

Participate

This activity has been produced for young people to explore the issue of how to encourage 15–17 year olds to participate in education, employment and/or training. The activity is suitable for Level 1 learners but it could be used with other groups.

It has been designed to supplement the suggestions in Unit 4 of *Citizenship through tutorial: a staff manual with activities for personal and social learning*¹, which examines topics relating to educational issues, learner voice and community participation.

The staff manual contains information, guidance and resources for citizenship activities on six topics:

- democracy and freedom
- global issues
- economy and employment
- education, learner voice and community participation
- rights, responsibilities and justice
- healthy, safe and cohesive communities.

All units in the manual make links to the outcomes of Every Child/Learner Matters. This activity is particularly relevant to the outcomes 'Enjoy and achieve' and 'Make a positive contribution'.

The activity makes use of research undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research² on young people classed as NEET (not in education employment or training) or in JWT (jobs without training) during 2009. The latest figures showed that there were 183,200 (9.2%) 16–18 year old NEETs at the end of 2009. Rates varied with age from 4% of 16 year olds, 6.2% of 17 year olds and 16.9% of 18 year olds NEETs.

The policy of the Coalition Government is to continue the previous Labour Government's plan to raise the age at which learners can leave education from 16 to 18 by 2015. They will have to be in a training post or education until the end of the school year in which they turn 17 from 2013, and until the end of the year in which they turn 18 from 2015. However, the decision announced in October 2010 to replace or change the arrangement for Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) may itself have an impact on the participation rates.

¹ *Citizenship through tutorial: a staff manual with activities for personal and social learning* is available to order or download from <https://crm.lsnlearning.org.uk/user/order.aspx?code=09011>

² Spielhofer, T et al (2009) 'Increasing Participation: Understanding Young People who do not Participate in Education or Training at 16 and 17', *Research Report DCSF – RR072*, NFER. Download from www.education.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR072.pdf

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Aims of the activity

The activity enables young people to:

- consider different ways to encourage all 16–17 year olds to participate in education, employment and/or training
- explore the factors that lead to drop out
- take action to encourage participation
- consider government policies to encourage participation.

Resources required

- Enough copies of Neetown (page 4) for two per group
- Sets of the Broken information exercise cards (pages 5 and 6) – one per group. Some groups have the female (Lucy) and others the male (Adam) cards
- Sets of the Role cards (page 7) enough for one per group.

Running the activity

Stage 1

- Explain that the purpose of the session is to explore what makes some young people drop out of learning and work. The so-called NEET group is not in education, employment or training. Begin by asking the learners if they have friends who are not at college, or in work-based training or work. They should not divulge any names. Next have a brainstorm of a list of reasons why young people may be in this group after leaving school. The list may include the following factors:
 - poor or no GCSEs
 - excluded from school in year 10 or 11
 - bullying or other bad school experience
 - regular truant in year 11
 - young offender
 - drug or alcohol abuse
 - family abuse
 - parents unemployed
 - living with neither parent or in care
 - homelessness
 - teenage parents
 - learning difficulties
 - caring for a relative.
- Ask young people to work in groups of three and four and distribute the Neetown sheet. Read through the scenario and make sure that they all understand the task. Allow 15 minutes for them to discuss the various options and to select a group of measures to tackle the problem which is within the budget. Invite two or three groups to present their recommendations. Ask other groups to question or criticise the options taken.

Stage 2

- The second stage is a broken information exercise. Broken information exercises encourage communication and team building. Explain that you will give each group a set of cards in an envelope and one person must deal them out as with playing cards.

Each person will have two or three statements about their case study individual who is either Lucy (a NEET) or Adam (at risk of becoming a NEET). They must share information about their young person without showing their cards. These are based upon real young people who were interviewed by National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in their research on NEETs. They should try to offer a piece of information that is relevant to the previous contribution. The aim is to find out:

– *Who is Lucy/Adam?*

– *What are factors that make them at risk of becoming or staying NEET?*

- When all the information is revealed they can put the cards on the table and should have a complete picture of their young person. This information is important in the third stage of the activity.

Stage 3

- Working now in groups of six, the learners will take on one of six roles. These are described in the role cards and represent the people that have most influence on the decisions of young people. Place an empty chair at each table. This represents the NEET young person whom they have just been discussing. Now is their opportunity to offer advice to Lucy/Adam based on their assumed roles. They should take it in turns to talk to the young person in the empty chair, i.e. they talk as if Lucy/Adam was sitting in the empty chair.
- A development of this technique is for one or more of the group to sit in the empty chair and respond as Lucy/Adam might to the advice being offered. They do not have to remain in the chair but can just sit down to respond to one piece of advice and then return to their other role.

