



TESSA

TEACHER EDUCATION IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA



Module Area: 1 / Module LIFE SKILLS [PAN AFRICA] :

Personal Development –How Self-Esteem Impacts on Learning

Section 1:

Ways to explore who pupils are

Key Focus Question:

How can you help pupils explore who they are in ways that are sensitive and stimulating?

Keywords:

class management; questioning; group work; thinking; data gathering; respect; sensitivity

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this section, you will have:

- developed your skills in organising the class in ways that will help pupils show respect for each other;
- developed your skills in asking questions to encourage thinking;
- used different ways to gather data to help pupils discuss who they are.



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Introduction

We all learn best when we feel comfortable and safe. As a teacher, one of your key roles is to develop a supportive classroom environment where everyone is able to participate fully and feels they are respected and their ideas are listened to.

This section explores how to do this by looking at different ways of organising the class. You will help pupils learn how to treat each other with respect by:

- helping them understand their similarities and differences;
- asking them to share opinions and feelings;
- giving them tasks where they can ask each other questions and listen to the answers.

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Young children often find it easier to identify difference rather than similarity. In this part, we show two ways to organise your pupils that will help them to explore differences and similarities.

They will:

- learn how to share information and contribute to discussions;
- learn about themselves and each other;
- have better self-esteem as they realise their ideas are as valued as much as those of others.

As a teacher, it is important for you to encourage this –if your pupils all understand their similarities and celebrate their differences, they will treat each other better. You should act as a role model, treating your pupils fairly and equally.

Before starting, it is a good idea to reflect on this and think about whether you treat your pupils respectfully. Do you ever have a ‘bad day’ when you shout at them for no good reason? Do you have favourites who you treat more kindly than others? If you can answer these questions honestly, you can take steps to make sure that all your pupils are treated fairly and respectfully.

To work in this way, you need to ask yourself questions to help you plan these activities, including: What questions will the pupils ask each other? What information will they need to find out? Will they work in groups? In pairs? How will you organise this? How will you give them instructions to do the activities? See what the teacher does in **Case Study 1** before trying **Activity 1** with your class.

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Case Study 1: Working in groups to explore similarities

After ten minutes, each group reads out one sentence. If the class agrees with the sentence, Chanda writes it on the board.

Using the sentences, he shows the class the different ways in which we are the same:

- e.g. physically –‘ We all have skin’ ;
- e.g. how we experience the same kind of feelings –‘ We all feel happy’ ;
- e.g. situation –‘ We all are school pupils’ .

Chanda is pleased with the ideas from his class and plans to use this as a starting point to look at differences.

Chanda teaches at a rural primary school in Mwenda, Zambia. He is working with his pupils to develop a positive classroom environment. He is looking at the pupils’ similarities and differences and asks them to think about the ways in which they are all the same.

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Understanding differences in people’ s opinions and feelings is important in developing good relationships. This is essential when dealing with a class of young people, from many different contexts, (backgrounds and settings), with different opinions and feelings. Your pupils need to understand this to help them communicate effectively and sensitively with each other.

However, before we can learn to understand different opinions and feelings, we first need to recognise them.

You can compare people’ s opinions by organising a survey. You need to plan how to:

- organise the survey;

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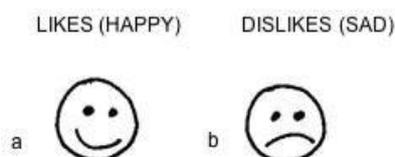
- explain it to the pupils;
- check that they have understood.

Case Study 2 and **Activity 2** show ways of doing this, and **Resource 2: Asking questions about feelings** offers some ideas to help your planning.

Case Study 2: Using groups to discuss opinions and feelings

One week Mr Obeng used the ‘Do you like...?’ survey with his primary 5 class (see **Activity 2**). He recorded their answers and stuck them on the wall. He often found pupils reading them and talking together.

The next week, Mr Obeng asked again about likes and dislikes, but this time, he drew two faces on the board:

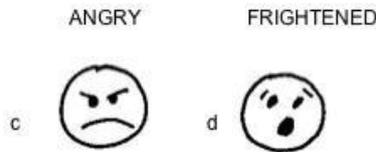


For each question, they counted the number of ‘likes’ in the class and wrote the number under face a. They wrote the number of ‘dislikes’ under face b.

To introduce the idea of feelings, he wrote ‘HAPPY’ above face a, and ‘SAD’ above face b. In groups of four or five, the pupils named things that made them feel happy or sad. Working in small groups helped involve the quieter pupils.

