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The Novel food

Pros and cons of a revolutionary (traditional) food



Image caption: a screening of “Bugs” by Andreas Johansen as part of “[Eat:ItH](#)”: a series of events and discussions on food culture in Ireland.



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General overview

"In 2050 we will all be vegans, and the luckiest ones among us will be able to eat insects" sing the *Eugenio in via di Gioia* irreverent rock band from Turin, Italy.

The context from which the exercise takes inspiration is the [new Novel Food Regulation](#) (EU) 2015/2283. "It aims to improve the conditions, so that businesses can bring new and innovative food to the EU market more easily, while still maintaining a high level of food safety for European consumers. The Regulation offers European consumers the benefit of a broader choice of food and a more favourable environment for Europe's agri-food industry – the second largest employment sector in Europe – to benefit from innovation, which is good for growth and jobs.

The theme chosen is very broad and can be approached from different points of view. Our proposals suggest a deepening of cultural, legal and economic nature through an analysis of the pros and cons.

The exercise presents an activity in detail and outlines a second one that teachers and trainers will be able to finalize following the proposed model.

Debate on food

Activity overview

In the activity we suggest to explore the theme of Novel Food from multiple points of view: cultural, economic and legal and we propose to the class group to work through the steps of the Debate methodology, a debate that consists of a confrontation in which two teams support and contrast a statement or a topic given by the teacher, placing himself in a field (pro) or in the other (against).

There are many kinds of methodologies related to the debate and to explore the topic you can surf this [resource](#) on World School Debate, a universal shared format on debate.

This is not the place to investigate the topic in detail or to become experts in the methodology, as time and experience are needed: the activity wants to offer input of reflection and support for class involvement in a virtuous, critical and constructive debate. It would be interesting to propose the activity to groups of mixed classes (classes with groups of students coming from different school addresses: commercial,



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social, ...) in order to deepen the topic from a specific different point of view in line with the school address.

The activity has been designed for VET students of the tourism sector and student of the HORECA sector.

Product

The product of this activity will be a session of debate in the class

Specific knowledge

Basic knowledge of the EU regulation on novel foods

Basic knowledge of the Debate methodology

Difficulty level

The exercise, as a whole, has a medium-high level of difficulty as it presupposes an intermediate level of entry, for part of the activities, into the skills on which it works:

- Multilingual competence
- Literacy
- Citizenship competence
- Entrepreneurship competence
- Cultural awareness and expression competence

Descriptive activity sheet

Stage 1

Description

This phase is for the whole class.

Define and explain to the whole class about the Debate methodology, the rules and the structure you are using for the activity.

On the internet you can find many resources on the Debate methodology. Here are some simple steps on how [conducting a debate](#) you can refer to by the Canadian Manitoba Government Education and Training



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Show a simple video cartoon in English

The topic of this [video](#) is on “wearing uniforms at school”. The topic is very different from the one suggested in the exercise, but it gives you an example of Debate.

Then debate together with the class on the methodology suggested

The activity requires the students to deeply understand the benefits and the challenges of the method suggested

Objectives

- Increasing students’ awareness of the main types of verbal interaction, a range of literary and non-literary texts, and the main features of different styles and registers of language (Literacy)
- Increasing the students’ ability to understand and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in oral form (Literacy) .
- Increasing the students’ abilities to distinguish and use different types of sources, to search for, collect and process information (Literacy)
- Increasing the ability to understand spoken messages, to initiate, sustain and conclude conversations and to read, understand and draft texts, with different levels of proficiency in different languages, according to the individual’s needs. (Multilingual competence)

Key competence

- Literacy
- Multilingual competence

Resources

- Human resources: reference teacher + teacher of the linguistic axis
- Equipment: internet connection, a PC and a video projector

Duration

- 60 minutes

Stage 2

Description

This phase is for groups.



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Point out three topics (see examples of the topics” below).

Divide the class into 6 groups.

Assign the same topic to two groups.

Ask your students to define and list "pros" and "cons" of the assigned topic without the use of the internet.

This activity requires that the number of groups are even.

If the topics, as we suggested, are three divide the class into six groups. Two groups will face the same topic: during the debate one group will argue explaining the pros and the other group explaining the cons.

