercise. They may also be used if the teacher senses that the group needs a break from current activity or as a way of moving between activities.

When choosing suitable ice-breakers or games, the following approaches and guidelines should be considered:

- Do the group members know each other well?
- Consider students' ability to do an activity.
- Choose an activity that will be comfortable for the group.
- Ensure the game relates to the topic.
- When appropriate, explain beforehand why a particular activity is being used.
- If a chosen activity is not working, stop it.
- If an activity is competitive, be sure to stress the fun element and underplay the importance of winning.

Ice-breakers and games can promote the following learning outcomes:

- They can enable students to get to know one another in a non-threatening way.
- They can enable students to interact socially, to become a group and to build teamwork skills.
- They are inclusive, including those who might otherwise be reluctant to participate.
- They can enable students to experience success and affirmation in a non-academic way.
- They can improve communication, listening and observation skills.
- They can help to build self- and group confidence.

The following are some examples:

Example 1: Invent a game

A really useful way of getting students to make the learning their own is to get them to invent a game for other students to play, using the important information they have been exploring. See p. 73 of the *Make A Difference!* Student Activity Book for an example of a board game, Ivy and Caterpillars, based on rolling a dice and using counters, similar to Snakes and Ladders.

Example 2: The active citizen … activity

This is in Chapter 1 of *Make a Difference!* on pp. 7 and 8. This game explores what being an active responsible citizen in a community is all about through a card-sorting activity. In the activity, the students have to think about their own roles in the different situations presented, discuss them in a group and consider some of the rights and responsibilities related to active citizenship.

Example 3: The labels activity

This is a whole-class activity that involves students moving around the CSPE classroom asking each other questions in order to ascertain what is written on the label on their back. This activity may be used as an introduction to a topic or issue, as an ice-breaker, and/or to check understanding at the end of a topic. It may also be used to practise the skills of researching and questioning. You will need to prepare a set of labels using the words you want students to learn. These are then placed on each student's back. Students are asked not to disclose who or what the person is. Each student moves around the classroom asking each student three questions. Answers that can be provided are limited to: 'Yes', 'No', 'I don't know'. No other answers are acceptable. Students return to their seats when they find out who/what they are. You should decide when and if you need to provide some prompts, particularly if there are four to five students still standing.

If you wanted to use this to explore people involved in the Irish legal system a labels activity might help. Create a set of labels with the names of people and places on them associated with the legal system. Here are a few to get you started:

Garda	Judge	Barrister	Solicitor	Defendant
Prison	Garda Station	Four Courts	Law Library	Court Service

The labels activity may be used for any CSPE topic to check students' prior learning or to revise a topic. A variation of this is having two identical sets of labels and after identifying themselves, students then have to find their match.

Example 4: Celebrities/Politicians quiz

Design two quiz sheets – one with 12 images of current celebrities from TV, cinema, popular music and the other with 12 images of current politicians. Give students the first Celebrities quiz sheet to complete. Then ask them to complete the Politicians quiz sheet. In most cases students will be able to identify the majority of the celebrities, while many will have difficulty identifying the politicians. The key learning point here is that students do not really know the people who make crucial decisions about them, their communities, their country, Europe and the world. Encourage them to gather images of politicians – the President, the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste, Ministers, local TDs, MEPs, etc. – and become familiar with them. These images could form a politics gallery in your CSPE classroom! A quiz/table quiz is a great way to learn and reinforce key facts.

Example 5: GloBingo

This ice-breaker is used to find out students' prior knowledge about other countries in a fun and active way when exploring the idea of, for example, connectedness. Give each student a copy of a GloBingo sheet, similar to the one below. They have to move around the classroom asking their classmates the questions on the sheet. If a student can answer a question, he or she should sign the sheet in the appropriate box. Each student should return to his or her seat when they have their 10 signatures. The responses could be plotted on a world map in your classroom.

GLO

Find someone who …	
1. Has a family member living in another country Person's name: Country:	6. Likes food grown in another country Person's name: Food:
2. Can speak the language of another country Person's name: Country:	7. Can name a country where bananas are grown Person's name: Country:
3. Heard/saw a news story about another country on TV/radio/online this week Person's name: Country:	8. Has visited another country Person's name: Country:
4. Can name a famous sports person from Africa Person's name: Country:	9. Travels in a car made in another country Person's name: Country:
5. Is wearing something that was made in another country Person's name: Item of clothing:	10. Has a social media friend in another country Person's name: Country:

Narrative

A narrative is not the story itself; it is the telling of the story and so can be represented textually, aurally, orally, visually, etc. Most societies have used narrative as a means of passing on the identity of the group and of teaching the community what fairness and justice, the rule of law and the relationship between the individual and a community implies and involves. Although narratives have an in-built capacity to carry such messages, they are often enigmatic and do not tell the reader what to think. Instead, they pose a series of mysteries and perplexities that force reflection and discussion. Narratives can thus play a role in exploring values and attitudes. The 'meaning' of any text lies not simply in the text itself, written, seen or heard, but in the interaction between the tale and its hearer, viewer or reader. Every text is coloured by the historical, social and cultural context surrounding its making and is therefore a product of its time. Narratives are an integral part of culture, past and present, and can help students understand themselves and relate to others, forging important links between the home, school, community and wider contemporary society.

Particular scenarios can often give a context for understanding life implications that might otherwise seem theoretical or irrelevant. A fictional story can give groups a fantasy space in which to safely explore a theme within their own life context. Alternatively, students can be encouraged to create their own scenario or story to suit the situation. Telling their own stories can also be an important part of understanding their experiences, just as listening to others' 'real life' stories can provide a way of learning from theirs.

The use of narratives can promote the following learning outcomes:

- Understanding, appreciation and empathy for others
- Skills of interpretation and critical thinking
- Personal expression, reflection and emotional development
- Creativity and aesthetic sensitivity

Narratives can include the following active learning methodologies:

- Case studies
- Media reports
- Fictional stories (novels, short stories, cinema, TV, etc.)
- Oral narratives
- Pieces of music and lyrics
- Self-narration through text, drama, oral or visual representation
- Photographs
- Video or YouTube clips

Many different narratives/stories are used throughout *Make a Difference!*. In each section of the textbook and Student Activity Book you will find some form of narrative that we have used to explain some key information. Here are some follow-on activities:

Give the narrative an alternative title.	Interview some of/all of the characters.
Produce a drawing/illustration/poster.	Write letters/emails to the characters.
Make a cartoon strip.	Write a poem/parody/song/rap based on the narrative.
Dramatise through role-play, mime.	Finish the story. What happened next?
Collect objects from the story.	Produce a newspaper article and headline.
Write a diary entry for one of the characters.	Organise a set of quiz questions based on the narrative.
Create a word puzzle.	Create an infographic.
Write a blog.	Capture the key message in a tweet (140 characters).

