

Respect Toolkit

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Q1: WHAT ARE CONCEPTS?

Concepts are the mental or cognitive tools we use to classify and order our experiences in and of the world. At a basic level, having a concept means being able to recognise something and distinguish and/or compare this concept with other things.

Concepts are abstract ideas. They are not straightforward and cannot simply be answered like a fact. For example, one may think that: “A teacher who treated every student the same does not **respect** difference.” To examine this claim we need to first look at what counts as **respect**. We are then able to evaluate our claim in the light of our understanding of the concept of **respect**.

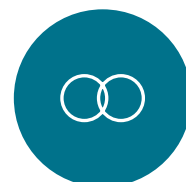
Concepts are abstractions constructed by thinking beings – like us – with sufficiently large brains. But some concepts are more abstract than others. For example, we can imagine a child deriving the concept dog from numerous instances of four-legged creatures that she encounters in her daily experience, together with appropriate reinforcement from someone already familiar with this concept. This is, in part, is a process of trial and error – excluding other four-legged creatures that for example, miaow instead of bark. Still, this concept is an abstraction - I can pat my dog but I cannot pat – i.e. interact physically with – my concept or idea of a dog.

Other concepts – including those, like *good*, *bad*, *right(s)*, *wrong*, *responsibility*, *freedom*, *justice*, that are central in the field of Ethics – are more abstract still, in that it is more difficult to describe or imagine precisely what kinds of items in the world fall under them.

There are two different points to notice here. First, even if there were complete agreement as to what such concepts mean, the words which stand for them function more like adjectives or adverbs than nouns. I can observe, hear, pat, play with and smell cats and dogs, but – so it seems – I can only observe, witness or perform actions – or, perhaps, people – that are good, bad, responsible, free, etc.

Secondly – and this point is acknowledged in the Ethical Capability Framework – there rarely is complete agreement as to what such concepts mean. What counts as right or wrong, or free or just is often quite contestable or controversial, both in general terms – precisely what the words “right”, “wrong” and “free” mean – and in specific instances – whether or not a particular action or person, state, regime, etc. is actually right, good or free. Trying to be clear about what certain terms or concepts actually mean is a key part of thinking and inquiry in ethics.

Concepts related to the philosophical branch of Ethics promote deep questioning and lead to contestable answers. Philosophical concepts such as fairness, equality and respect can overlap with topics in most general subject areas. Therefore, it is easy to see how one can add a philosophical dimension to every unit of work. By discussing such concepts, students will learn to become autonomous thinkers, while also applying their subject knowledge to their own personal existences and the world around them.



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Philosophical concepts, which we call Big Ideas, are distinguished by having the following three characteristics:

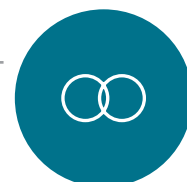
1. **Common:** The concept is shared by everybody. It is a word commonly used by students (depending on their age), however they might not be very clear about what such concepts really *mean* or signify; and even if they are clear, others might well disagree (because these concepts are contestable)
2. **Contestable:** The concept will arouse argument and disagreements. Students may hold different understandings of what the concept means, and how it can be used in varied situations. This is how some concepts can rely on necessary conditions.
3. **Central:** The concept is important to use in how we live our lives and understand the world around us. In an ethical context, concepts like person and human being are very important, as are many others such as *right, justice, duty, happiness....*

HOW DO I SCAFFOLD STUDENTS UNDERSTANDING OF CONTESTABILITY?

