

# Choosing Teaching Contents on the Basis of How Learners Might Be Affected

**or**

## Seeing Learning Through the Eyes of the Learners

### Lesson Planning: An Example

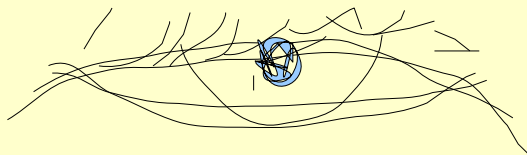
Let us assume the teacher decided for a teaching unit on "Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n Roll" within the curricula context "Growing Up" or "Identity and Lifestyles" (upper secondary level) The teacher now has to ask her- or himself the central question:

***What makes my students want to occupy themselves with a particular content that I have chosen for a learning unit and that might be interesting to them for more than just the double period English at school?***

**(Tip: If you don't know any reasonable answer to this question you better choose another content!!)**

**Because the goal is...**

**As a teacher we need to see the process of learning and understanding contents through the eyes of our learners (see John Hattie).**



Thinking to myself about the wish to deal with the topic "Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n Roll" in connection with the course topic "Identity and Lifestyle" / "Growing up" I need to find answers to the central question above. Here are some of them...

Dealing with the topic "Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n Roll..."

- makes me (as a learner) realize the attraction of (sometimes harmful or even self-destructive) social trends, peer pressure and perhaps drugs because during puberty we teenagers undergo tremendous physical and necessary mental changes that make us vulnerable for sometimes harmful or anti-social behaviour while trying to go our own way for the first time in our lives.
- makes me (as a learner) want to think about the question to what

extent I personally need or want to identify myself with, for example a particular social or political trend, a hero, a certain music or fashion style, a particular sport (whatever).

- helps me to understand why adults set limits to me or believe to have to set limits or “enforce (more or less meaningful) laws” and why it is so tempting to me to test out these limits.
- hopefully helps me to understand myself much better, especially in the sense that I hope to get to know who I really am, what I want and what I don't want in my life.
- hopefully helps me to somehow become able to better assess and comprehend massive violations of social rules (e.g. excessive drug abuse, juvenile offenses) and their attractive potential in order to decide if or to what extent I want to violate these social rules.
- makes me understand that sooner or later the influence of peers becomes weaker and will be substituted by the importance of a partner as a potential husband or wife with whom I want to start a family.
- enables me to take a critical view on the role that music & film, fashion & life style industries and social media play because “Sex, Drugs and Rock'n Roll” sells pretty well!
- makes me decide to what extent I want / need to make myself dependent on these social trends and peer pressure; and dealing with the topic makes me realize that the more I know about the background of the topic the more self-autonomous I can become because I decide myself when to follow a trend and when not.
- etc.

Of course, teenage students are not very much likely to ask themselves these rather sophisticated- sounding pedagogical questions but it is the task of the teacher to put his or her students on a higher intellectual and self-conceptual level since learning means improving and developing. And helping learners on upper secondary level to raise questions like the ones above does not contradict the above-mentioned statement according to which teachers have to choose contents on the background of the life-experiences of their students. On the contrary, raising these questions – I am convinced– is very much in the deep interest of young people. They just have to become (more) aware of it. And that is exactly where the (English) teacher comes into play...