Discussion and debate

A discussion is an extended interactive communication involving an exchange of views on a particular topic. A number of approaches and guidelines should be considered when planning a classroom discussion. In order for discussion activities to be productive, they should occur in a safe classroom environment, characterised by trusting and respectful relationships (see ground rules p. 48). Discussion-based activities can be either teacher- or student-led, but participation is likely to be more animated if the topic for discussion is relevant to students' lives and experiences. With this in mind, it is essential to provide students with some type of stimulus to generate discussion. Task cards are very useful here – each group is given a card with the task clearly explained, perhaps in bullet points.

See an example of a task card activity on p. 276 of *Make A Difference!* for a structured discussion that can be used to explore laws and why they are necessary.

#action

Divide your class into groups.

Imagine you are on a plane. The plane gets into difficulty and is forced to land on an island in the middle of nowhere. Food, water and shelter are all available. Now you must hold a group meeting to decide what laws you need to make. One person should take notes for each step of the task.

(a) Make a list of five of the laws that your group agrees to.

(b) Note why these laws are necessary.

(c) Decide what you will do if a person breaks one of these laws and write down your decisions.

Groups then share and discuss their laws and decisions.

Debate is a formalised system of (usually) logical argument – a common process in democratic deliberative bodies and therefore an important methodology in the context of citizenship education.

Cognisance should be taken of a number of approaches and guidelines when planning a classroom debate. Learning outcomes will be maximised where background work occurs before the debate and the topic is relevant to student lives. The rules governing debate allow students to discuss and decide issues and differences in a safe environment. Where the issue may be contentious, the structure has the advantage of 'containing' it. Outcomes of debates may be decided by voting, by student-appointed judges or by a combination of both.

Discussion and debate in a classroom setting can promote the following learning outcomes:

• Knowledge and understanding of the concept of democracy

• Development of the skills of communication, collaboration and consensus building

• The sharing of knowledge, skills and interests

• The opportunity to hear feedback from peers

• The building of confidence and self-esteem

• The voicing of student opinion and their decisions to alter opinions

• The opportunity for the teacher to learn from students

Discussion and debate includes the following active learning methodologies:

- Small group discussion
- Whole-class discussion
- Generating ideas

- Walking debate
- Structured debate
- Justifying a point of view

We believe that well-structured discussion is the principal active learning method to be employed in a CSPE classroom. It is crucial that students learn how to take part in discussion in a gradual, step-by-step way.

Think-pair-share approach

The following think–pair–share approach is a useful one to take in developing discussion.

- Provide a context for discussion.
- Divide the class into groups of six.
- Provide a stimulus.
- Students work on their own (3 minutes).
- Students work in pairs (3 minutes).
- Students work in groups (6 minutes).

- One student reports on findings to the class.
- Elaborate on the main points of students' feedback.
- Follow-up work and/or homework.

The timing of each stage of the discussion is important. A time sequence has been suggested on the previous page and this should be followed if the work is to be completed in a 40-minute class period.

The stimulus provided is extremely important. Students should be able to read or interpret it without much difficulty. A variety of stimuli should be sought for different exercises. Many are provided in *Make a Difference!*, e.g. a photograph/illustration, controversial statement, cartoon, newspaper headline, graph, infographic, slogan and question. It is equally important that students are given opportunities to provide feedback on their findings and that this role is rotated within the group.

One similar stimulus that is useful is providing a blank charter that students have to develop using the think–pair–share approach. Students come up with three of their own articles for the charter; they then work in pairs and agree on five articles for the charter; finally they work as a group of four and agree on six articles. All articles are then pooled and the class agrees a class charter. At this point you might decide to agree on 10 articles for the finished product. In Chapter 2 of the Student Activity Book (p. 9) there is an activity about creating a declaration for a new planet in which a charter is used.

Throughout *Make A Difference!* you will find On the other hand activities, which give students opportunities to discuss and debate issues, always ensuring that they have thought about the issue from another perspective. Here's an example on circuses from p. 172.

Circuses use animals for our entertainment. Sure, what's the harm in that?

Do you agree with this opinion? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have thought about other points of view.

On the other hand

Walking debate

Another type of debate is the walking debate. A walking debate can be used to explore any topic or issue. It is important to note, though, that the statements must be somewhat controversial, like some of the On the other hand statements, in order for the methodology to work properly. Some examples might include:

'It's okay to break the law.'

'All blood sports should be banned.'

'The Seanad should be abolished.'

'Human rights are only the entitlement of the rich.'

'Petrol and diesel should be rationed to encourage drivers to change over to electric cars.'

'Child labour is necessary or how else could some families survive.'

In order to do this activity, you will need two large signs: 'I AGREE' and 'I DISAGREE'.