A: Concepts can be difficult to understand as they are mental tools and can sometimes be understood in different ways in different situations. Sometimes, that makes it tricky to agree to a standard meaning to any one concept. Let us consider the concept of fish. We all know what a fish is and what a fish is not. We know that the word fish is a noun and therefore denotes a thing. Therefore, a simple concept like 'fish' is easy to understand and communicate to others. But, let us consider an important concept that is more abstract like 'respect'. **Respect** is an abstract noun, therefore it is not a thing, it is an abstract idea. As part of a critical investigation, we first ask these three questions to identify if a concept is indeed an important concept.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Is the concept used in our common day-to-day communication? | Yes/No |
| 2. Does the concept play an important role in our lives? | Yes/No |
| 3. Is the concept contestable? Can its meaning be debated? | Yes/No |

If you have answered 'Yes' to all three questions, the concept is an important one and there is an opportunity to investigate the complexity of the concept. Let us test the concept of **respect** against the above criteria questions. **Respect** is used in our common day-to-day conversations, and it plays an important role in our lives, and it can have different meanings to different people in different situations. Therefore, **respect** is an important concept and there is an opportunity to investigate its implications to our lived experiences and the way we use it to communicate to others. Remember, people are very complex and how we communicate with each other is very complex. We cannot assume everyone understands or experiences **respect** in the same way. However, the concept of fish is used in our common day-to-day conversations, and it may or may not play an important role in our lives, but the concept of fish is not debatable. We do not argue over the understanding of what the word fish means. Therefore, the concept of fish is not an important philosophical concept, but **respect** is an important philosophical concept. That is why we think '**respect** is a **Big Idea**.'



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Q2: WHAT IS CONTESTABLE ABOUT THESE CONCEPTS?

HOW IS RESPECT A CONTESTABLE CONCEPT?

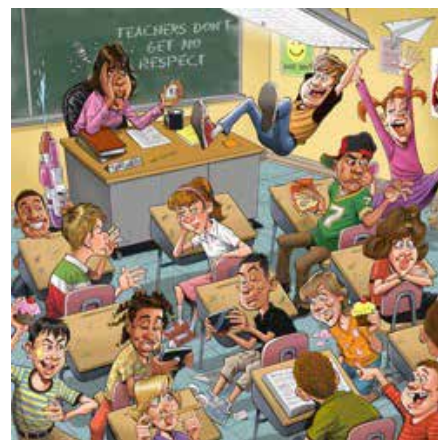
Here we have another ethical concept which is common, contestable and central, although its contestability is not often acknowledged, even in schools, where the term “respect” is usually taken for granted in vision or mission statements and lists of class rules.

Like most concepts which are common to us, there are many words whose meanings approximates that of “respect”, bearing in mind that the latter functions as both a noun (e.g. a certain feeling) and a verb (a form of action). I may esteem, admire, honour, appreciate, venerate, revere, or treasure someone in virtue of their achievements or particular qualities (like applauding an actor after a great performance). More generally, I may respect (or show respect to) those, like parents and teachers, who hold specific positions or status in relation to my life (like standing up in a court room when the judge enters); indeed, I might respect all persons and the world itself in the sense that I recognize their value and/or their importance (to me, or to everyone).

Some would insist that respect has to be earned and that it makes no sense to mandate it, just like genuine gratitude is not something that can be insisted on (as when a parent insists that her child expresses gratitude for an unwanted gift by saying “Thank you”). But perhaps this is somewhat idealistic and in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, we do need reminders – even rules or stated expectations – of when and to whom to “show” respect. Still we can ask if there are particular behaviours that go with all forms of respect, or do different contexts require different behaviours?

Assuming that respect for (other) persons is morally appropriate, does it follow that all persons, regardless of their behaviour or their viewpoints, are worthy of respect? How about a tyrant or dictator who demands respect but treats citizens with contempt? Further – and this is an issue which many young people will have pondered – can we still respect someone if we disagree with them? Is it possible (as the children in Lipman’s first philosophical narrative *Harry Stottlemeier’s Discovery*, wonder in Chapter 9) that by disagreeing with someone like teachers and parents, we actually show them greater respect (or honour) than if we acquiesced to their point of view simply because we are duty-bound to obey them? The answer to this question may be somewhat *culturally-relative* in that there are societies and traditions in which challenging or even questioning someone in authority is regarded as *disrespectful*. But could someone in that society reasonably *disagree* with such cultural or traditional norms? During the Middle Ages, it was customary for women accused of witchcraft to be burned at the stake. But did that make such a practice morally right – even back then?