He repeated the exercise, this time using:

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In their groups, the pupils named things that made them feel angry or frightened. They shared the main ideas together as a class. They looked at whether some things occurred in more than one list and discussed why this might be. Mr Obeng was pleased with how thoughtful they were.

Activity 2: The 'Do you like...?' survey

Read **Resource 3: How to conduct a class survey**, and prepare for this activity.

- Perhaps start by asking your class easy questions about what they like and dislike, e.g. 'Do you all like hiplife?' or 'Do you like homework?'
- In pairs, the pupils think of their own questions about what they like and dislike and record these.
- Draw the chart from **Resource 3** on the board. Ask your pupils to copy it and choose three of their own questions. With older classes you could put in more questions.
- Explain that they will all ask five pupils the questions and write down 'Y' or 'N' for the answer under their names.
- Ask the pairs to compare their answers. Ask some pupils to read out their questions and answers so that the whole class

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can hear the different responses. Discuss what they have found out from the survey.

Think about what the pupils learned from the activity and how you know this.

Appreciating the similarities and differences among your pupils will help you become a more effective teacher. You will be able to plan better to match their needs. If your pupils also understand themselves and others, they will become more confident about participating in class.

As the pupils realise the ways in which they are different from other people, it is important that they should not start to feel isolated or left out. Part of your role is to help them understand that agreeing with people on one thing and disagreeing on others is acceptable and not a reason for conflict.

When a child is seen to be different because of how they look or behave, other children may bully or tease them. Bullying can make children very unhappy. It damages their schoolwork and stops them from making friends.

Children need to learn how to interact with each other. Your role as teacher is crucial for helping them understand the difference between right and wrong.

How can you encourage this? Read **Resource 4: Observing your pupils** for an initial suggestion. Below are some other ideas you can use. Try them out. Are they successful? Did you have any problems?

Case Study 3: Helping pupils to respect each other's differences

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Mrs Ojo has a boy in her class who is an albino. One day, she had seen some girls laughing at him and calling him names. This made her upset, but she allowed herself to calm down and after school, she asked them: ‘Why were you behaving like that?’ She asked how they would feel if somebody teased them, and how they thought it made him feel. With questions like this, she helped them think about their behaviour. Thinking about this afterwards, she decided to help all her pupils respect each other’s differences.

The next day, in class, she used a story about a child with polio to start a discussion about how her pupils would feel if they had polio. She also used the words and ideas for talking about likes, dislikes and feelings when she needed to talk to the pupils about their behaviour.

When two boys were fighting, Mrs Ojo talked with them, one at a time, to find out why they were angry with each other and helped them resolve their conflict. When one child was sitting alone, she asked others to find out why and make friends with him. This way, her pupils began to look after each other. Mrs Ojo was pleased.

Key Activity: Role play about differences

Read the **Key Resource: Using role play/dialogue/drama in the classroom.**

- Organise your pupils into groups of five.
- Ask each group to imagine two brothers or sisters whose likes and dislikes are opposite. Ask them to imagine a conflict between them.

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- Ask them to role-play the conflict. Two members of the group will be the brothers or sisters. The others could be the mother, father and grandparent.
- First, they should role-play the conflict, and then discuss the conflict all together. Next they should role-play the resolution, which should be a peaceful one.
- Next, the group should discuss their ideas about the causes of the conflict and the resolution.
- Finally, ask each group to act out their role plays to the class, and explain the lesson that they learned. Collect each of these lessons together and display them on the wall to remind everyone.
- If you have time, at the end of each role play, allow the rest of the class to ask questions to the group or give further ideas as to how the conflict could be resolved.

Resource 1: Similarities and differences



Background information / subject knowledge for teacher

There are many ways in which people are the same, from physical features to personality. There are also many ways in which we are different. However, for young pupils, it is often more important for them to feel the same as others and be part of the group.

By understanding ways in which we are all the same, we make the first steps towards understanding ourselves. We also begin to see ways in which we are part of a group or a community. Helping pupils understand that they and their classmates are all equal and should treat each other fairly is an important part of a teacher's role.

Similarities and differences in appearance

The most obvious way in which people are different is in their appearance. Some are tall, some are short. Some are fat, some are thin. If you are working with your pupils to explain similarities and differences between people, then looking at physical features is an easy place to start. For example, what are the physical similarities and differences between Michael Essien and Kofi Annan?