I AGREE

I DISAGREE
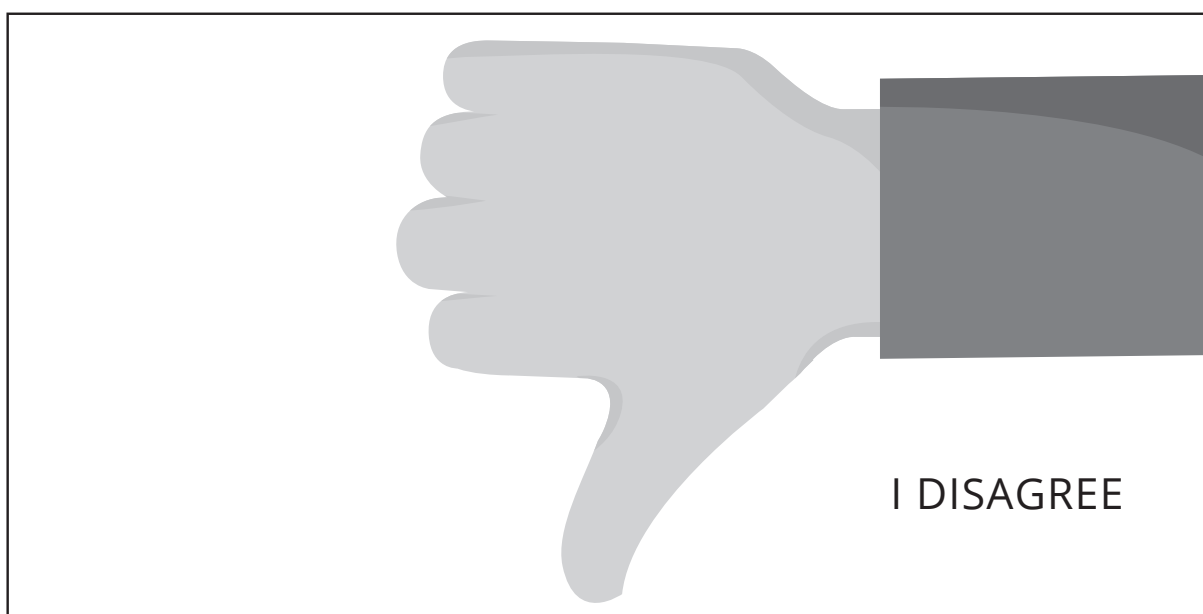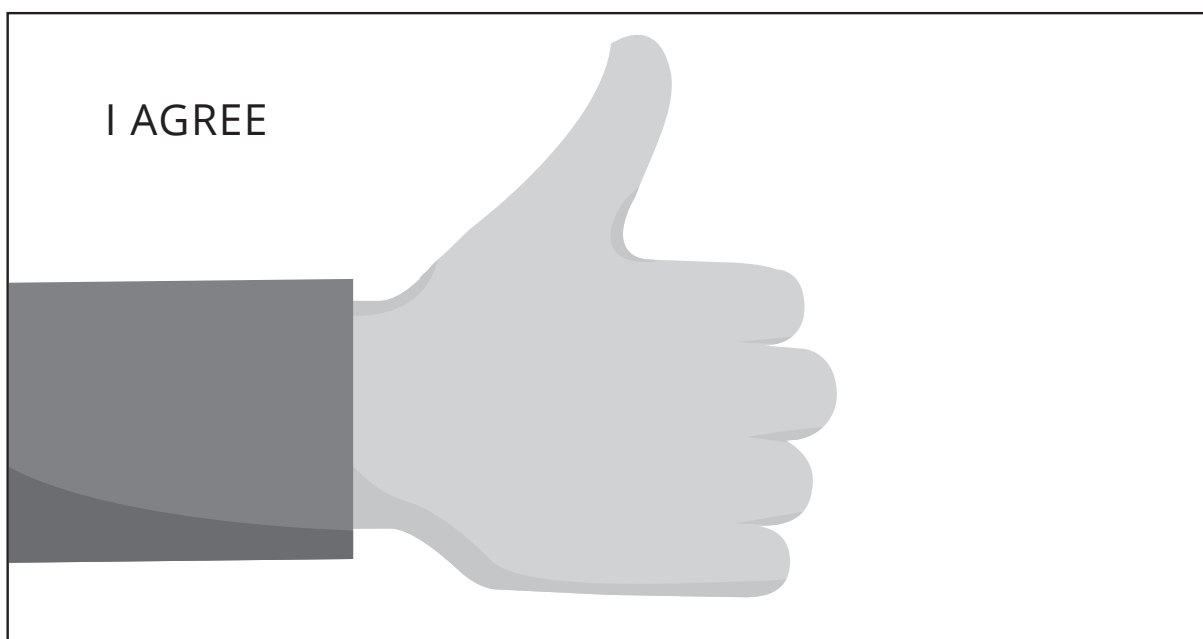
These signs should be placed at either end of the CSPE classroom. To begin the walking debate the students all move to the centre of the classroom between the two signs. You then call out the statement, like one of the examples above. Students then show their opinions by moving towards either sign. If students agree/disagree strongly, they should move very close to the appropriate sign. As students explain why they have positioned themselves where they have, other students may move away from or towards the latest opinion. You should ask a number of students why they have positioned themselves where they are. This activity enables quieter and shyer students to have a say, without using their voices.

Group work

Group work occurs when a number of students gather together in a purposeful process. While the group may set out to complete a task together (e.g. a group presentation to the class), a greater emphasis is placed on the process involved rather than on the task itself. Group work encompasses everything that takes place in the group: how things happen, the relationships and interactions involved, and so on.

Group work is participative and encourages all students to engage and interact in tasks and discussion. Working in a smaller group will give all students a chance to have a voice, which can be reported back to the full group. Students' attitudes, opinions and experiences and their ability to express and discuss these and listen to those of others are as valuable as the knowledge and information that the teacher brings to the lesson.

You should be aware of the following approaches and guidelines before starting group work activities. It is possible to build up to group work through the allocation of individual and then paired tasks. Addressing controversial issues can be handled more easily and in a more controlled way in pairs or small groups that then report back to the full group. Establish an agreed set of ground rules for behaviour and responsibilities within the group context before commencing.

Allocating a student to a group does not guarantee inclusion within that group. Some groundwork around active listening skills and the allocation of roles within groups will help to ensure genuine inclusion. It is usually a good idea to allocate students to groups rather than letting them form groups themselves. This will prevent some students being left out, and you can separate combinations that may distract each other from focusing on the task at hand. Appoint a recorder or reporter in each group who will report back to the class. This can be a good role for a student who tends to dominate or distract from discussion.

Give very clear guidelines regarding tasks and have materials well-prepared. Limit the time allocated for each task and observe the groups in action in case the length of time needs to be extended or cut short. Allow enough time for feedback and full group discussion, comments or sum-up before the end of class.

Group work can promote the following learning outcomes:

- Communication skills
- Reporting and presentation skills
- Teamwork and cooperation
- New thinking

- Discussion, debate, negotiation and consensus
- Self-awareness and self-confidence
- Interpersonal and social skills

Group work includes the following methodologies:

- Pair work
- Small group work
- Teams
- Committees

A useful example of group work is the jigsaw method. This is a method that allows students to peer-teach and is a particularly useful strategy for learning and revising essential knowledge.

Jigsaw method

- Divide the class into groups of the same size. For example, in a group of 24 you could have six groups of four students.
- Number each student in the group, i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4 – 1, 2, 3, 4 – 1, 2, 3, 4 – 1, 2, 3, 4 – 1, 2, 3, 4 – 1, 2, 3, 4.
- Divide the material to be learned into four numbered segments.
- Give one piece of information to each student, matching the information number to the student number.
- Reorganise the students so that all the students with the number 1 will be together, the 2s together, the 3s together and so on.
- The task of the group is to learn the information they have and to come up with a method of teaching this information. They become the experts on their piece of information.

After a suitable period of time, the original base group is reformed (1, 2, 3, 4) and each member now teaches his or her piece of knowledge until all the information has been presented.

Visuals

In recent years, visual culture has emerged as a transdisciplinary field in its own right. Everything can be looked at from the perspective of visual literacy. Thus, looking at a DVD of a football match can lead to a variety of CSPE-related discussions of politics, sociology, religion, history, advertising standards and media reports. Given that the arts and creative media are forms of human expression that reflect personal, social, political and cultural values and beliefs, active methodologies with a visual emphasis are particularly suitable for use in CSPE classrooms. These methodologies can involve the development of students' visual literacy, either through the interpretation of visual stimulus or the creation of their own visual representation of content or emotion.

The power of the visual (i.e. photography, graphic design, architecture, digital, animation, film, painting, etc.) can be captured and used to motivate the learner and open up a world of imagination that can bring citizenship education to life. Appropriate visual stimulus can challenge stereotypes and prejudices and increase empathy for others.

Encouraging students to express themselves through the visual is a means of encouraging effective communication, without heavy reliance on verbal and literacy skills. These types of visual activities can also be a social act. A visual piece, together with an accompanying narrative, can create powerful and multi-faceted representations.

Visual methodologies and creative arts can be very effective with students who are less confident of their verbal communication and literacy skills. They encourage a range of creative skills, provide an important outlet for expression of emotions, and enable students to express things that they might be unable to put into words.

When choosing suitable visual methodology, the following approaches and guidelines should be considered. Students can be asked to interpret a visual stimulus before carrying out any background work on the topic, but contextual information should be provided thereafter and indeed could prompt a re-examination and reinterpretation of the original stimulus at a later stage. You should avoid visual stimuli that serve to reinforce prejudice and stereotypes. If students are producing their own works of art, it would be important to provide reassurance to those less artistically inclined and to promote the activity as a creative endeavour where each work was equally valued.