In addition to the idea of respect for others, how about the idea of respecting oneself? Is self-respect the same as self-esteem or feeling good about yourself? And does the word “respect” mean the same thing regardless of whether it is directed at oneself or others? Finally, is there is a link between self-respect, respecting others, and gaining the respect of others? Can these be separated or are they mutually *inter-dependent* in the sense that you cannot have one without the others?



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Q3: WHAT ARE CONCEPT GAMES, AND HOW DO WE PLAY THEM?

Although each concept game will deal with a different concept, there is a standard process you can use for them all.

1. CONTESTED CONCEPT

Decide on your contested concept, For example: **Respect**

2. SET-UP

Set up the room so you have an area on the floor with a label indicating what each area represents. Often A4 cards are made with the category title. You can also use a hoola hoop to place the cards in.

For example:



The students should sit in a circle around the categories. It is important that every student can see each person in the group, as well as the three categories.

3. PROCEDURE

Part 1:

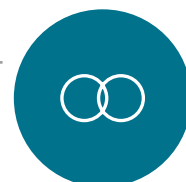
Begin by getting the students to write a **DEFINITION** of the contested concept.

By thinking about a definition of a term, the students will have to consider a range of scenarios that relate to that concept. Often they will find it challenging to write a definition that fits with every scenario.

- In small groups or individuals, students write down their definition of the concept
- As a class read out each definition and begin to write a **CRITERIA LIST** for that term
- If there are points in your criteria list that clash with one another, discuss to come to a resolution
- It is quite normal for your definition to change and evolve throughout the course of a lesson

Part 2:

- Get the students to return to their groups
- Each group is given a set of **EXAMPLES**. These may be words, pictures or scenarios.
- Students examine the examples one at a time, and decide which hoop they will place each example.
- An example cannot be placed without students identifying the **REASONS** they are placing it there.
- Nominate a scribe to keep a running list of these reasons.



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Part 3:

- As a class come together go through each example
- Discuss any examples that are contested
- It is useful to write the students ideas on the board. This is important to give them a sense of purpose and progress
- While you are organising the reasons:
 - Eliminate repetitions
 - Identify contradictions
 - Seek out any necessary conditions (if appropriate)

Part 4:

- Students revisit their original definition and edit as necessary
- Come together as a class and students share their new definitions
- Discuss come to a final definition

Part 5:

- Always leave time at the end of your lesson for **REFLECTION**
- Students can reflect on what they have learned, clarified or discovered so far
- They can also reflect on their own thinking and contribution to the class

Tips:

- Always ensure the students give reasons for their choices.
- Challenge the students to think of counter-examples that could show how an idea is incorrect.
- Try to combine multiple ideas into one unified concept, or show there are several different concepts in play.
- Write down student questions on the board. This provides a starting board for your next lesson.



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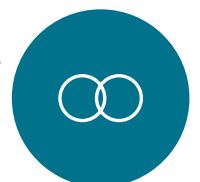
Q5: WHAT TOOLS DO I NEED TO PLAY CONCEPT GAMES?

WORD CARDS FOR A CONCEPT GAME:

RESPECT

?

DISRESPECT

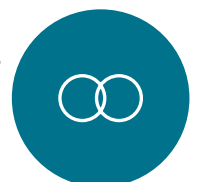


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WORD CARDS FOR A CONCEPT GAME:

Regard	Disregard
Appreciate	Unappreciate
Approve	Disapprove
Like	Dislike
Care for	Do not Care for
Admire	Contempt
Value	Do not Value
Honour	Dishonour
Hate	Love



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WORD CARDS FOR A CONCEPT GAME:

A friend	An immediate family member
A teacher	A stranger
Your body	Your mind
A place	A thing
A thought	A feeling
The environment	An animal
A plant	A memory
Words	Pictures
Sounds	An idea

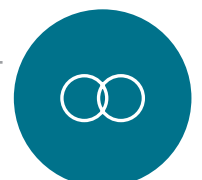


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SCENARIO EXAMPLES FOR A CONCEPT GAME:

