

Dying Matters “Let’s talk about it”

Class:	Teacher:	Date:	National Curriculum Links: PSHE, English	Lesson Time: 55 minutes
---------------	-----------------	--------------	--	-----------------------------------



Title: Dying Matters “Let’s talk about it.”

Context: Introduction to the Dying Matters Coalition – discussing and reflecting upon dying, death and bereavement.

Learning Objectives: To understand the importance of talking about dying and to record our own preferences.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson:

- **All** – will express their dying preferences using the ‘Dying Matters’ pinboard (on MS Publisher or completed by hand on printed templates).
- **Most** - will articulate their opinions on the importance of discussing dying, death and bereavement.
- **Some** - will generate complex and reflective discussion drawing on personal experience.

Teachers’ Notes:

22,000 children and young adults will lose a parent whilst in full time education, hundreds of thousands more will experience the long term conditions and loss of close family and friends, sometimes within the school community. Many schools find it difficult to support children who experience loss. Few children are prepared for it, and many who experience bereavement feel ostracised by their peers. This is often unintentional: people, not knowing what to say, choose to say nothing at all. However, it can have a direct impact on a child’s academic progress. Getting people in society to talk more openly and dying, death and bereavement and planning for a ‘good death’ is one of the Dying Matters Coalitions key messages. The Dying Matters Coalition believes that reducing the taboo around dying should begin at a young age and where better than in the classroom with a trusted teacher and among friends.

The lesson aims to incorporate some of Dying Matters messages and objectives with resources from the website, e.g. the film, but allowing the student’s creative time to consider, perhaps for the first time, what their own feelings are towards dying.

The use of the ‘do now’ activity and film is to capture the student’s attention and undoubtedly highlight the taboo that surrounds talking openly about the subject. The discussion and questions that follow will get the students thinking in a group before going on to complete the main activity individually.

The main activity of the lesson is for the students to complete a personal pinboard. The pinboard will reflect some of their thoughts about dying, what they would like to be remembered for, get them thinking about their own funeral and subsequently their ‘dying wishes’. The activity is a creative way for students to think positively about end of their life and will allow for a wider discussion as to why they want the things they do and consider things they would like to achieve during their life.

Resources required: (all available in resource pack)

- Dying Matters Overview
- Campaign Film: <http://www.dyingmatters.org/site/party-for-kath>
- Pinboard example and template – MS Publisher.
- PowerPoint of questions.
- Print out of five questions on individual slides to be used with post it note activity.
- Post it notes.
- “5 things” postcard- printed out.

*Nb: If students don’t have access to computers, template can be printed and photocopied onto A3.

Dying Matters “Let’s talk about it” continued

Starter: The objective of this part of the lesson is to get the students initial and first reactions on the topic of dying, death and bereavement.

1. The teacher should write up a quote on the board which is their answer to the question ‘What would you like to do before you die?’ e.g. “Go diving in the Great Barrier Reef”, before the students walk in to the classroom so that they are presented with a ‘do now’ activity straight away, which get them questioning the statement.
2. With no prior discussion, or answer to what they ask about the statement on the board, show students the Dying Matters film – keeping the explanation of the lessons objectives until after viewing, with the aim that the film will have a greater impact upon the students.
3. At the end of the film open up discussion with the students by asking the following questions:
4. How did the film make you feel?
What did you think the film was about at first?
Why is this a powerful/ effective piece of media?
What might we be discussing today?
5. Conclude the discussion by introducing students to learning objectives and link back to the quote on the board.

15 minutes

Main: The lessons main activity is the students creating a personal pinboard allowing them to reflect on the Dying Matters film as well as Dying Matters themes.

1. Show students the example pinboard available to download from the Dying Matters website – students will be interest to know about what the teacher’s preference for the end of their life are.
2. Using MS Publisher on IWB model allow students to begin completing their own pinboard (if computers are unavailable, please print out the PDF template and complete by hand. However, provide class with internet link to pinboard if they would like to complete their profile at home).
3. Remind students how to retrieve photographs using copy and paste tools.
4. Students to save task in their own folder on shared network. (Printed pinboards may wish to be taken home but would also make an effective classroom display).

20 minutes

Extension: Create a letter, poster, poem, drawing, song or rap entitled ‘My Dying Wish...’. This is an open ended task to encourage creativity.

Plenary: This is the most important part of the lesson as it is a reflection on learning.

1. Explain aims and objectives of the ‘Dying Matters’ Coalition
2. Show PowerPoint with five key questions – each question is then blue tacked to a different area of the classroom, or if there is space on the board at the front of the class.
3. Students are provided with post it notes. They choose a question and stick their response below it.
4. Students are encouraged to move around the room reflecting on each other’s responses.
5. It might be interesting to put up the question ‘How has this lesson made you feel?’ on one of the walls/ the board at the front of the classroom.
6. Once back at their desks feedback to the group any interesting comments on the walls.

20 minutes

At the end of the session provide students with copies of “5 things” to take away with them. This will give them a chance to reflect on their learning in their own time. Suggest they may like to keep it in their diary or wallet. Perhaps they would like to share their ideas with their friends or family.