

Lara (16) is pregnant

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Country: Germany

Subject: Biology

Grade level: 15-16 graders

Curriculum content: Life sciences; sexual education; decision making and moral judgement in a semi-real dilemma situation.

Kind of activity: Role play, plenary discussion about a dilemma situation

Anticipated time: 6 lessons of 45 minutes each (blocked as a project)

Objectives / Competences

The task's main goal is to improve the decision making and moral judgement in a bioethical context and to promote the subject-related communication amongst the students. It aims at developing competences such as:

- Subject knowledge in the context of human sexuality, human embryonic development, different methods of abortion, female hormones and pregnancy.
- Process knowledge in connection with ethical justification and moral judgement.
- Communicational competences such as to argue and defend own ideas, and to listen and reflect his/her peers ideas.

The students are expected to:

- * perceive and understand a moral dilemma;
- * distinguish normative and descriptive arguments;
- * become aware of a diversity of perceptions of a dilemma;
- * experience the opportunity of voting independently (of friends and authorities);
- * learn to value peers and reasons as a source of support;
- * learn to appreciate a public debate on "real" (moral) issues in a bioethical context;
- * learn (deepened) some aspects of sexual educations such as developing of embryo and foetus, abortion (methods), hormones;
- * learn about social issues in connection with unborn life,

- * become aware of the own moral and democratic learning;
- * decide, with justification, in a moral dilemma situation.

General Instructions

As teachers we cannot think of all moral dilemmas that young people will ever encounter, and even less able are we to provide a solution for all of them. All we can do is to prepare our students to be better able to solve their moral dilemmas by themselves and to utilize the advice and support of other people. A good way of preparation is to confront the learner with the kind of tasks that they should learn to master and also to provide them with support and guidance. Therefore we use the Konstanz Method of Dilemma Discussion (KMDD) by Georg Lind. The teacher puts the student into a semi-real situation and confronts him / her with a controversial discussion. That creates emotions and social reactions that need to be taken into account. To persist in this situation, the students must activate and develop his/her moral and democratic competences, for example to give (good) reasons for defending their opinion in a moral issue or choice, to listen to opposing reasoning, evaluate and appreciate it, to deal with conflicts between group pressure and one's own conscience or to take the perspective of the actors of a dilemma story.

In the task "Lara (16) is pregnant" we use a moral dilemma that come outside the classroom and whose solution is only fictitious. It is a semi-real dilemma situation, with the help of which we want catch the interest of the students and stimulate a serious, lively debate. If a dilemma story is not real for the participants, it will not stimulate moral-cognitive processes in the students.

Task description

The subject of this activity is a group discussion about a dilemma: the 16 year old Lara is pregnant. She asks the editors of the youth magazine "Bravo" for decision help. The "Bravo" editors build two groups: group 1 looks for information for the case that Lara wants to have her baby, group 2 looks for information for the case Lara decides to interrupt the pregnancy. Both editor groups collect normative and descriptive arguments. In a plenary session the two editorial groups discuss the PRO and CONTRA of Lara's pregnancy. Each student reflects his / her decision by writing a "letter to Lara" (home-work).

Procedure

The procedure of the task follows the script of the Konstanz Method of Dilemma Discussion (Table 1).

Table 1

Time	Activity of teachers	Activity of the students	Phase
35'	Introduction to the dilemma (plenary session) Present the moral dilemma. Clarify the dilemma by asking questions: "Who thinks Lara has no problem? Why?" "Who thinks this is no problem? Why?" "Is it difficult or not so difficult? Why?"	Introduction For the introduction into Lara's problematic see Power Point presentation "Lara is pregnant" (annexes 1).	STAGE A