Original source: http://212.95.232.145/fapl/html_gb/players/player_1055.htm

<http://www.undp.org>

You must also be careful: like adults, children can be sensitive about their appearance, so you should try not to draw attention to something that a pupil might be embarrassed about. Instead, focus on similarities such as

'We all wear clothes'. You will need to be especially careful if you have children with physical disabilities in your class.

In addition, children sometimes tease or bully other children, and drawing attention to differences in appearance might encourage them to behave like this outside of the class. So, as well as helping pupils identify their differences in appearance, you should also emphasise how many similarities there are. If pupils can see the connections between themselves and others, they are more likely to treat others with respect.

Similarities and differences in personality

While it is easier to see the similarities and differences between people's appearances – the way we look – it is probably more important for pupils to understand the similarities and differences between people's personalities – the ways we think, feel and behave.

Our opinions and feelings influence the way we behave with other people. They can be summarised as follows:

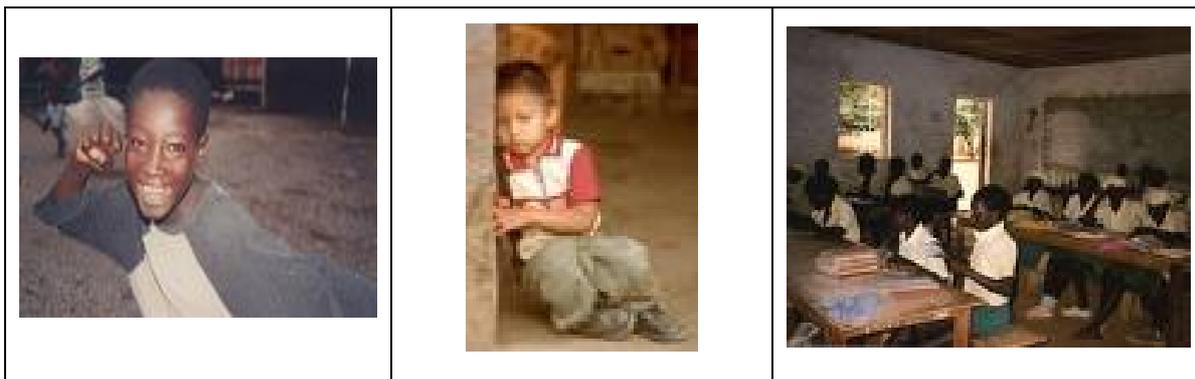
- 'Opinions' cover what people think about things – whether they like or dislike something, or whether they agree or disagree with something. Differences in opinion can sometimes cause arguments and fights, whether with children or adults. Opinions can be based on clear factual knowledge or hearsay which is not always accurate.
- 'Feelings' cover people's emotions – whether something makes them feel happy, sad, angry or frightened etc. Feelings can sometimes be hard to explain, and if someone has different feelings about something to you, it can be difficult for you to understand it.

As children grow up, it is important for them to be able to understand their feelings and emotions, interact with other people, and recognise the needs of others. It is important for children to learn that not everybody thinks and feels the same way that they do. Each person's ideas, feelings and opinions will have been influenced by their home environment, experiences and carers. This diversity (variety) should not be seen as a problem – except where it goes against legally accepted behaviour. The activities in this module will help pupils begin to appreciate such diversity as a basis for friendship and working together.

As a teacher, you need to understand the feelings of your pupils and make sure that you consider their feelings and differences as you plan their learning. You must be considerate of the fact that some children will enjoy certain activities – e.g. talking in front of the class – and others will not.

However, you must also be fair and equal with your pupils. If you treat each of your pupils differently in class, the children will see this and begin doing the same, both inside and outside of school.

Which feelings are expressed in the photos below? How do you know?



Original source: <http://images.google.co.uk>

Resource 2:

Asking questions about feelings



Background information / subject knowledge for teacher

You need to be sensitive when asking questions about feelings. Children might not always want to talk about their feelings in public. You need to ask the kinds of questions that allow children to give answers they feel comfortable with.

One way to do this is to ask questions to the whole class instead of to individuals. Ask questions such as: 'Who likes ...' and 'Who doesn't like ...' with pupils putting up their hands. If they see that they are part of a group, the children will feel less embarrassed about revealing their feelings.

You can do the same by brainstorming different questions (see **Key Resource: Using mind maps and brainstorming to explore ideas**). For example, ask: 'What makes you scared?' and then write all the pupils' ideas down on the board very quickly. This way, you won't make the individuals feel too exposed.

