

Lesson 4

How can we take part?

The policy cycle as a tool for political participation

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.

Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

Competence training	Methods: giving, and listening to, presentations. Participation: identifying opportunities for political participation.
Learning objective	A model serves as a tool to analyse part of a complex whole. Politics has two sides: the solution of problems and the struggle for power. The policy cycle model focuses on the first aspect.
Student tasks	The students brief each other on their results. The students reflect on the product and process of their work.
Materials and resources	≈ Student handout 6.2, with students' notes.
Method	Open space presentations, plenary discussion.
Time budget	1. Student presentations. 15 min
	2. Discussion and reflection. 25 min

Lesson description

1. Student presentations

The lesson begins with the students' inputs. The groups sit at tables arranged around the wall, leaving an open space in the middle. Each group appoints two team speakers who take turns in representing their groups. This allows all students to visit the other groups and be given a briefing on their results.

This decentralised arrangement allows many students to become active simultaneously. No student will have a complete picture in the end. This would take considerably longer, and the amount of information would be too large to remember.

The teacher joins the students and listens, rather than asking questions or commenting.

2. Discussion and reflection

The students assemble in the plenary. They are seated in a circle or a U-form so that they face each other.


First the students and the teacher must agree on the agenda. The teacher suggests focusing on the policy cycle model rather than the issues that the students have studied, and the students should agree before the lesson proceeds as is suggested here.

The teacher asks an open question and then gives the floor to the students:

“What worked well when you applied
the policy cycle model to a concrete example and what didn't?”

The students respond as experts, drawing on their experience in the research task. They may report on technical problems, such as obtaining information or lack of time. They may refer to analytical difficulties, for example, deciding which stage a particular event belongs to: agenda setting, debate on decisions, or reaction to the outcome of a decision. They may have some thoughts about the model itself, questioning whether it accurately depicts reality.

It is not necessary to comment on and answer each point raised by the students, but of course the students and teacher are free to do so, and plan their time accordingly.

There are at least three key statements on the policy cycle model that are worth thinking about (see  materials for teachers 6.2). The teacher should not necessarily deliver the whole set; this is one option among others. A statement may be useful to respond to the students' comments. Otherwise the teacher selects one or more, as a brief input to conclude the discussion.