

Case Studies

Summary

Students assume stakeholder roles within a case study in order to analyze an ethical issue. Case studies are one of the most powerful tools for helping students understand ethical issues, and for providing them with insight into diverse perspectives.

Teacher Instructions

1. Students are given a scenario (actual or fictional) that incorporates an ethical issue related to science.
2. Students identify what they know/don't know about the issue.
3. Students are divided into groups that represent different stakeholders. The stakeholders (in 'same-stakeholder' groups) decide on their values and perspectives on the issue.
4. Students are then divided into 'mixed-stakeholder' groups that contain one member from each stakeholder perspective. These mixed groups are asked to come to consensus (or clarify the nature of their disagreement) with regard to making recommendations about how to resolve the issue or designing policy to address the issue.
5. Each 'mixed-stakeholder' group presents the summary of their discussion to the class.
6. As a follow-up, provide students the opportunity to express their own position and recommendations in written form.

Variations

Students can brainstorm who the stakeholders are, then be provided with opportunities to research what the issue of concern to those stakeholders might be, and the arguments that those stakeholders put forth. Time is allotted for library/internet research.

The same activity can be done using only single or mixed stakeholder groups.

Students can also complete a Decision-Making Framework, either in their mixed-stakeholder groups, individually prior to making stakeholder groups, or individually following the discussion.