

Online life: classroom community and relations online

Purpose

To give the students a space to reflect on how they are together when they are online. The lesson invites to dialogue, understanding, and curiosity instead of set rules for online presence. Youth today does not necessarily distinguish between relations online and in-person. Both arenas must therefore be acknowledged as influencing the overall wellbeing in the class.

Content (45 min.)

- Introduction to the lesson (5 min.)
- Group discussion of dilemmas (20 min.)
- Summarising and discussion in class (20 min.)

Preparation

- Divide the students into group of 4-5 people in each.
- Print the student material and assign one of the four dilemmas to each group.
- Find the ideals formulated by the class in lesson 2.

Your role

Most of your students navigate their own online life which is often an extension of their physical person and the class community. It is important to emphasise that this lesson is not a tool for you to control or direct their behaviour online. Rather, it is important that you as a teacher facilitate an open-minded *dialogue* and *reflection* about community and relations online. This dialogue can help the students themselves create a framework and some ideals for how they are together online.

Furthermore, the lesson is an opportunity to make visible your role in their online relations – that is; a person whom they can trust and turn to if they experience anything that violates their personal boundaries. The keywords here are open-mindedness and curiosity. You do not need to be up to date on the newest platforms or social media. Instead, your role is to provide the framework for a healthy dialogue about social relations and community of the class online.

Introduction to the topic of online relations

In lesson 2 you discussed what constitutes a good classroom culture and the class defined *ideals* for your own classroom culture. These ideals should also apply when the class is together online. To facilitate this, the students will discuss different dilemmas about social relations online.

Discussion of dilemmas in groups and in class

First, the students will be divided into groups which each will be assigned one of the four dilemmas. After discussing the dilemma in the group, they will present their solution to the class as well as their reflections

about the dilemma. The reflections are just as important as their suggested solution.

Afterwards the whole class will discuss the questions below:

Questions for reflection in class:

- Were any of the questions particularly difficult, easy, logical, irrelevant or interesting?
- Did the dilemma questions prompt any reflections on the way in which you in the class are together online?
- Did the discussions provide anyone any new insights or realisations?
- What can you do to handle the challenges and conflicts that can appear in online relations?
- In your opinion, what characterises a healthy or an unhealthy online community?
- Who is responsible for a healthy online class community?
- What can you do as a class to ensure a healthy online community?
- In your experience, is there any difference between the discussions and community that take place in your physical class relations and those that take place online?
- What should you do if you experience anything difficult or uncomfortable online?
- Are there any advice or guidelines that we have discussed which we can add to our ideals for our classroom culture?

If the students find it difficult to relate to the dilemmas or the topic in general, it can be helpful to ask them with curiosity: “Why do you find it difficult to talk about?” “Why is it difficult to relate to?” “Why is it stupid or silly?”

Write down the most important points of your discussion and add them to your ideals for classroom culture (Lesson 2).

Who can you refer to for counseling and information:

- Ventilen Denmark
- Danish media council for children and youth (Medierådet for børn og unge)
- Center for Digital Youth Care (Center for Digital Pædagogik (CFDP))
- Delete It counseling (SletDet Rådgivningen)
- Danish Family Planning Association (Sex og Samfund)

Potential extra questions for reflection:

- Discuss the development of digital media and the pros and cons of this development.
- What are the positive aspects of digital media?
- What are the negative aspects of digital media?
- Provide examples of how social media affect young people’s lives – both negatively and positively.