This activity invites students to reflect through their knowledge, experiences and background.

The reflection should be effective, creative, critical and with strong arguments.

The activity requires the students to:

- Brainstorm
- Discuss
- Select information

This step of activity can involve teachers and trainers of different subjects through interviews.

Then, ask your students to argue within the group "pros" and "cons" of the assigned topic. The activity requires the selection of information through reliable sources to sustain the thesis.

Objectives

- Arising students’ abilities to identify, understand, express, create, and interpret concepts, feelings, facts and opinions (Literacy).
- Improving students’ disposition to critical and constructive dialogue (Literacy).
- Improving students’ critical thinking and ability to assess and work with information (Literacy).
- Improving the abilities to distinguish and use different types of sources, to search for, collect and process information, to use aids, and to formulate and express one’s oral and written arguments in a convincing way appropriate to the context. It encompasses critical thinking and ability to assess and work with information (Literacy).
- Increasing the understanding of economics and the social and economic



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opportunities and challenges facing an employer, organisation or society (Entrepreneurship competence).

- Increasing awareness of ethical principles and challenges of sustainable development and have self-awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses (Entrepreneurship competence).
- Increasing skills are founded on creativity which includes imagination, strategic thinking and problem-solving, and critical and constructive reflection within evolving creative processes and innovation (Entrepreneurship competence).
- Increasing knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures and expressions, including their languages, heritage and traditions, and cultural products (Cultural awareness and expression competence).

Key competence

- Literacy
- Entrepreneurship competence
- Cultural awareness and expression competence

Resources

- Human resources: reference teacher + teacher of linguistic axis + teachers of historical and social axis.
- Equipment: pens and sheets + internet connection, laptops

Duration

- 40 minutes + 40 minutes

Stage 3

Description

This phase is for small groups.

Objectives

- Improving students' ability in formulating and expressing their oral arguments in a convincing way appropriate to the context (Literacy).
- Improving students' skills to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities (Citizenship competence).



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Key competences

- Literacy
- Citizenship competence

Resources

- Human resources: the reference teacher + the linguistic axis teachers

Duration

- 60 minutes in total
- The activity requires some debate trials in order to be ready for the final phase (the debate in front of the class).

Stage 4

Description

This phase is for the whole class.

Define which teams will do pros and which ones will do cons in the debate.

Ask your students to debate in front of the class on the assigned topic.

The activity requires the students of each team to convince the teacher and the other students (not the one involved in the topic) on the goodness of their arguments.

The topic will be presented by two groups: one group will propose arguments in favor (pro) and one group will propose arguments against (cons).

After each debate session there will be a debriefing session (see below).

There will be three debate sessions in total.

Objectives

- Improving students' ability in formulating and expressing their oral arguments in a convincing way appropriate to the context (Literacy).
- Improving students' skills to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities (Citizenship competence).

Key competence

- Literacy
- Citizenship competence



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Resources

- Human resources: the reference teacher

Duration

- 90 minutes in total

Stage 5

Description

This phase is for the whole class.

Ask your students to analyse and debrief the activity after each session.

This activity requires to:

- analysing behaviours
- expressing feelings
- discussing

Objectives

- Improving students' skills for citizenship competence relates to the ability to engage effectively with others in common or public interest, including the sustainable development of society (Citizenship competence).

Key competence

- Citizenship competence

Resources

- Human resources: the reference teacher
- Equipment: flipchart or blackboard

Duration

- 20 minutes for each session

Examples of topics

1. Cultural approach of novel food

The use of insects in the food sector is capable of breaking down cultural obstacles and can eliminate the problem of world hunger.



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2. Economics approach of novel food

Food insects are a new business able to create economy and jobs both in poor countries and in more developed ones

3. Legal approach of novel food (safety and security)

The methods of breeding and production of insects in the food sector are known and without risks from the point of view of health and hygiene

Example of pros and cons of the cultural approach

The use of insects in the food sector is capable of breaking down cultural obstacles and can eliminate the problem of world hunger

Pro

“In the future it is conceivable that our eating habits will change in favor of the consumption of insects instead of meat. Insects can help defeat hunger in the world, as they are numerous, reproduce quickly and are easily bred; have a high rate of growth and food conversion. You can start with the use of feed and meal based on insects”.