The use of visual methodologies can promote the following learning outcomes:

- Understanding of the language of visual expression
- Visual literacy
- Digital literacy
- Expression of individuality

- Creativity and artistic development
- Interpersonal, communication and presentation skills
- Self-confidence
- Empathy

Visual active methodologies include the following:

- Collage
- Storyboards
- Freeze-frames
- Use of photographs
- Use of film/YouTube clips

- Art
- Design
- Animation
- PowerPoint
- Graphic organisers

Visuals provide opportunities for students to:

- Empathise with the people portrayed or the situation
- Recognise that different people assess situations differently
- Address controversial issues

- Appreciate that different viewpoints may be equally valid
- Synthesise information and opinion
- Deepen understanding
- Have a multisensory learning experience

Visuals may be used to:

- Promote discussion and develop discussion skills
- Summarise, depict and capture learning
- Explore perceptions and attitudes and even challenge them

- Bring wider experiences of people or places outside the students' immediate surroundings and experiences into the classroom
- Safely explore controversial issues

Using photographs and images

Photographs – still images of a snapshot in time – are rich in complex detail. Subject matter, colour, tone, shadow, perspective and juxtaposition all contribute to the single image. Photographs and images are open to multiple interpretations. The range of perspectives that can emerge in a classroom from a single image is pedagogically challenging and rich in opportunity.

Photographs and images come from many sources: newspapers, magazines, books and more and more from the internet.

Using sets of photographs and images has a particular value because learners encounter the photos as artefacts in their own right. The meaning and significance of the photograph is not predetermined by the surrounding text, as in a textbook.

Facilitating learning through photographs and images enables the learners to voice their own views where there are no right or wrong answers to any of the issues raised, only different interpretations. They can talk about issues that are sometimes complex from their own starting point. Respect for different opinions and perspectives on the same topic can be nurtured. Listening to different interpretations of the same photograph or image can broaden and challenge one's own opinion.

So, photographs and images are a really useful tool in encouraging students to talk, explore, compare, debate, discuss, deliberate and apply understanding. They can be used to explore how images are constructed, what choices and issues face photographers, how images can 'lie' or provide 'partial' understandings and access.

Here are some questions you could give to your students to discuss when looking at a photograph or image.

What do I see and think?

- What do I see in the image?
- What key ideas or keywords does the image suggest to me?
- What might the people in the image be thinking?
- How do I interpret the image?
- What does it make me think?

Working with a partner(s), find out how others see the image.

- What do they see?
- What similarities do we see in the image?
- What differences do we see in the image?
- Are our reactions to the image different?
- How would others from different places see the same images?

Some tips for using photographs

- Use open-ended questions, e.g. 'Tell me about this person.' 'What is happening in this photograph?'
- Extend the questions, e.g. 'What do you think of the picture of this community?' 'Are the houses/facilities as you expected? 'How do they differ from what you are used to?'
- Encourage students to look at details in the photograph, e.g. 'What is the landscape like?' 'What about the climate?'
- Ask students to explore similarities and differences.
- Explore feelings: 'How do you think the people in this photograph are feeling?' 'Why do you think this is the case?'
- Extend students' knowledge by giving additional information, e.g. context about the photograph/image (where and when it was taken and why).

Code of Conduct on Images and Messages – Dóchas (2006)

A Code of Conduct on Images and Messages was drawn up by NGOs working in the areas of emergency relief, long-term development and development education. It is particularly important when choosing and using photographs of a sensitive nature with young people to follow this Code of Conduct, an extract from which follows.

Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

Choice of images and messages will be made based on the paramount principles of:

- Respect for the dignity of the people concerned;
- Belief in the equality of all people;
- Acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity and justice.

Accordingly, in all our communications and where practical and reasonable within the need to reflect reality, we strive to:

- Choose images and related messages based on values of respect, equality, solidarity and justice;
- Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and in its wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development;
- Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise or discriminate against people, situations or places;
- Conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and protection of the vulnerable people.

Extract from the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages (2006)

Using photograph methodologies

Here are 15 different methodologies for use with photographs and images.

Method 1: Pick a photo/image

Display a set of photographs/images on tables in the classroom. Invite the class to look carefully at the set of photos/images. Each student picks one or two photos/images that they find particularly interesting or that raise important questions or issues for them.

Ask the students to form small groups (of three or four). Each student then shows the image(s) chosen and explains to the group the reason(s) why they chose the image(s).

You might decide to probe further with questions like:

- What photo/image did you find was most surprising or most shocking? Why?
- What photo/image would be the most likely one to appear in a newspaper or magazine, website, blog, social media site or textbook? Why?
- What photo/image would be the least likely one to appear in a newspaper or magazine, website, blog, social media site or textbook? Why?

Method 2: Photo gallery

This activity is similar to the previous one in that it gives students an opportunity to explore a set of photos/images gathered by the teacher or students. Photos/images should be placed on the wall with sufficient walking space for students to view all of the images. Give each student a coloured sticker. Ask them to place their sticker beside the photo/image that speaks most clearly to them. Get all students who selected the same photos/images to group together. Each student then talks about why he or she chose this particular selection.

You might decide to probe further with questions like:

- What photo/image did you find was most surprising or most shocking? Why?
- What photo/image would be the most likely one to appear in a newspaper or magazine, website, blog, social media site or textbook? Why?
- What photo/image would be the least likely one to appear in a newspaper or magazine, website, blog, social media site or textbook? Why?

Method 3: Post-It keywords

Give students or pairs of students a photo/image to explore and interrogate. Ask them to think about keywords they would associate with the image. Use Post-Its to post three to five keywords on each photo/image. Students then present their photo/image and their keywords to the rest of the class.

At this point you may discuss the relationship between words and images and how people's opinions might change or be influenced depending on the words used.

Method 4: Captioning

A caption is a brief explanation that accompanies a photo/image. A caption can make a big difference to the way a photo/image is interpreted. Give students or pairs of students a photo/image. Ask them to suggest captions that say something about their particular photo/image.

Ask them to suggest captions that might elicit a variety of responses, e.g. hope, despair, pity, shock, fear, charity and action.

You might decide to probe further with questions like:

- What caption might be used if the photo/image was used in a tabloid newspaper?
- What caption might be used if the photo/image was used in a broadsheet newspaper?
- What caption might be used if the photo/image was used in a charity advertisement?
- What caption might be used if the photo/image was used in a school textbook?
- What caption might be used if the photo/image was used on a web page?
- What caption might be used if the photo/image was used on a large billboard?
- What caption might be used if the photo/image was being posted on Facebook or Twitter?

Method 5: Describing a photo/image

Give pairs of students a photo/image to work with. One student describes the photo/image in detail to his or her partner without the partner seeing it. The partner draws the image from the description and then compares it with the original. In what ways is the drawing different? Was anything left out? Was anything added? Remember it is not a Texaco Art Competition!