<p>A student puts his hand up to talk in class.</p>	<p>In some countries women do not have the right to an abortion.</p>
<p>A stranger falls on the ground so you stop to see if they are alright.</p>	<p>You are about to miss the train and the only way you can get on is to push people aside.</p>
<p>You were grounded for lying to your parents, but you sneak out of the house to go to your best friends party.</p>	<p>While playing basketball you accidentally hit your opponent in the head.</p>
<p>Even though you disagree with your co-worker, you still cooperate to find a solution to the problem.</p>	<p>You tease another person because they had an ugly haircut.</p>
<p>You do not like the way you look, so you decide to stop eating every meal.</p>	<p>You disapprove of your country's policy related to refugees and attend a protest rally</p>

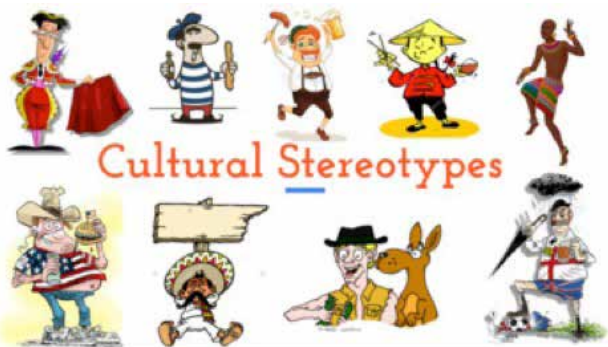


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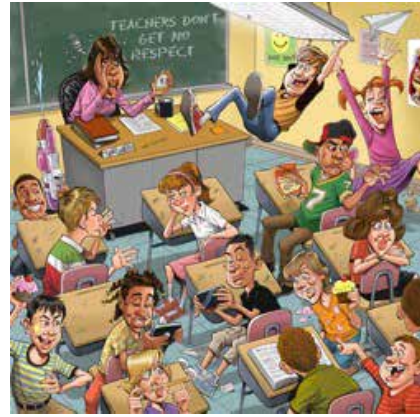
PICTURE EXAMPLES FOR A CONCEPT GAME:



with How to Respect Parents



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Q5: WHAT ARE DISCUSSION PLANS AND HOW DO I USE THEM?

When conducting discussion, it is useful to have prepared some questions in advance. Discussion plans will help provide direction and structure in discussion. They may also be used to direct the students' attention to a particular aspect of the topic being examined.

Discussion plans can be sequential – that is, each question builds upon the previous question, or non-sequential, where the questions devised could be asked in any order. The latter plan allows for you to explore the topic from different angles.

Questions asked should reflect the shift from more “concrete” to more “abstract” thinking in relation to the concept of **equality**. In thinking about concepts and their meanings, students are encouraged to offer their own thoughts and opinions in response to questions or comments made by others. However, discussion is transformed into *inquiry* when and only when participants engage in such procedures as:

- Providing reasons and/or evidence (including examples and counter-examples) for their views;
- Building on one another's ideas in the interest of developing a deeper understanding of the issues;
- Balancing a sense of passion for or commitment to their own ideas with an open-mindedness that allows them to rethink issues and change their minds when it is appropriate to do so;
- Showing a commitment to getting to the truth of things while being aware of questions and issues that remain unresolved.

When conducting a philosophical discussion, the teacher should be seen as a facilitator of thinking, rather than the source and evaluator of knowledge. One of the teacher's key roles in guiding discussion and inquiry is to encourage all students to participate without fear of being judged. Teachers should model and encourage the sense that good thinking matters whereas sloppy or careless thinking is to be avoided where possible. Rather than focusing on the “correct” answers, the teacher should place their attention on the students' thinking.

The point of working as a *community* of inquiry is to develop an understanding that the *ups* and *downs* that will inevitably occur over time (a breakthrough “Aha!” moment, or a discouraging dead-end, for example) are owned by the community as a whole – and, thereby, by each and every member – and not simply by individuals who have no connection with one another.



