Ethics in the Workplace: Case Study Scenarios

Standards Addressed:

CT Framework: Cooperative Work Experience
- Content Standard 1: Career Awareness
- Content Standard 3: Career Retention
- Content Standard 5: Technology and Information

CT Framework: Technology Education Curriculum Framework
- Content Standard 3: Career Awareness

Objective: To become aware of ethical issues in the workplace and to problem solve how to handle various situations.

Length: 60 minutes

LESSON

Engagement:

As a group students will watch three short videos.

http://youthforhumanrights.org/watchads/index.html
Download and watch the following human rights ads:
  2: Don’t Discriminate
  27: Copyright
  29: Responsibility

Pre-Assessment:

KWL chart: What are ethics? Describe your personal ethics that you display in school and/or work and/or at home. What type of ethics do you think are important to display at work?

Activity:

Split class into groups of 3-5 students. One group member should volunteer to be the scribe, another timekeeper, another facilitator and another reporter.

Each group will receive a copy of “You’re the Boss” and JA Success Skills “Ethics and You” case studies. Each group will choose 2-3 case studies to discuss and answer the ethical questions provided.

After 30 minutes reconvene to discuss important findings as a larger group.
Evaluation:

Individually write 2-3 sentences describing your personal code of ethics.

Extension:

Insert your personal code of ethics into your qualities/attributes section of your resume.

Attachments (Case Scenarios and Ethical Questions)

You’re the Boss

Directions: As a group, take the perspective of the boss and problem solve the following scenarios:

All level employees have attended a mandated sexual harassment training in the workplace. Bob continues to make rude remarks to all the women in his department. What should I do?

Betty was working in the plant when she caught her finger in a machine, causing a severe injury and a lost time Workers Comp claim. I have heard rumors that Betty had been smoking pot before she came to work. We have a “No Drugs in the Workplace” policy, what should I do?

When he is at work, Richard is one of my best employees. However, recently he has been late coming into work. What should I do?

I have been receiving complaints about John, who works in the finishing department. People around him say that he smells badly and it is difficult to work around him. He is a good employee, how can I tell him to practice better hygiene?

Linda, who is an excellent employee, has applied for a transfer to the Shipping and Receiving Department. The job includes lifting heavy materials and operating the fork lift. She is qualified to do the job, but that job should go to a man, after all, there are only men in that department. What should I do?
James applied for the position of Sales Manager. I had Human Resources check his references. It is difficult to read his application because his handwriting is so messy, so I am considering not hiring him because of this. Am I being fair?

I am facilitating our department meeting this month and the employees have been complaining about each other and are not getting along with one another. Some people are saying that other people’s ideas are not any good, other people are not completing their work. What should I do at the meeting?

**JA SUCCESS SKILLS**

Adapted from Junior Achievement Success Skills (2002). Junior Achievement, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado

**1. CONNECTING TO THE WORKPLACE**

**Ethics and you**

Ethics = Rules or standards, for right/good behavior or actions

Your group will work on one of the case studies below. Read the case and answer the questions on the next page. Select one group member to present your answers to the rest of the class.

**Case Study #1**
Your friend, Holly, confides in you that Mr. Leech, the yearbook moderator, has been criticizing her in front of the yearbook staff. Holly is ready to quit the staff because she’s tired of Mr. Leech calling her stupid and making fun of her. What should you do?

**Case Study #2:**
You usually wait outside your school for one of your parents to pick you up after basketball practice. Lately you observed two of your school’s cafeteria workers loading boxes of paper and food supplies into a van and driving off. You’ve seen this occur three or four times, and you suspect they may be stealing. What should you do?

**Case Study #3:**
Your friend, John, is a computer whiz, and the principal asked him to help enter some data into the school computer. Now John is bragging to you that he hacked his way
into the student grade reports. You don’t know if he has changed any grades or not. What should you do?

**Case Study #4:**
Your English class has a research paper assignment due tomorrow, and you haven’t started yours yet. While waiting in line, you overhear a student mention a great Internet site where you can download a completed research paper on any topic. You think this might be the solution to your problem. What should you do?

**Case Study #5:**
You work at an auto repair shop with a co-worker named Dante. Last week Mr. Perez, the owner, turned down Dante’s request for a raise. Dante told you, “Perez is going to be sorry he did this.” Today you arrive at work and find broken windows and graffiti on the walls. What should you do?

**Case Study #6:**
You and your two friends, Portia and Melanie, work in the same department of a large discount store. Melanie frequently shows up an hour late for work, looking tired and bedraggled. You and Portia have been covering for her, but your supervisor is getting suspicious. What should you do?

___________ CONNECTING TO THE WORKPLACE

**Ethical Questions**

1. What is the ethical violation (e.g., lying, stealing)?

2. Do you have enough information to act? If not, what additional information do you need?
3. Assuming your suspicions are true, who is at fault and whose rights were violated?

4. If you were the adult in charge (e.g., the principal or supervisor) what would you do to the violator once you found out the truth?