Follow-up activities

- A follow-up to this activity could involve learners volunteering to talk to small groups or individuals at risk in local schools about the benefits of further education and the perils of dropping out. They could also target friends who are NEET and try to involve them in college life or access courses as a prelude to re-entering education and training. They could contact their local council to find out what is being done locally to help young people who are NEETs.
- Further, learners could investigate and then debate or give presentations on aspects of government policy which affect the decisions of young people in the 16–18 age group, including:
 - *policy on apprenticeships*
 - *plans to change the arrangements for Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)*
 - *plans to raise the compulsory education/training participation age to 18 by 2015.*

Note

There is a reference to National Citizen Service for young people in the Neetown description. For more information about this, see page 16 of the November 2010 edition of *Citizenship News*.

Neetown

You work for a charity that has a contract to support young people who are NEET in your area. NEET stands for not in education, employment or training. In other words they are young people who have dropped out. There are 18 secondary schools and one large college for 6,000 young people aged 16–18 in your area. Of these 400 (6.6%) are NEET. The job of your team is to reduce the number of NEET young people from 400 to 200 over two years. Your budget is £200,000.

Below are 11 measures you can take to reduce the number of NEET young people.

You should:

- discuss the measures from the list below that you think will make a difference
- choose from two to five measures from the list but try to spend your £200,000 budget
- make a note of the reasons why you think these are the best measures
- try to think of any other ways to stop young people becoming NEET
- be prepared to explain and justify your choices.

Measures	Engage young people because...	Cost
One to one interviews with Connexions personal advisers	it guides them to the right courses	£100,000
Work with truants	it interests them in education again	£25,000
More work-based courses	they offer practical skills	£80,000
More part-time courses	they can work and study	£75,000
Vary start dates of courses	they can start courses in September, January or April	£50,000
More grants for poor students staying on in college	they may need extra financial support	£100,000
National Citizen Service for young people	this may motivate them to stay on in education	£60,000
Parent courses to help them support young people	family support is very important	£10,000
More careers guidance in school	they can make the right choices	£25,000
More work experience by giving allowances to employers	they need work experience to get jobs	£40,000
Mentoring by business people who meet with them regularly	they can advise and support them in finding a way forward	£30,000

Lucy – Broken information exercise cards

<p>Lucy is 17 years old</p>	<p>Lucy left her secondary school in Year 8</p>
<p>Lucy's parents were separated when she was 10</p>	<p>Lucy lived with her mother when she was 12</p>
<p>Lucy's mother is an alcoholic</p>	<p>Lucy went to live with her father when she was 13</p>
<p>Lucy was bullied at her new school</p>	<p>Lucy began glue sniffing when she was 14</p>
<p>Lucy ran away from her father's house many times</p>	<p>Lucy was placed in a secure unit when she was 15</p>
<p>Lucy was released from a secure unit when she was 16</p>	<p>Lucy did not take any GCSEs</p>
<p>Lucy has been looking for work</p>	<p>Lucy has had two cleaning jobs</p>
<p>Lucy lives alone and has to support herself</p>	<p>Lucy would like to gain some qualifications</p>
<p>Lucy's cleaning jobs lasted only a number of weeks</p>	<p>Lucy is interested in child care or care of the elderly</p>

Adam – Broken information exercise cards

<p>Adam is 15 years old</p>	<p>Adam has dyslexia</p>
<p>Adam has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder</p>	<p>Adam has been in trouble at school for messing about in class</p>
<p>Adam has been suspended from school for vandalism and fighting</p>	<p>Adam is a good footballer and plays for a local team</p>
<p>Adam is predicted to get three GCSE grades A*–C in PE, Design and Technology, and Art</p>	<p>Adam works on his father’s market stall at weekends</p>
<p>Adam has been truanting to work on his father’s market stall on Wednesday mornings</p>	<p>Adam’s older brother is taking a BTEC National course at the local college</p>
<p>Adam has a learning support assistant who helps him in some lessons</p>	<p>Adam helps his father in doing up old cars</p>
<p>Adam is interested in car mechanics</p>	<p>Adam is fed up with school</p>
<p>Adam needs to earn money to help pay for his lifestyle</p>	<p>Adam’s girlfriend, Sally, left school at 16 and works in a hairdressing salon</p>
<p>Adam’s girlfriend, Sally, is pregnant</p>	<p>Adam has been suspended for bringing alcohol on to school premises</p>

Participate – Role cards

Parent

What advice do you want to give to Lucy/Adam about their future life?

Teacher

You are a school teacher who has a good relationship with Lucy/Adam. What advice can you give them about their future education?

Friend

You are the best friend of Lucy/Adam. What do you think they should do with their lives to be happy?

Favourite relative

You have a good relationship with Lucy/Adam. What advice can you give them about their future?

Careers adviser

You are a professional careers adviser. What advice can you give Lucy/Adam about the next steps they should take to progress into work?

Employer

You work for a local business and help young people to improve their employability. What advice can you offer Lucy/Adam to improve their employability?

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