

Self-awareness

Self-awareness comes up again and again as a key topic in Life Orientation. The reason that it does so is because enhancing self-awareness really is the first step towards making an informed career decision. After all, how can anyone decide on a suitable career or industry to work in, without first understanding what makes them tick?

While their self-concept will shift and evolve during their teenage years, certain characteristics will remain unchanged. The process can be started as early as Grade 7, with learners starting to think about their strengths, weaknesses, interests, passions and abilities, to name a few. By starting the process early on, learners will be more appropriately equipped to make their subject selections in Grade 9.

Some tips and tools

• Concepts to consider

When it comes to preparing LO lessons on the topic of self-awareness, consider the following facets: skills, strengths, talents, interests, motivators, abilities, areas for development, passions, values, influences and personality.

To do in class

While learners may have a basic understanding of the above terms, they may not have been required to use them within the context of describing themselves. Help them to gain an in-depth understanding of terminology associated with describing themselves by providing them with a checklist of personality descriptors and by invoking class discussions around the meaning of the words.

• Self-awareness questionnaire

A structured way of initiating the process is to get learners to answer questions that are designed to incite them to engage in in-depth thinking about themselves. Getting them to think about questions such as: 'What am I naturally good at doing?' and 'What really motivates me to succeed?' can kick-start the process of enhancing self-awareness.

To do in class

Pace Careers offers a free online self-awareness questionnaire. This can be accessed at www.pacecareers.com. From the website, click on 'Get Career Guidance', followed by 'Questionnaire' at the top of the left hand

column. From there, learners can create a Pace Careers ID by clicking on 'I am a First Time User', enabling them access to the online questionnaire at no cost.

• The creative approach

While questionnaires serve as a fantastic starting point, it's useful to incorporate alternative exercises on the subject, particularly to accommodate kinaesthetic or visual learners.

To do in class

Encourage learners to engage in a creative form of self-awareness enhancement. They could, for example, create a scrapbook page of their interests, skills, passions and abilities.

• Opinions of others

Learners often find it difficult to admit to what they believe they are good at, in front of others in class. They believe it is being immodest and struggle to put these thoughts to paper and this makes it difficult to incite class discussion on the topic.

To do in class

Learners are required to get into pairs and give each other three pieces of positive feedback regarding their personality, strengths or talents. Additionally, you can ask learners to discuss their role models and to identify the specific personality traits that they identify with and why. Understanding what appeals to them in others can assist them to identify whether or not they too display these characteristics.

TO SUMMARISE

The starting point for any informed career decision is to have a strong sense of self-understanding. A few simple, in-class activities have been highlighted above, to assist you to kick-start the process. ■



To find out about Achieve Careers' CV Workshops for LO teachers or LO career manuals for learners, please contact Joanne on joanne@achievecareers.co.za or visit www.achievecareers.co.za.



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