If you want them to talk more intimately about their feelings, organise them into pairs or groups to do similar exercises. They will probably find it easier to speak in a small group.

You can also use stories to explore sensitive ideas – this helps pupils to talk more freely as they do not feel they are talking about their own experiences.

You can make up your own stories to share with your pupils. Or you could use the story of Ghanaian street children below to stimulate discussion. Either copy the sheet – one for each group – or read from your copy to the whole class.

After they have heard the story taken from *Street Children News*, ask them how they feel about the children's lives. Are they similar or different to their own lives? How would they feel about living like that? What would they like and dislike about this kind of life?

Street Children News: Ghanaian street children

'Street' children have been given this anonymous label because the 'street' is where they live their lives out: hustling, sleeping, working, eating. The street is their home and this is where their daily struggle is endured.

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Street boys at night on the streets

Original source:

<http://www.stretchchildafrica.org.uk>

Currently in Africa there are a few national governments addressing the very real needs of these marginalised citizens; but there simply is not enough money to go around. It is up to grass-roots organisations and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to reach out to these children and offer them a helping hand.



Street boys in the market, their home – at night

Original source:

<http://www.stretchchildafrica.org.uk>

It gets cold at night in the winter and so street children sniff glue as a guard against the cold and to escape from their struggle to survive for a few short hours.

Quotes from the street

In 2003, Wendy Jones asked street children in Accra some simple questions and recorded what they said. Their lives may seem very different from our lives but by reading their replies we can see that they are people just like us, often with the same dreams and aspirations.

'If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?'

Peter, 19: 'My home town.'

'If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?'

Simon, 14: 'Shoes. One Shirt. Sneakers.'

'What makes you happy?'

Sandra, 4: 'Clapping games.'

'What makes you cry?'

Sandra, 4: 'When I am hungry.'

'If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?'

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Sandra, 4: 'A dress. Sandals. Eggs.'

'What do you think about last thing at night before you go to sleep?'

Godfrey, 18: 'I think about the next day. Because I think that evening has passed so I have to think about the next day. As for the night I have no place to go and I just sleep.'

'What would you have if you could have anything?'

Peter, 10: 'A necklace, a watch, a bed I can sleep in, a TV, a video tape – any tape, a chair.'

'Tell me about your mother.'

Larni, 18: 'She wants me to be somebody. Yet I am on the streets.'

'What would you like to do in your future?'

Larni, 18: 'In the future, if I'm rich – I know I will be rich – yes, I hope, I hope I will be rich, I will care for street children. Children with broken legs who can't work...'

'What do you regret?'

Betty, 18: 'I will say I regret being a street girl and I regret picking a boyfriend. And I regret having bad friends – those that don't give good advice and wish for your downfall.'

'What's your favourite thing?'

Aisha, 19: 'I have a long black dress. I used to wear it and go anywhere. If I go to an exhibition or to visit some people I can wear it. I love my long dress. It's fitted with sleeves. It's black.'



Adapted from: <http://streetchildafrica.org.uk>

Resource 3:

How to conduct a class survey



Background information / subject knowledge for teacher

Conducting a survey is a very useful way for your pupils to practise many different skills. These include:

- asking questions;
- recording different types of information;
- comparing answers;
- practising speaking and writing;
- finding out more about each other.

However, you need to think and plan very carefully to organise a survey in your class, and also how you will explain it to your pupils.

1. What is a survey?

A survey is a way of gathering information from many different people on a particular topic. It can explore a range of opinions in a group, and help to find out more about individuals.

To gather the information, a survey usually uses a chart to record the responses. The chart below is one example where the answers could be recorded easily and quickly by using a Y for a yes and an N for a no in each box:

Name:Faith.....
1. Do you like yams?					
2. Do you like...?					
3. Do you like...?					

A survey is an interesting way for pupils to practise finding out information for themselves.

Because a survey has many different stages, it can take a whole lesson to complete – or longer, if pupils have to ask people outside school. Providing time for the data collection to happen is especially important so that everyone is involved and able to see the process in action.

2. Choosing your topic

When deciding to do a survey with your class, you need to think carefully about what the survey will be about – what information will you find out? Clearly, the survey should be linked in some way to the topic in class. For example, if teaching about similarities and differences, a survey about the different foods people like might be an idea. The pupils will be more involved if they suggest ideas themselves.