	<p>“What makes it a problem? Why is it so hard to decide what to do?”</p>		
10´	<p>First Vote</p> <p>Ask students for a “straw vote” by asking the questions: “Please raise your hand if you think Lara is right by deciding for having the baby.” “Please raise your hand if you think Lara is right by deciding for abortion.” Count votes.</p>	<p>First Vote: How would you judge the decision of Lara PRO or CONTRA pregnancy?</p>	
90´	<p>Collecting supporting arguments in editorial-groups</p> <p>Divide the participants into two groups according to their decision. Form small groups (3 or 4 persons). Task: “Prepare for the discussion later: poster, PRO and CONTRA arguments. Collect together arguments supporting your position on Lara’s dilemma.”</p>	<p>The 1st editorial meeting of the youth magazine “BRAVO”</p> <p>Please imagine you are being the BRAVO` s editors. At the first editorial meeting of BRAVO about Lara`s pregnancy two possibilities are discussed how Lara could decide: On the one hand Lara is having a termination of pregnancy and on the other hand she is going to have the baby. Please form two editorial groups to collect PRO and CONTRA arguments</p> <p>Editorial group 1: “Pregnancy”</p> <p>Please form three groups with 3-5 pupils, describe the pregnancy progress and discuss its following consequences for Lara. First group of experts: Pregnancy development Second group of experts: Physical changes of Lara` s body (see material 2) Third group of experts: Personal and social changing during pregnancy and afterwards. (see material 3) Task: Please write your results on a poster and prepare for the discussion later. Collect together arguments supporting the decision “pregnancy – Lara should decide for having the baby”.</p> <p>Editorial group 2: “Abortion”</p> <p>Please form three groups with 3-5 pupils and discuss the consequences of abortion. Forth group of experts: Abortion counselling (see material 4) Fifth group of experts: Team of doctors (see material 5) Sixth group of experts: Lara` s social contacts (see material 6) Task: Please write your results on posters. Prepare for the discussion later. Collect together arguments supporting the decision on “abortion – Lara should decide herself against the baby”</p>	<p>STAGE B</p>
70´	<p>Dilemma Discussion (plenary session)</p> <p>Assign two assistants to record PRO and CONTRA arguments visibly for each other. Explain</p>	<p>The 2nd editorial meeting of the youth magazine “BRAVO”</p> <p>In a plenary discussion the editorial group 1 and editorial group 2 first present their posters (5 minutes each group). The two opposing</p>	<p>STAGE C</p>

	<p>the principle and rule of the plenary discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Principle of respect ➤ Ping-Pong-Role ➤ Bring in your best arguments. 	<p>groups should be seated facing each other. The PRO and CONTRA arguments should be visible for all. They are discussed according the following rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Principle of Respect: "Respect each other and all human beings not in this room. You are free to bring up any argument and make any comment on others' arguments. Yet, do not say anything bad or good about people." ➤ Ping-Pong-Rule: "The person who has spoken chooses one from the opposite group for responding. Then he or she does the same so that the right to speak goes back and forth between the two groups". ➤ Best argument: "Bring forward only your BEST argument. If you present more than one argument, your opponent is likely to respond to your weaker argument." 	
20'	<p>Appreciating opposing arguments</p> <p>Form again editorial groups to give space for reflection of the arguments of the other groups.</p>	<p>Please form again the two editorial sub-groups to reflect the PRO and CONTRA arguments.</p> <p>Here is your new group task: Which arguments of the other groups were the best ones? Please think over the arguments you have heard. Remember what has been said by the other group. Take this as an opportunity to show respect to the other group.</p>	
35'	<p>Plenary discussion</p> <p>Ask for responses for your task. Start with responders from the larger group first ("Now it is your turn being first." When no one requests to speak anymore, switch to the other group.</p>	<p>The 3rd editorial meeting of the youth magazine "BRAVO"</p> <p>At the beginning of the 3rd editorial meeting the two sub-groups discuss their reflections on the PRO and CONTRA arguments (Take care on the discussion rules!)</p>	STAGE D
10'	<p>Final Vote</p> <p>"Please raise you hand of you say she should decide herself for the baby?" "Please raise your hand if you say she should decide for abortion."</p>	<p>Final Vote</p> <p>After having looked in Lara's dilemma more closely, how would you now judge the decision of Lara?</p>	
	<p>Reflection and documentation</p> <p>Home-work: "Write a letter to Lara"</p>	<p>Home-work</p> <p>Please write a letter to Lara in which you write down your own position concerning pregnancy of an underage girl.</p>	STAGE E

Teacher Notes

In addition to table 2 here some notes for the teacher concerning didactic, documentation and reflection and learning goals (Table 3).

