Problem Solved

ACTIVITY: 'PROBLEM SOLVED'

TIME: 15+ minutes
SIZE: Small groups
SPACE: For small groups to work
RESOURCES: Paper, slips of paper, pens, buckets/envelopes (one for each group of two to four students)

The aim is for students to problem solve ways around obstacles that might arise when trying to achieve their day-to-day goals.

The result should be practical exercising of problem-solving and perspective-taking skills.

1. Break the class into small groups of two to four students, and give each an envelope with a number on it (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.).

2. Give every student a slip of paper.

3. Have every student write down on their slip of paper an obstacle they may face (or anticipate facing) in the near future. These can include diverse problems like: 'No time for fun', 'Marks aren't good enough', 'Can't work enough hours to save money', etc.

4. Have the students put their 'obstacle slips' into their numbered envelope.

5. Redistribute the envelopes so each group gets another group's obstacle slips.

6. Each group now has five to 10 minutes to come up with possible solutions for every obstacle/problem in the bucket/envelope they have been given.

7. Ask each group to choose one obstacle slip they've received and use it (and the solution they've come up with) as the basis for a short role-play scenario (approx. two minutes) that they will then present to the wider class.

8. Commence class discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

•   Was it easy or difficult to come up with problems/obstacles? Why/why not?

•   Was it easy or difficult to come up with solutions to the obstacles you received?

•   Were you surprised by any of the obstacle slips your group received?

•   Did anyone who had the obstacle they wrote presented as a role-play find the solution offered helpful? Explain why/why not.

•   Were there some thinking skills that groups came up with to solve the problems?

•   What thinking skills can you take away from this activity and use in your day-to-day life? In what other scenarios might they be useful?