Method 6: Interrogating a photo/image

Give students or pairs of students a photo/image to explore and interrogate. Ask them to respond to seven key questions that are about seeing, feeling, analysing, reflecting and taking action.

Q1. What do you see?

Describe the main features in the image, including the foreground and the background. Sum up the photo/image in a word, phrase or caption.

Left background	Centre background	Right background
Left of centre	Centre	Right of centre
Left foreground	Centre foreground	Right foreground

Use this grid to help describe what's going on in different parts of the photo/image.

Q2. What do you feel?

What words best describe the feelings/emotions you have about this image?

If there are people in the photo/image, what feelings might they have? If you could read their mind, what might they be thinking?

Q3. What do you think?

What do you think about this photo/image? Is your reaction one of agreement, shock, disagreement, amusement, empathy, anger, puzzlement, confusion or something else? Explain the reason for your reaction.

Q4. How did this photo/image connect with your life?

As a human being and as a citizen with rights and responsibilities, how does this photo/image connect with your life? Does this image support or challenge how you act?

Q5. How reliable is this photo/image?

What do you know or think happened before and after this photo was taken? What role did the photographer and/or other people play in constructing this image? How do you know if this photo/image represents reality?

Q6. How does this photo/image connect with the challenges facing humanity?

What, if anything, are the connections between this image and issues such as human dignity, human rights, development, justice, equality, solidarity, conflict, poverty, democracy, interdependence, sustainability and responsibility?

Q7. Summarise your response.

Sum up your response to this photo/image in a paragraph.

Method 7: Questioning a photo/image

Give pairs/groups of students a photo/image and a large sheet of blank paper (A3 of flip chart) to work with. Students place their photo/image at the centre of the page.
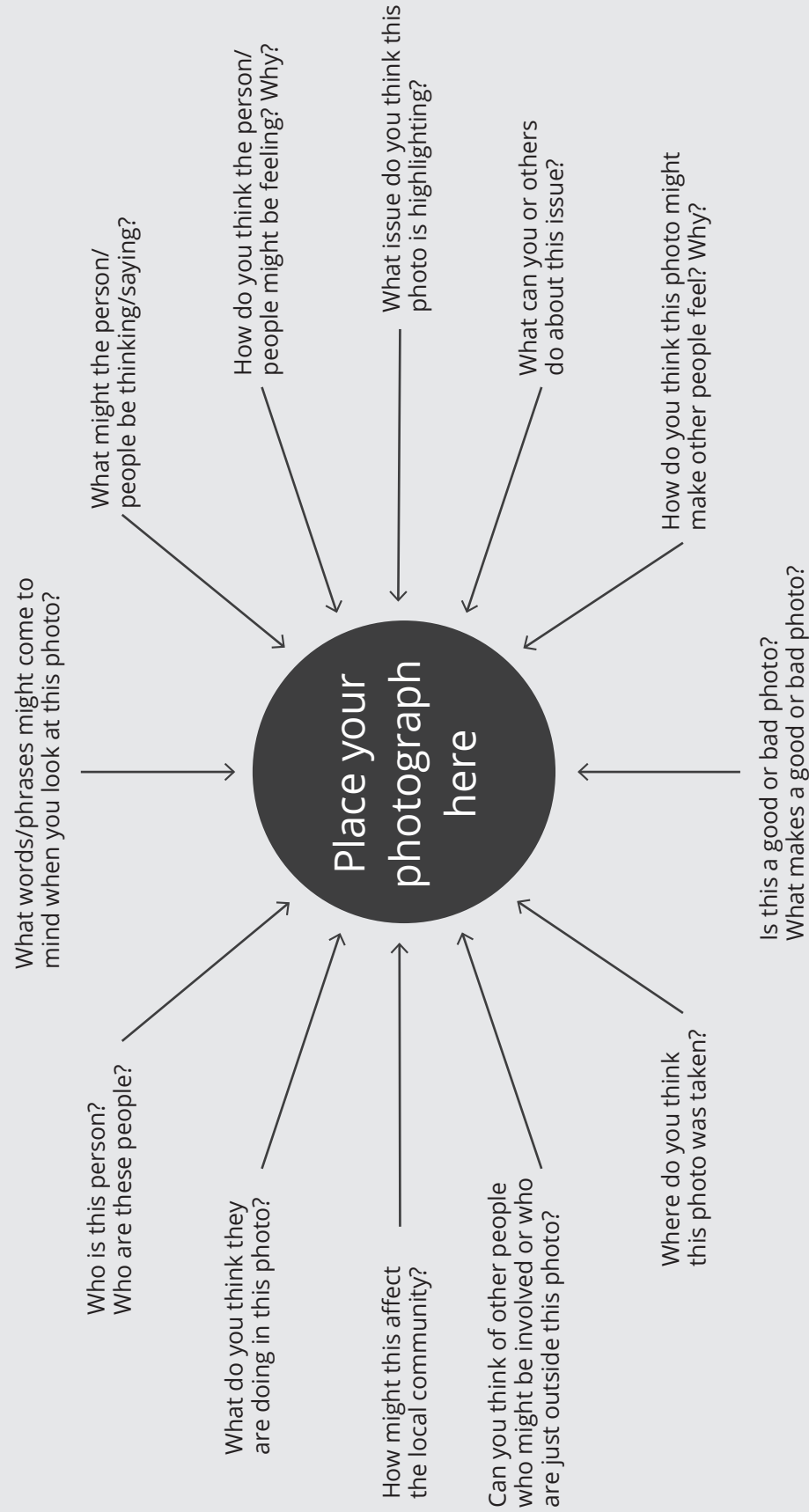
Ask them to take a close look at the photo/image and then jot down the questions that the group feels it raises. Some questions may be directly related to the photo/image; others may relate to the issue/topic more generally.

Ask students to report back to the rest of the class.

Method 8: What am I looking at?

Give pairs/groups of students a photo/image and a large copy of the next page (A3) to work with. Students place their photo/image at the centre of the page and answer the questions provided. Ask students to answer only the questions that work with their particular photo/image. This method is used with the Daniel Cabrera story on p. 40 of the *Make A Difference!* textbook.

WHAT AM I LOOKING AT?

Place your photograph here

What words/phrases might come to mind when you look at this photo?

What might the person/people be thinking/saying?

How do you think the person/people might be feeling? Why?

What issue do you think this photo is highlighting?

What can you or others do about this issue?

How do you think this photo might make other people feel? Why?

Is this a good or bad photo? What makes a good or bad photo?

Where do you think this photo was taken?

Can you think of other people who might be involved or who are just outside this photo?

How might this affect the local community?

What do you think they are doing in this photo?

Who is this person? Who are these people?

Method 9: Ranking the photos/images

Give pairs/groups of students a set of photos/images. Ask them to rank them in order according to agreed criteria, e.g. photos/images they like most, photos/images they like least, photos/images that say the most to them about an issue.

Each group then presents their ranking and explains it to the class.