Table 3

	Activity of teachers	Didactic, Documentation, Reflection	Phase <i>Learning goals</i>
35'	<p>Introduction to the dilemma (plenary session) Present the moral dilemma. Clarify the dilemma by asking questions: "Who thinks Lara has no problem? Why?" "Who thinks this is no problem? Why?" "Is it difficult or not so difficult? Why?" "What makes it a problem? Why is it so hard to decide what to do?"</p>	<p>Didactic: Make sure that every student reaches a full understanding of the story by presenting the dilemma. Let the students paraphrase the dilemma. Documentation: Write protocol notes that all can see (blackboard, slide, computer-beamer). Reflection: Has everyone perceived the moral problem in the story? Has everyone got the facts right?</p>	<p>STAGE A SUPPORT <i>Getting facts straight.</i> <i>Perceiving and understanding the moral dilemma.</i> <i>Understanding the multitude of possible motives behind decision.</i></p>
10'	<p>First Vote</p> <p>Ask students for a "straw vote" by asking the questions: "Please raise your hand if you think Lara is right by deciding for having the baby." "Please raise your hand if you think Lara is right by deciding for abortion." Count votes.</p>	<p>Didactic: Create a (not too) challenging learning environment modelled after real life with time pressure, social urgency, and no-non-decision situation. Try to get everyone to decide, always respect any learner to refrain from (public) decision. Documentation: Have peer-supervisor or student assistants observe the discussion using an observation sheet. Reflection: What have you, the teacher, learned from this discussion?</p>	<p>CHALLENGE <i>Feeling some of the pressure of time and urgency of a real life dilemma.</i> <i>Committing oneself publicly to an opinion about right and wrong on a controversial issue.</i> <i>Experiencing the opportunity of voting independently.</i></p>
90'	<p>Collecting supporting arguments in editorial-groups</p> <p>Divide the participants into two groups according to their decision. Form small groups (3 or 4 persons). Task: "Prepare for the discussion later: poster, PRO and CONTRA arguments. Collect together arguments supporting your position on Lara's dilemma."</p>	<p>Didactic Working in small groups to foster speaking and co-operating. Ask the participants to spread out in the room so that they do not hinder each other. Documentation Have assistants observe the intensity of the conversations or even to listen to it.</p>	<p>STAGE B SUPPORT <i>Learn to value peers as a source of support.</i> <i>Learn to value reasons as a source of support.</i></p>

70'	<p>Dilemma Discussion (plenary session)</p> <p>Assign two assistants to record PRO and CONTRO arguments visibly for each other. Explain the principle and rule of the plenary discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Principle of respect ➤ Ping-Pong-Role ➤ Bring in your best arguments. 	<p>Didactic</p> <p>Make clear that the principle of respect has absolute value and is not changeable. Indicate that you have no reasons to believe that someone wants to oppose this principle or obstruct it on purpose. Indicate that you suggest using the Ping-Pong-Rule for the discussion, but that you welcome comments on it after the discussion to improve or alter it for future sessions. Listen carefully to the discussion. This is a rare and very valuable opportunity to get to know your students's moral judgement and discourse competence, and their relationships. Let the smaller group start with the discussion.</p> <p>Documentation</p> <p>Have peer-supervisor or student assistants observe the discussion using an observation sheet. Use video-taping. Reflection</p> <p>Was there enough time for the discussion? What have you, the teacher, learned from the discussion?</p>	<p>STAGE C CHALLENGE</p> <p><i>Learn to appreciate a public debate on "real" (moral) issues.</i></p> <p><i>Learn to make yourself heard; present the reasons for your opinion succinctly.</i></p> <p><i>Learn to carefully listen to your opponents arguments.</i></p> <p><i>Learn to distinguish between the quality of an argument (which you may attack) and the quality of a person.</i></p>
20'	<p>Appreciating opposing arguments</p> <p>Form again editorial groups to give space for reflection of the arguments of the other groups.</p>		<p>SUPPORT</p> <p><i>Appreciating good arguments even when given by an opponent.</i></p> <p><i>Distinguishing arguments from the arguer.</i></p>
35'	<p>Plenary discussion</p> <p>Ask for responses for your task. Start with responders from the larger group first ("Now it is your turn being first.")</p> <p>When no one requests to speak anymore, switch to the other group.</p>	<p>Didactic</p> <p>Discourage any attempt to continue the discussion, and any negative comment on the arguments of the other group. Be friendly but make clear that you will not give in.</p> <p>Documentation</p> <p>Ask the assistant to take note visible to all. Use video-taping.</p>	<p>STAGE D</p> <p><i>Reducing aversive feelings against the other side.</i></p> <p><i>Experiencing reconciliation with and from opponents.</i></p>
10'	<p>Final Vote</p> <p>"Please raise you hand of you say she should decide herself for the baby?"</p> <p>"Please raise your hand if you say she should decide for abortion."</p>	<p>Didactic</p> <p>Appreciate the fact that the participants do vote. Encourage change of vote. Yet avoid comments to make voting a matter of competition. Value the fact of changing opinions. Yet do not make negative comments on stable voters.</p>	<p>CHALLENGE</p> <p><i>Feeling comfortable to vote in public.</i></p> <p><i>Appreciating the opportunity to reconsider one's decision.</i></p>

		Documentation Use video-taping or observers.	
	Reflection and documentation Home-work: "Write a letter to Lara"	Didactic Be prepared to accept all comments as valid, yet do not refrain from posing your own point of view.	STAGE E SUPPORT <i>Becoming aware of one's own moral and democratic learning.</i>