It is important at this stage to think about the skills that your pupils need to develop and practise. Design a survey that matches your learning objectives.

3. Writing the questions

In any survey, it is good for the pupils to think of and write their own questions – each pupil or group of pupils should come up with their own ideas. But you need to think about how you will organise the pupils to do this. Pair or group work is good if it is the first time that they have done this, as then they can check each other's work.

To help pupils do a survey you may need to decide (by yourself or with the pupils):

- how they are to work e.g. individually, in pairs, or in groups;
- how many questions they should write (3–5 is usually enough);
- what types of questions they should ask (provide some examples yourself and ask them for some more examples to check that they understand);
- how much time they will have to write the questions – 10–15 minutes should be enough for 3–5 questions.

It is important to do all the above with the whole class together before they start working. As they work, go round and monitor their work to check that they really have understood the task.

The type of question they will write depends on the kind of information that they want to find out. For example, if the idea of the survey is to gather information about the numbers of pupils who think/like/do

something, then they might write 'Yes/No' questions: e.g. 'Do you like football?'

However, if the idea of the survey is to gather information about the range of interests in the class, then they might write 'open-ended' questions: e.g. 'What sports do you like?' They will have to think of ways to record the answers.

4. Asking the questions

Every pupil should practise asking and answering questions on a one-to-one basis. Think carefully about how you would organise this. Here are a few suggestions:

- Pupils do not need to speak to everybody in the class. This would take too much time and also be very repetitive. A sample of five pupils may be enough, and maybe no more than ten pupils – depending on the size of your class.
- If they wrote their questions in pairs or groups, they shouldn't ask each other the questions. Instead, suggest they ask others in the class or school.

Organising pupils into groups to do the survey can be useful if you have a large class. You also need to ensure that all pupils are involved in writing and asking the questions. (See **Key Resource: Using group work in your classroom.**)

5. Recording the answers

The pupils need to be clear about the responses they are recording and keep these as short as possible.

For example, if they are asking open-ended questions, they can write down one-word answers: Q: What sports do you like? A: football/running/jumping.

If they are asking Yes/No questions, they can write Y or N as an answer.

If they are gathering information on numbers, they could just keep a tally, with one mark representing one person: e.g.

Favourite sports:	Football	Running	Jumping	Catch
Numbers:	IIIII	IIIIII	III	IIII

Again, plan this carefully, and explain it to the pupils before they gather their data. To check they understand, you could ask them to explain it to you, too.

6. Comparing answers

After the pupils have asked questions and recorded the information, it is good for them to talk in pairs or groups about their data and compare answers. This data can be used to discuss people's likes and dislikes and they could draw graphs of the results to make it easy to see the differences and discuss what they mean.

Displaying their findings or asking them to write about their findings will help you understand their thinking and give them the opportunity to think more deeply about the data.

Resource 4:

Observing your pupils



Background information / subject knowledge for teacher

Observing or watching your pupils at work in the classroom or playing in the playground is a very good way to build up a picture of them as people. It tells you who they mix with and whether any pupils are isolated. Such information can help you plan activities that better match their needs.

Do they talk more in groups? If so, by using group work more, you may help them think more and therefore learn more. You can observe at two levels by looking at:

- the social groups in your class and how they do or do not interact. What kinds of conflicts are there, if any? How can you use this knowledge to plan group work?
- individuals and their social skills, interests etc. (Finding out and acknowledging what pupils are interested in outside and inside school can be a very powerful way of motivating them to learn.)

Some aspects you could look out for as you watch your pupils are in the table below. But remember to keep an open mind and readjust your picture as you get to know your pupils better.

Noisy	←————→	Quiet
Active/sporting	←————→	Sedentary
Studious	←————→	Not studious
Friendly	←————→	Aggressive
Anxious	←————→	Calm

Below is an example of how to record pupil observation. A version of this was used in the Literacy Development Across the Curriculum programme in Nigeria.

Tick the appropriate column in terms of the pupil you are observing.

0 = not at all; 1=poor; 2 = fair; 3= good

	Not at all (0)	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)
(a) Pupil participates actively in the lesson				
(b) Pupil produces something creative				
(c) Pupil works in groups or pairs				
(d) Pupil shares ideas/information				
(e) Pupil shows evidence of understanding lesson				
(f) Pupil is not afraid to ask questions				
(g) Pupil shows respect for the ideas of members of the class.				

Adapted from: <http://info.worldbank.org/>