## Method 10: A picture paints a thousand words

Give students/pairs of students three photos/images. Ask them to tell a story, ordering their photos/images so that they correspond with the beginning, middle and end of the narrative. Give students sufficient time to compose their stories before sharing them with the rest of the class.

Method 11: Freeze-frame

Give groups of students three photos/images. Ask them to choose one photo/image in order to create a freeze-frame – a scene that students make with their bodies to show the rest of the class their interpretation of their image. It is like pushing the pause button on the remote when watching a TV programme or film and there is no sound or movement. It is a snapshot, just like a photograph. This is called a tableau.

Method 12: Thought tracking

This activity follows on from a freeze-frame. As the group of students is frozen in freeze-frame, enter the scene and tap individual members of the scene to find out the thoughts of their character. When all the characters have been 'thought tracked' from the scene, another freeze-frame may be explored.
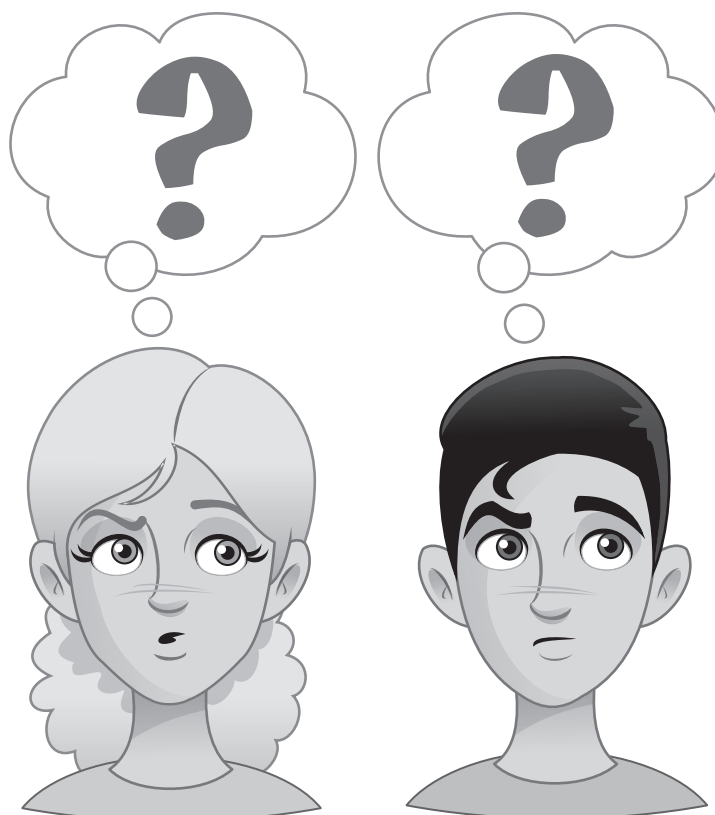
Method 13: Group interviews

Give groups of students three photos/images. Ask them to choose one photo/image in order to develop a short interview with the key character(s) in it.

Each group prepares four to five questions to ask the interviewee and decides who will play the role of interviewer and interviewee. The teacher might choose to play a role here too. They then present their interview to the rest of the class.

Method 14: Role-play

Role-play is best undertaken when students have done some background work around the photos/images and the issues explored. It allows students to develop empathy with those people in the images. Give groups of students three photos/images from the set. Ask them to choose one of them in order to develop a scene about the lives of the people in the image.

They will need to decide the following:

- The names of the people in the photo/image
- Their relationship to each other
- Whether any members of the household/community are not in the photo/image
- How each person in the photo/image feels
- What each person is doing
- What each person is saying

The students then decide which roles they want to take on. They may role-play the scene in the photo/image or extend it to include events that led up to this scene or events that followed it. Each group presents their role-play. You should allow for comments and questions afterwards. Then all students should debrief and come out of role!

Method 15: Community meeting

Give groups of students three photos/images. Ask them to choose one image in order to create a scene from a community meeting. The meeting has been called to discuss how to improve things in the community. Ask students to use the photos/images to help identify what the needs of their community are. The students should then discuss these in role. After the discussion has taken place, the group should try to agree which needs are the most important and suggest ways that these needs could be met.

Using film, video clips or YouTube

Using film, video clips or YouTube is another really useful approach to take in the CSPE classroom. There really is not enough time to show an entire film in a single lesson. And even if there were more time, watching a whole programme is not necessarily the best use of film as a teaching and learning tool. Very often an appropriate three- or four-minute clip or news item is the most effective way of using film and video. YouTube provides a wealth of current and up-to-date material.

It is important for students to be on task as they watch video clips – in other words, they should have a very clear purpose, something to do while watching the clip. It is a good idea to divide the class into a number of groups. The following are some tasks which each group could undertake while watching a video clip (these templates are available to download from FolensOnline):

This approach means that each student is on task and involved in viewing the film clip. It also means that no one group has to tackle the full range of learning activities. Students can work in small groups and this provides for greater participation.

Do not forget that visual communication through posters and slogans is a really useful way of raising awareness in CSPE actions!

Gathering information

Tasks involving the gathering and interpretation of information can develop skills of independent learning and provide rich opportunities for active learning both within and beyond the classroom. This type of learning, by nature active, engenders students to become more informed, empowered and participatory citizens. In teaching students how to gather information and conduct a critical content analysis, we are also teaching them to recognise their own relationship with producers of the information (e.g. media) and the ability that these sources of information have to cultivate attitudes and values in our culture and society. This can provide hands-on opportunities to explore the phenomena of fake news, inaccurate information, bias, 'alternative facts' and the challenges of living in the knowledge society.

HOW TO CHECK FOR FAKE NEWS

1 Have you checked the source?
Investigate the site, its purpose and its contact information.

2 Have you checked the author?
Do a quick online search on the author. Is he or she a real person? Is this person reliable?

3 Have you checked the date?
When was the story first posted? Old stories are not necessarily relevant to current events.

4 What are your opinions?
Are you biased? Could your own beliefs affect your judgement?

5 Have you read the whole story?
Research the whole story. Headlines may try to attract you by being shocking.

6 Does it have supporting sources?
Click on any further links. Does the information in the other links support the story?

7 Is it a joke?
If it is ridiculous, it might be a joke. Find out more about the author and the site.

8 Have you asked the experts?
Ask someone you trust or consult a fact-checking website.

The following approaches and guidelines should be considered before commencing information-gathering activities in class. Students may need time to develop skills to discern and identify relevant and genuine information. Teachers should play a role in guiding students towards good use of media (print, broadcast, digital and social) and other source materials. Students should be directed to gather information only on topics where they are likely to find a defined body of knowledge, some of which will be readily accessible to students, but most of which will challenge students to reach new heights of research, analysis and presentation.

