

“The Ethics Of Our Online Presence” is a scenario card game that facilitates group discussion about our use of digital media and the ethics behind it.

Executive Summary

Scenario games or conversation kits are an exciting way for youths/students to hold debates on difficult scientific, political and ethical issues.

This game presents a range of key viewpoints on the issue of our online presence. It offers a simple game-like structure to facilitate debate amongst students.

What are the principle benefits of studying and debating controversial issues?

Students learn to:

- Weigh up conflicting evidence
- Find out information
- Detect bias
- Question the validity of sources
- Present their own considered viewpoint
- Develop skills such as communication and working collaboratively
- Relate science to everyday life.

What do we need to consider when teaching controversial issues?

- Teachers need to give a balanced viewpoint
- All views are expressed with equal emphasis.
- The necessary scientific principles need to be understood.
- Arguments, opinions and information from all sides are presented.
- Sensitivity and tolerance to different views are encouraged.
- Bias, prejudice and indoctrination are excluded.
- A neutral stance is maintained.

How to maintain neutrality and balance:

- Teachers should not use their authority as teachers as a platform for promoting their own views.
- The mode of enquiry should have discussion rather than instruction at its core.
- Discussion should protect divergence of view.
- Teacher should have responsibility

How does the scenario game implement these principles?

During the game students get involved with the topic:

- They understand the impacts on people using Story Cards.
- They gather further information using Information Cards.
- They discuss the major questions using Issue Cards.

Conversation guidelines create a supportive environment in which all students can form their opinion and express themselves safely. A conversation works well when people follow these guidelines:

- Interrupting people destroys the conversation
- Only one person to speak at a time
- Listen carefully
- Respect each other
- Remember it's OK to change your mind
- Ask questions if you need to
- Speak calmly and clearly

Using this game effectively in the classroom:

Tips for using this game:

- Give clear instructions (briefing).
- Ensure all students understand what they have to do and what is expected of them.
- You may have to demonstrate.
- During the debate trouble shoot, listen, support, help, challenge, and maybe demonstrate to small groups or whole group if common problem.

Preparation:

- Photocopy as many cards as you might need.
- Prepare the room to enable students to easily work in groups of 2 or more.
- During the debate when you are using the cards, put a set of the cards in the middle of each groups' table. Leave a set of instruction cards on each table so students have a visual reminder to your verbal instructions (or have the instruction card document on the whiteboard).

Using the story cards:

The story cards can be used to play a shorter version of the game that enables students to discuss the situations and characters on the story cards. Each student should receive one card and read it out loud to the rest of the group; students then discuss the situation and voice their opinions.

Alternatively

The story cards can also be used in conjunction with the issue cards and info cards for a longer version of the game that requires the students to look at the scenarios in more depth. If you want to play the longer version:

Deal two story cards to each student. Students read their cards and then take it in turn to read their cards out loud to the group. They then discuss the characters on the story

cards in terms of what they think and feel about them, in relation to the topics and information featured on the other game cards. Students should be encouraged to discuss the characters on the story cards; they should discuss their thoughts and feelings about the story card. Make sure that everyone has a say and that students observe the conversation guidelines.

Using the Information cards:

Give each group of students a set of all 19 information cards. Each student reads the cards and the group chooses two cards that they believe are of most importance in relation to their story cards. They take it in turns to read their 2 cards to the other students. When everyone has read their cards they are placed in the middle of the table so everyone can see them. Students discuss whether there are any connections between the cards, and start to group them. Make sure that each student has equal time to discuss the information cards.

Using the Issue cards:

Give each group a set of all 12 issue cards. Each student reads their cards, and then they choose 2 that are most important to them. They pass the unwanted cards to the person on their left. They only pass the cards once. They receive new cards from the player on their right. They select 2 cards that are most important to them. They may be different or the same as the cards they chose first. Place the unwanted cards to the side face down. Each person reads their 2 chosen cards to the group. They place the chosen cards on the table. They discuss why the cards are important and their thoughts and feelings about them. Students also discuss if any of the cards are on the same theme, and whether they link with any of the chosen information cards.