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DISCUSSION PLANS FOR RESPECT

DISCUSSION PLAN: 1 "RESPECT"

1. Think of someone whom you respect? Why do you respect that person?
2. Should friends respect one another?
3. Should strangers respect one another?
4. Should enemies respect each other?
5. Do you deserve to be respected? Why and by whom?
6. Is it reasonable to expect respect from someone if you do not respect them?
7. Is respect necessarily mutual or reciprocal?
8. How are the concepts of respect, care and trust connected?
9. Which is more important from a moral or ethical point of view: to care, to trust, or to respect?
10. Do we owe respect to certain others (e.g. parents? teachers? civic leaders?) by virtue of their positions or roles in society?
11. Is there any point to having and enforcing rules about respect?
12. Are there non-persons whom we should respect (e.g. animals, works of art, the environment, the whole world)?

DISCUSSION PLAN: 2 "RESPECT"

1. Who do you respect?
2. How you show respect for another person?
3. Who respects you?
4. How can you tell someone respects you?
5. Can you respect a place?
6. Can you respect a thing?
7. Why do people say you should respect your elders?
8. Do you have to like a person you respect?
9. Is it ever ok to be disrespectful?
10. Can a person disrespect themselves?
11. Should respect be earned?
12. Could respect be lost, and then earned again?



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Q6: WHAT FURTHER LINKS AND RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

LINKS AND RESOURCES:

The Shortest Kid in the World by Corrine Demas Bliss

<https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/TheShortestKidInTheWorld>

Hey Little Ant by Philip and Hannah Hoose

<https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/HeyLittleAnt>

The Sweetest Fig by Chris van Allsburg

<https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/TheSweetestFig>

The Philosophy Shop by Peter Worley –

Chapter on ‘Ethics’. In particular,

‘Bobby the Punching Bag’ by Phillip Gaydon

Provocations by Peter Worley – Feelings and Rights



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IAPC RESOURCE

Lipman, M. and Sharp, A. (1977). *Ethical inquiry Instructional Manual to Accompany LISA*. 2nd ed. Upper Montclair, N.J.: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair State College ISBN-13: 978-0916834210

Lisa, a classmate of Harry Stottlemeier, experiences a range of physical, aesthetic and ethical awakenings as she puzzles over issues of animal rights, sexism, racism, justice, divorce and death with her classmates. As Lisa and her friends begin to recognize the ethical dimensions of their experience, they delve into the philosophical concepts as the right, the fair, the good, perfection, and naturalism. Lisa's struggles with identity and thinking for oneself leads her to recognize her interdependence with others and with nature. This novel explores the complexity of ethical concerns and the multiple capacities involved in making sound ethical judgments.

Grade Range: 7-12. Target Grades: 7-8



Leading Idea No. 1: Manners, Discussion Plan: Manners.....	Page 91
Exercise: Manners.....	Page 92
Leading Idea No. 1: Suki and Lisa's treatment of Kio, Discussion Plan:	
Treating a person as a person.....	Page 108
Leading Idea No. 3: Mr. Partridge's sexism, Discussion Plan:	
Under what circumstances is it sexism?.....	Page 312
Exercise: Sexist words.....	Page 313
Leading Idea No. 2: Intergenerational communication, Discussion Plan:	
Improving Intergenerational communications	Page 228
Exercise: Intergenerational communication.....	Page 229

Lipman, M. and Sharp, A. (1980). *Social Inquiry: Instruction Manual to Accompany Mark*. 1st ed. Upper Montclair, N.J.: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair State College. ISBN-13: 978-0916834135

This instructional manual aims to support students' thinking skill development through the conceptual foundations of the social sciences. The various exercises and discussion plans aim to identify issues within the social sciences and expose to students to conflicting concepts at the heart of each issue. These various topics fit well within a social studies curriculum unit.



Leading Idea 1: Respect for people in authority.....	Page 135
Exercise: Who are people in authority?.....	Page 137