Gathering and analysing information can encourage the following learning outcomes:

- Critical thinking
- Research and analysis skills
- Appreciation and empathy for the opinions of others
- Group work skills
- Communication skills
- Reporting and presentation skills
- ICT skills

- Vigilance: the need to authenticate sources of knowledge
- The wealth of knowledge, opinions and opportunities for learning available today
- Responsible behaviour online – what it means to be a 'digizen'
- More informed understanding
- Digital literacy

Information gathering and analysis activities include the following:

- Literature searches and reviews (primary and secondary sources)

- Research (qualitative and quantitative)

- Survey (oral and written)

- Interview

- Questionnaire

- Social media

- Video/YouTube clips

- News reports

- Case studies

- Images/photographs

- Study visits

- Fieldwork
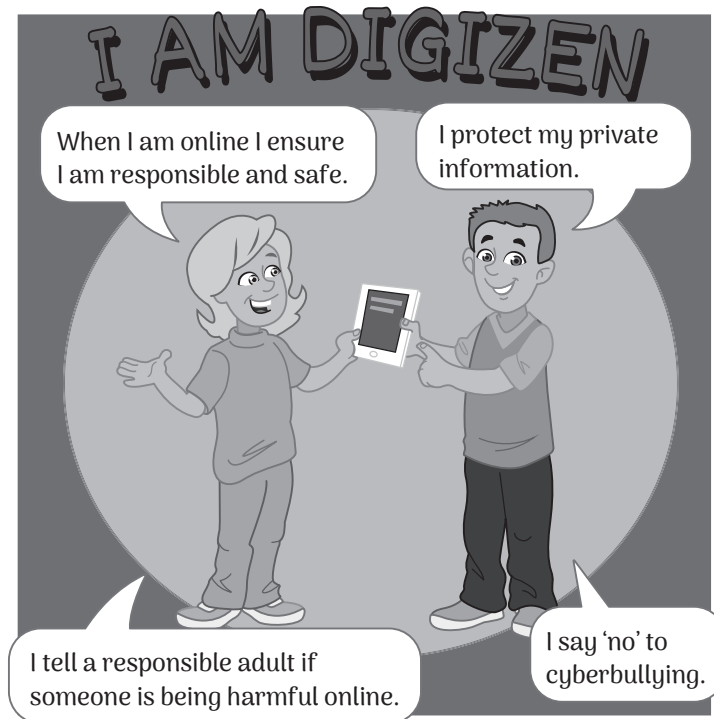
In *Make a Difference!* we have suggested internet searches for further research. We have also provided numerous suggestions about who might be invited to the CSPE class from the local community, from an organisation or from a political party, and lots of ideas as to where a CSPE class might like to visit, e.g. a local courthouse, dump, multinational company in order to gather relevant information.

Drama-in-education, simulation and role-play

In drama-in-education methodologies teachers use techniques from drama to stimulate students to explore a given topic/issue. Central to drama in education is simulation and role-play. Students are encouraged to assume roles or identities that are not their own and to react and develop ways appropriate to their 'new' identity. The teacher sets up situations, encounters, debates that are not personally threatening to the students. Unlike drama or theatre-in-education, drama-in-education is not concerned with performance or the final product; the main focus here is on the process and the learning that derives from this process.

Some simple drama-in-education methodologies that do not take up a lot of time are:

1. **Freeze-framing** – Students choose a scene and get into position and then are asked to freeze, like forming a statue to represent the particular scene; these can then be analysed by other groups of students. This method has already been mentioned as Method 11 in Using photos/images.

2. **Thought tracking** – Used in conjunction with freeze-framing, this involves speaking the inner thoughts of the characters, at an agreed signal. This technique can be useful in understanding the feelings of characters involved in the drama. This method has also been mentioned previously as Method 12 in Using photos/images.

3. **Hot seating** – One or more persons sits in character in front of the class and answers questions put to them. The questioners can also ask their questions while 'in role'. This technique can be useful for eliciting precise information that may have been acquired in a previous lesson.

69

4. **Mantle of the expert** – The students are working as themselves, but 'as if' they were experts. The roles can be general ones, which imply special skills, allowing the student to look at the situation through specific eyes, e.g. a member of a local council.

5. **Student in role** – The students are given or assume roles within a scenario, which has been carefully planned by the teacher.

6. **Teacher in role** – The teacher assumes a role within the structure of the drama. The teacher will be inside the play with the students and can therefore actively affect what is happening from the inside, e.g. the chairperson of the planning committee.

Simulations and role-plays are learning activities used to explore issues, situations, themes, or texts where diverse opinions need to be exposed and ideas require fleshing out. These methodologies take longer to organise and execute than the other drama-in-education methods mentioned above. However, these methodologies can add life and immediacy to topics and issues by encouraging students to 'experience' and reflect upon real or hypothetical situations in order to make a particular point or show a specific interaction. Beware of stereotyping!

There are a number of approaches and guidelines that should be considered when planning role-play and simulation activities with students. Because students can often be asked to take on a role or act a part they have not previously experienced, it is very important to ensure that this happens in a safe environment with clear preparatory work around the issue at hand, that the teacher ensures realistic boundaries around the unfolding drama, that the temporary nature of the character is stressed and that students are sufficiently and appropriately debriefed and 'de-roled' at the conclusion of the exercise. Where an issue is considered highly controversial, an alternative methodology to the use of 'live' performances can be utilised, e.g. puppets or masks.

Simulation and role-play can promote the following learning outcomes:

- Skills of reflection, analysis and debate
- Changes in understanding, feelings, attitudes and empathy levels
- Appreciation of the motivations, behaviour, feelings and self-image of others
- An increased understanding of the consequences of certain actions, complex social situations and inter-relationships
- Development of interpersonal and communication skills
- Increased self-confidence and coping abilities
- Improved self-awareness

In *Make a Difference!* we have included a number of simulations and role-plays. In Chapter 5, Lesson 33 pp. 115–17, there is the *Then and now* play. In the same chapter in Lesson 35 on pp. 122–3, there is The Mill Activity; in Chapter 7, Lesson 57 there is *Barbara Banana: this is your life*, pp. 195–7. And finally in Chapter 9, Lesson 84 on p. 286 there is the Mock trial where students have the opportunity to act out the trial of Goldilocks (*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*) or another fictional character of choice.

Problem-solving

Another strategy used as an active learning methodology is problem-solving. Here, students are presented with a problem that they have to solve. They are given information that they have to analyse. The students then have to decide upon possible solutions. The final step in the process is to select and agree upon the best solution(s). In Chapter 5, Lesson 34, pp. 119–20, there is the Ballynew town planning activity. Here, students are presented with a scenario about a developing fictional town and decisions have to be made about the future of Ballynew, taking on board all of the information provided. Many of the activities in the Student Activity Book have a similar focus, e.g. Themus Island conflict in Chapter 8, p. 97 or Witness reports in Chapter 9, p. 108.