Cons

“Europeans should not be imposed on food that is foreign to their culture. We should enhance the products of the European and national tradition, also with a view to cutting hunger in the world. Accounting must also be taken of the analysis made by the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenza for instance demonstrate that in Italy 54% of Italians are against Novel Food, 24% indifferent, while only 16% are favorable ”. Source: proversi

Debriefing activity suggestions

- Were the goals and the instructions clear?
- Has the experience been positive or negative overall?
- How did the experience go?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- Did you go as you expected?
- What happened that you didn't expect?
- Did you behave as a group? Why?
- Has the team worked well? Why?
- How was the relationship with your mates?
- Have you learned anything more about them?



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- What obstacles did you have to overcome together?
- How did you overcome them?
- Could the teacher use another method to reach the goal? Which one?
- What were your fears about this experience?
- What could you have done differently?

Novel food on the table

Activity overview

The activity requires students to explore the novel food under the gastronomic point of view. The students are required to produce a whole menu on novel food with illustrations and recipes, presenting their research and explaining their choices to the whole class.

The suggested steps of the activity are the following:

1. Divide your class in five groups
2. Ask each group to focus on a specific course. The first group will focus on appetizers, the second group on the main course, the third one on the second course, the fourth one on side dish and the fifth one on the dessert.
3. Ask your student to search on the internet to find recipes using novel food, according to their focus. Our suggestion is to start from starred chefs recipes on the internet but also explore the recipes coming from different parts of the world.
4. Each group has to collect a representative illustration of the course and its recipe.
5. If the material is in english the group has to translate it in its national language
6. Each group will present its own recipe to the whole class presenting the reasons for the choice.
7. Ask your students, as a whole class, to collect in one file the result.
8. The product of the activity will be an illustrated menu, from appetizer to dessert, with its own recipes



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Resources

Debate on food

- [Regulation \(EU\) 2015/2283 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015](#) on novel foods, amending Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EC) No 258/97 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1852/2001 (Text with EEA relevance)
- The [hyperlink](#) takes you to the World School Debate [The document](#) by the Canadian Manitoba Government Education and Training explain you how to conducting a debate
- [The video](#) is an example of Debate

To deepen the topic:

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the [United Nations-FAO](#)
- The FAO research "[Edible insects Future prospects for food and feed security](#)"
- "[Insects as food and feed: what are the risks?](#)" By the European Food Safety Authority.
- "[Edible insects in China: Utilization and prospects](#)" by the Research Institute of Resource Insects, Chinese Academy of Forestry, Kunming, China
- An [article by Alan Louey Yen](#) of the Biosciences Research Division, Australia.
- [Edible insects: Traditional knowledge or western phobia?](#)
- In this [Ted-Ed lesson](#) Prof. Arnold van Huis, coordinator of the interdisciplinary project "Convergence of Sciences" in Benin, Ghana and Mali and of project "Sustainable Production of Insect Proteins" in the Netherlands try to convince the audience to eat insects. Here his research:
<https://agricultureandfoodsecurity.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40066-015-0041-5>
- The video "[What's stopping you eating insects?](#)" by Oxford Brookes University
- Associate [Professor Kerry Wilkinson of University of Adelaide](#) explains her research in this area
- Edible Insects - [Future prospects for food and feed security](#)

Novel food on the table

- [Alex Atala](#), a 2 star chef, on cultural interpretations and eating insects
- The [Multimedia center of European Parliament](#)



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- Demonstration of Novel foods: [Workshop on new foods](#) and dishes by Roberto FIORE, Head Chef of Nordic Food Lab, and Afton HALLORAN, GREEiNSECT, University of Copenhagen.
- EP seminar on Novel foods: "[What will we be eating in 2025?](#)": preparation of dishes by Roberto FLORE, Head Chef of Nordic Food Lab
- [Infoclip](#): Novel Food - Insects and Algae Novel food from a Brussels-based start-up farm producing crickets for human consumption