

Creating a Personal Code of Ethics Grade 9 Health Lesson Plan

Grade Level – Nine

Subject Area – Phys. Ed. / Health

Curricular Objective:

Identify the components for building and maintaining healthy, close relationships (e.g., effective communication, decision-making skills, respect, trust, love...).

Human Rights Objectives

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Materials Needed:

Crosby Stills and Nash: TEACH YOUR CHILDREN, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young by Graham Nash (Optional)

Book: Covey, Stephen R., *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Fireside, New York, 1989.

Evaluation:

Human Rights Reflection Journal pages

Background:

A personal code of ethics puts into writing the ideas and beliefs that are the essence of a person's life and which allow a person to say "I will do this because I believe that..." A code of ethics is a document which is a daily reminder of what a person believes in and a source of encouragement in their daily life.

Ethics is relevant to every major social problem facing the world today and influences daily decisions made by individuals, businesses and nonprofit organizations. Students at the grade nine level are in the process of self-definition. They are influenced by peers, media, parents, and organizations they belong to. "Students are working at developing a personal ethic, rather than following an ascribed set of values and code of behaviour." [Grade Nine Social

Studies; A Foundation for Implementation, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007. P.28] This exercise can be a useful tool in helping them think through what their beliefs are and why they believe what they do.

“You who are on the road
Must have a code that you can live by
And so, become yourself
Because the past is just a good bye.” (Crosby Stills and Nash: TEACH YOUR CHILDREN, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young by Graham Nash)

Ethics can be understood as a particular code of values, and values as the core beliefs that guide our actions. The purpose of this lesson is not to instill our own values in our students, but to help them to become aware of what their values are. This is why we begin with the students brainstorming for people they look up to and admire, and then move into the visualization where they imagine how they would like to be remembered.

Activating

Have students brainstorm a list of people they admire or look up to, and state why they do. Ask students to think of people they know, or know by reputation, (living or dead) whom they consider to be “ethical”. If necessary, define the word ethical. It may be helpful to explain that an ethical person is one who “walks the talk”, or lives according to what they say they believe in. Several people who clearly fit that description may come to mind. These may be famous people or people they know personally. List the names on the board. Students might say things such as they admire a sports hero because he or she is the best in their sport, or that they admire a certain popular singer because their music is great. Challenge them to give supporting evidence that shows these people are ethical, or “walk the talk”. Have students list the reasons why they admire or look up to the people they have named.

The next part of the assignment is for students to think about and come up with a list of personal qualities that person has and / or would need, to be able to do what they do. For example, while a sports star needs to have talent, they also need commitment to practicing hard, determination to keep going when things get tough, and so on. A popular singer needs talent, but they also need to believe in their own ability and be able to respond positively to criticism.

Acquiring

Now dim the lights, and ask student to relax. They can close their eyes if they wish, as you read to them the visualization at the beginning of Habit 2, Principles of Personal Leadership (P.96 and 97) in *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. This is a brief reading, which has the listener imagine going to a funeral, which

turns out to be their own. The purpose is to have people think about what contributions and / or achievements they would like to be remembered for, what kind of person they would like to be remembered as, and what kind of difference they will have made in the lives of the people who knew them. (You will need to adapt the language slightly for a teen audience, i.e., school rather than work, and son or daughter, rather than husband / wife, father / mother.) At the end of the reading, allow students a few minutes to write down their thoughts. You may want to play TEACH YOUR CHILDREN by Crosby Stills Nash and Young.

Next, have students write down their answers to the following four questions.

1. Who do I think I am?

Take time to write down how you see yourself as a person. Also write down how your friends see you. Imagine asking a friend to describe you, and make a list of what you think they would have to say. Add to this the all the things about yourself that anyone has ever pointed out to you or that you know to be true of yourself. Try to balance your list by noting both your strengths and your weak points.

2. What do I believe is important in life?

Think about *what* you believe. Don't worry about *why* you believe these things, right now, just brainstorm a list of all the things you believe to be important about life; later you will look at the reasons. These are the beliefs that carry you through your life and guide your decisions.

3. How do I relate to (get along with) others?

Think about all the places where you spend your time; where you go to school, where you relax and have fun, where you earn your money; and how you relate to all the people you meet there. Think about your relationships on a scale of one to ten where ten is GREAT, and one is dismal. What do you do in the great relationships that make them great? What could you do differently in the so-so relationships that would move those relationships closer to a ten (or even a five)? Are these things that you would like to list in your code of ethics?

4. Why do I believe the things that I do?

Now think now about why you believe what you do. This is a very important step, because it helps you to become aware of how important your beliefs are to you. You might say it like this; "I believe that it is important to....because..."

Applying

Part I – Purpose – Why am I writing this? Think about why you are writing this code of ethics. Are you doing this just because it is an assignment? If you have to do it anyway, what can you get out of it for yourself? Are you doing this to inspire yourself? Are you doing this to change your actions, or the way you do things? Thinking about these questions helps you to develop the reason behind

your code of ethics. The purpose of your code needs to be fit *your* needs, so you could say to yourself..."Right now I need...in my life."

Part II – Aspirations – This is your best self; the best you are right now, and how you would like to become. Go through your list of how other people see you and find out if any of the things they say match up with what you believe to be important. For example, if you believe it is important to tell the truth, but people say that you aren't always honest with them, you have a mismatch. But if you believe it is important to keep your word and people say they can always count on you to follow through with what you say, you have a match. This part of your code contains your aspirations...how you want to be as a person. It will include all the positive traits you now have, as well as the ones you wish to develop or improve on. You might want to state it in these terms: "When I am at my best, I am a person who...." and "I will be a person who..." or "I am becoming a person who..." (Note to teacher; the use of "I will be" is preferable to "I want to be", because it engages the will and engenders a sense of determination and possibility. "I want to be..." is more often associated with "...When I grow up."; "I will be..." is more immediate.)

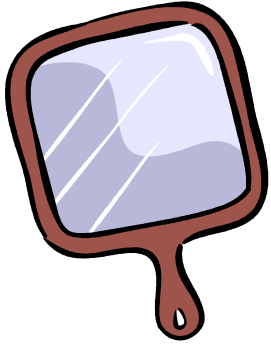
Part III – Why I Hold the Personal Expectations I Do – "I am..." or "I will be...because I believe that..." this is where you state the reasons why you want to be the kind of person you listed in part II; where you pull together your "walk" with your "talk". For example, "I will tell the truth because I believe that people need to hear the truth to be able to trust me, and I would like to be trustworthy." Or, "I will train hard for the track team because I believe that working hard improves my chances of meeting my goals."

PERSONAL CODE OF ETHICS REFLECTIONS

What Do You Want to Leave as a Legacy of Your Life?



Who Do I Think I Am?



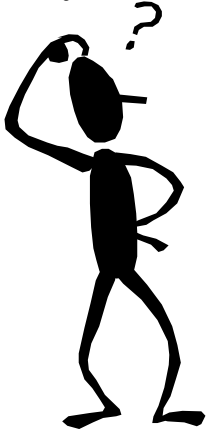
What Do I Believe is Important in Life?



How Do I Relate to (get along with) Others?



Why Do I Believe the Things that I Do?



Part I – My Purpose



Part II – My Aspirations



Why I Hold the Personal Expectations I Do

