

Online Ethics Discussion Lesson Plan

Title: Online Ethics Discussion	Tool: Computer	Grade Range: 6-8
Summary: In this lesson teachers use the discussion points to help students understand the concepts of online ethics, including acceptable use policies, copyright laws, computer hacking, piracy, intentional virus setting, and invasion of privacy.		

Warm-up

- Ask the students for examples of different places that are governed by rules (roads, sports, schools, etc.). Talk about how even though the rules of each of these examples may vary from place to place, they are all usually very similar. Also discuss why these rules exist (to protect people's safety, to keep order, etc.).

Activity

Discuss online ethics and consequences of unethical behavior:

- Discuss acceptable use policies including EasyTech's policy and the school's policy.
- Explain intellectual property and copyright laws.
- Talk about ethical violations including computer hacking, piracy, intentional virus setting, and invasion of privacy.
- Discuss the consequences for each of these violations.

Wrap-up

- Have students read the school, lab, or classroom acceptable use policy and discuss the rules. What are some rules that students were unaware of? What are some rules students think are missing?

Extension

- Have students research, more in-depth, the different computer ethical use principles discussed in this lesson. Using their research, have them create a presentation or short report illustrating what they learned. Have them find examples, consequences, and the ways those principles relate to their school and community.

Online Ethics Discussion Key Points

Acceptable Use Policies

- When you use information from networks, like websites from the Internet or files from a computer, you need to follow acceptable use policies. Acceptable use policies are lists of rules. They are the things you are expected to do and not do while using the information, website, or program. These rules are created to protect you and other people who are using the information.
- Not all acceptable use policies are the same. Some common examples of rules they might include are: on a site where you can leave messages, you're not allowed to leave mean or hateful messages or ones that use profanity; and on sites where people leave information about themselves, you're not allowed to copy or change that information.
- EasyTech requires that you follow an acceptable use policy. Some examples of rules on the EasyTech acceptable use policy are that you can't impersonate, or pretend to be, someone else by logging in with a username and password that isn't yours. You also cannot try to break or cause problems on the website.
- Review other parts of EasyTech's acceptable use policy with the students as appropriate.
- Schools, classrooms, and computer labs also have acceptable use policies. These kinds of acceptable use policies include rules about how and when you can use school and computer equipment and information stored on and accessed from it.
- Describe applicable elements of your classroom's, school's, and/or lab's acceptable use policy to the students. Post some of the most important rules in the lab.

Intellectual Property

- An important element of most acceptable use policies is respect for intellectual property. Intellectual property is anything that a person has written, drawn, or otherwise created from ideas that are their own.
- Have students think of some examples of intellectual property (books, art, websites, etc.). Intellectual property also includes software. Talk about how it is against intellectual property rights rules to copy software without buying it or without permission.
- The reason you cannot use someone else's words or art is that it is copyrighted. Copyright laws protect people's products (words, songs, art, etc.) so others cannot copy or steal them.
- You may not use the entirety of a copyrighted work as your own. However, you may use portions of a copyrighted work when you are quoting it for your own use. When you do this, you must cite the original work to give credit to the person or people whose ideas you are using. Review the way you would like your students to cite their sources. This may include a works-cited page, footnotes, or endnotes, and the format those citations should follow (MLA, etc.).

Ethical Violations

- Some rules that are included in acceptable use policies focus on ethical use of computer software and information. Ethical use means following rules or doing the right thing.
- Computer hacking is gaining access to online information without permission. Examples of computer hacking are accessing a school's records and changing grades, accessing a bank's records and changing numbers, etc. Depending on the severity of the hacking, the consequences can include being suspended from school, and even a criminal conviction, including fines and/or prison.
- Review your school's policies regarding computer hacking.
- Piracy is when someone copies computer software or other digital information without permission. This includes copying CDs, DVDs, and software programs. Penalty for piracy can include a fine or prison, depending on the severity.
- Review your school's policies regarding piracy.
- Viruses are computer programs that ruin computers' files or hard drives. Viruses are usually sent in emails. Intentionally creating and/or sending a virus and infecting people's computers is against the law, and can result in jail time or a fine.
- Sometimes, a virus is sent to you by email without your knowledge. To ensure that you don't accidentally open a virus, make sure you only open emails from people you know.
- Review your school's policies regarding the intentional creation and distribution of viruses.
- Invasion of privacy includes accessing someone's private information without permission. This can include someone's email, files, or other accounts, whether or not they are protected with a password.
- Review your school's policies regarding invasion of privacy.