Questioning

No matter what active learning methodologies you use in your classroom, one of the most important aspects of teaching and learning is the use of effective questioning. In the 1950s Benjamin Bloom identified different orders/levels of questioning that lead to different levels of thinking. The diagram below summarises the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Level	Level of thinking	Question cues
1	Knowledge (recalling information)	State, list, identify
2	Comprehension (making sense of ideas)	Explain, describe, illustrate
3	Application (applying understanding in new contexts)	Apply, select, solve, predict
4	Analysis (identifying structures and patterns)	Examine, investigate, rank, compare, contrast
5	Synthesis (combining ideas to come up with something new)	Generalise, create, compose, design, develop
6	Evaluation (making judgements based on reasoned arguments)	Judge, assess, prioritise, argue for and against

Bloom discovered that over 80 per cent of teachers' questions required students to respond only at the simplest level of recall (Levels 1 and 2). Bloom's Taxonomy is really useful in helping teachers to look at the types of questions being asked and to explore how to increase high-order questioning (Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6). Assessment for Learning (AfL) encourages teachers to plan for effective questioning. The following tips are useful in developing a teachers' questioning technique:

- Do not ask questions that only demand recall of facts.
- Use open questions as opposed to closed questions that can often be responded to with 'Yes' or 'No' responses. An example of an open question is 'What do you think the law should say about ...?' An open question implies that a wide range of answers is acceptable.

- When posing questions, ask students to discuss the answer in pairs before responding. This will give them an opportunity to reflect before answering.

- Encourage students to use 'wait time' – at least 10 seconds – before responding.

- Direct questions to as wide a range of students as possible, not just those who put their hands up.

- Restate a student's opinion and ask the other students for comment. For example, 'So, Máire thinks the death penalty is okay in certain circumstances … What do you think, Seán?'

CSPE classrooms

How should I organise my classroom for CSPE?

Classrooms come in all shapes, layouts and sizes. For the effective teaching of CSPE, the classroom setting can make a difference. It is important wherever and whenever possible to change the 'hierarchical' space – the usual 'square' space of the traditional classroom, where desks and students are in rows. This is not a good model for communication, since students have little eye contact with each other and do not have an equal share in the learning process. This classroom set-up is content- and teacher-centred.

While acknowledging that some teachers may not be able to reorganise the layout of a classroom for CSPE, we suggest the following.

Group/project work

Group or project work is best facilitated in a classroom where small work stations can be set up. This set-up allows for sharing in the learning process as students are equally placed in the group and have eye contact. This is a process- and student-centred space.

Discussion classes

Discussions are best held in the round, in what is a more 'democratic' space. This layout enables greater participation and an equal sharing in the learning process as students are equally placed in the group and have eye contact with everyone. This is a process- and student-centred space.

In this democratic space the teacher's role is more creative and rich and includes that of facilitator, motivator, listener and choreographer. In this set-up the student becomes empowered.
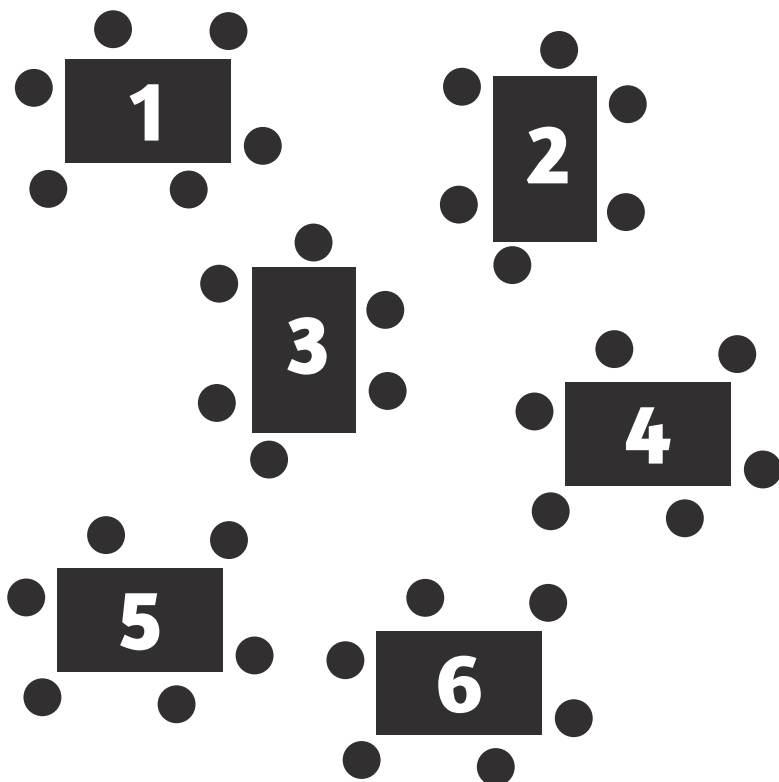
Democratic space can be created within the 'square' traditional-type classroom set-up where desks may be too heavy or screwed to the floor. Students can be invited to face each other and to work together in small groups – in pairs, threes and so on. If the desks cannot move, the students can!

Tip

If you plan some noisy work, then it is a good idea to find an alternative venue for your CSPE class. This lessens the stress on you, your colleagues next door and the students trying to 'keep it quiet'!
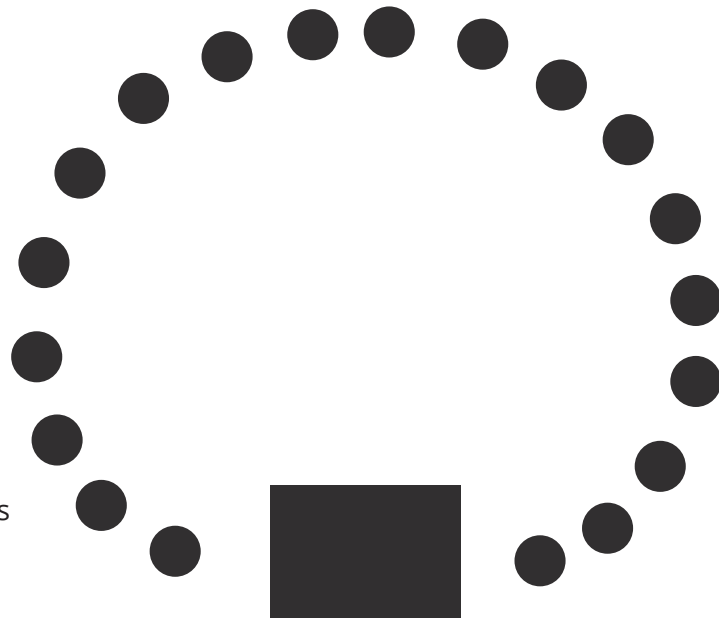
Debriefing and evaluation

No active learning activity is ever complete without debriefing and evaluation; this part of the activity provides the keys for learning and helps the students to put what they have learned into a wider context. Be sure to give students plenty of time to complete the activity and if necessary come out of role before discussing what happened and what they learned. Spend time at the end of each activity talking over what they learned and how it relates to their lives, their community and the wider world. Without reflection, students do not learn much from their experiences.

We suggest that you try to go through the debriefing and evaluation process in sequence by asking students questions that relate to:

- What happened during the activity and how they felt.
- What they learned about themselves.
- What they learned about the issues addressed in the activity.
- What feelings/opinions they have developed about the issue now.
- What new questions they have now.
- How they can move forward and use what they have learned.

In Chapter 11 of both the *Make A Difference!* textbook and the Student Activity Book there are ideas and activities to help students to reflect and evaluate their learning.