

## Hoop in

*This activity stimulates students to consciously make choices and justify it. It's also an easy and visually strong way to help students to be curious about others' opinions and to challenge students to be flexible in their own thinking. In addition to this principle, this activity supports Learning Through dialogue and Interaction and Learning Through Reflection and Evaluation.*

### Expected Outcome(s) – students will:

- ✓ Be able to articulate their own thinking.
- ✓ Be able to listen actively to others.
- ✓ Be able to identify similarities and differences in opinions.
- ✓ Be able to demonstrate flexibility in opinion formation.
- ✓ Be able to demonstrate interest and openness towards other people 's views and experiences.
- ✓ Be able to justify their choices.

### Timing

The minimum amount of time you should plan for this method is 40 minutes.

### Material

- 3 hoops
- Icons/pictograms/name tags for each student
- Objects to put in the hoops (see below)

### Prepare yourself

- Choose a story or situation you will talk about.
- Formulate some questions, based on the story and/or characters that elicit a choice.
- Provide several objects and/or pictures which represent the choice(s). E.g., pictures of the characters of a story.
- Give each student a pictogram or a card with their name.
- Place your students in a circle, the hoops in the middle.

### Step-by-step

#### 1. First steps

Familiarize the students with the hoops. Place an object or picture in each hoop. Ask a question that elicits a choice between the two objects or pictures. Students place their pictogram in the hoop of their choice. They tell why. E.g., What do you want to play? Which one do you find most beautiful? What do you use to ...?

#### 2. Input

Tell or read the story or situation. See if the students understand what the story is about. Let the students summarise the story.

- Who is ...?
- What happened?
- What is ...?
- Where and/or when did ...?
- How did ...?

### 3. Making choices

Tell the story again, if needed. Put the objects or pictures in the hoops.

- What does a or b have to do with the story or situation?

Ask your choice question.

- What would you choose/do to ..., a or b?
- Who of the two characters do you think is more ...?
- Which of the objects in the story is more ...?

Students place their pictogram/name tag in the hoop of their choice. Sound out the reason for their choice:

- Why did you choose a/b?
- Who else chose a/b? Did you choose it for the same reason or another?
- What do you think about the argument of student a? Who (dis)agrees?  
Who wants to comment?

Give students the possibility to change their opinion and therefor move their pictogram/name tag to another place.

- Now that you've heard the arguments of the others, do you want to change your opinion? Why (not)?

Repeat this for the other questions and or fragments of your story.

#### Tips

If you are telling a longer story, you can split it in fragments and do this exercise in pieces. Ask a question after the fragment it relates to.

Does a student have a new suggestion that is not in the hoops? Introduce a third hoop 'I choose something different'. Have them first articulate why the other objects are not 'satisfactory' and why the new object is a better choice. Give other students the possibility to

change their opinion and therefor move their pictogram/name tag to another place.

Does a student have a suggestion that combines the options of the two hoops, then make a Venn diagram with your hoops. Have the student(s) first articulate why the other two options are not 'satisfactory' and why the combination is a better choice. Give other students the possibility to change their opinion and therefor move their pictogram/name tag to another place.

### Do not hide the argument in the question!

Instead of: "What do you choose to play outside so you don't get wet? An umbrella or a fishing net? Because the students will automatically choose the umbrella, 'because then they won't get wet!'"

Ask: "What do you choose to play with outside when it rains? Umbrella or fishing net? *Umbrella, because then I won't get wet. Fishing net, so I can catch frogs.*"

## 4. Variation

You can apply this exercise to many kinds of input and related choices. If you want the students to think of other content, replace the objects in the hoop by:

- Emoticons
- Arguments on a sticky-note
- Terms on a sticky note (e.g. 'waste', 'no waste', ...)
- Pictures of situations
- ...

You can also replace the pictograms or name tags by objects. For example, you let the students read short stories about different objects (a sad cucumber who is wrapped in plastic, a happy organic banana, ...). After reading and exploring the stories, you give the students different kinds of waste (banana peel, plastic wrapping, ...). You give them the choice between 'waste' in one hoop, and 'no waste' in the other. The question is: Is your object, in your opinion, waste or no waste?

## 5. Reflection

- ✓ What did I ask you to do?
- ✓ How was it to make a choice? Why?

- ✓ How did it feel to justify your choice?
- ✓ Which arguments of classmates did you find interesting/surprising?
- ✓ Did those arguments make you change your opinion? Why (not)?
- ✓ To which topic would you like to apply this exercise again?