

Tree Troubles

Trend task

Approach: Team

Level: Year 8

Focus: Value positions.

Resources: Instruction card, opinion cards.

Questions/instructions:

In this activity your team is going to consider a problem that a school has with a tree in its grounds.

Your team needs to imagine that you are a special committee that has to help the Board of Trustees decide what to do about the tree.

Each member of your team will be given a card that tells them the role they are to play on the committee. One team member will be a teacher from the school, one will be a student from the school, one the school caretaker and one a Māori person who lives near the school.

The card tells you the opinions of the person you are representing. Your job is to present that opinion as convincingly as possible to the rest of the team. You don't have to say only what is on your card, but need to make a good case to convince the rest of the committee.

After you have done that, your whole committee needs to work together to decide what to tell the Board of Trustees - what should happen with the tree?

Here are the opinion cards for each of you and an instruction card to remind you what to do.

Assign a card to each student, show instruction card and allow time until students are ready (up to 10 minutes).

Now I would like one person from your team to tell me what this committee will say to the Board of Trustees.

Let a team member report back.

Does everyone agree with that? Is there anything else you would like to add?

% responses	
2001 ('97)	year 8

How strongly was the case presented for cutting down the tree?

very strongly	12 (27)
moderately strongly	30 (20)
weakly	32 (30)
very weakly	26 (23)

How strongly was the case presented against cutting down the tree?

very strongly	13 (20)
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Tree Troubles

1. Discuss the problem of the tree as a committee.
2. Each team member needs to give their opinion to the rest of the team. Give a good argument to try to get the rest of the team to agree with you.
3. Decide together what you would tell the Board of Trustees they should do with the tree.

Teacher:

The classroom feels dark and cold. Students would learn better if the tree was pulled out. The tree annoys me when it scrapes on the window.

Student:

All the students love this tree. They play in it and it makes the school grounds look good. It gives the playground shade on hot days.

Caretaker:

This tree is ruining the building. It is making the walls damp and is scraping the paintwork. I hate cleaning leaves out of the gutters.

Māori person:

This tree is very special because it is planted in memory of people who died in the war. It was given a special blessing by a Māori leader when it was planted.

		% responses	
		2001 ('97)	year 8
Overall, how strong was the debate?	moderately strongly	45 (37)	
	weakly	30 (20)	
	very weakly	12 (23)	
To what extent was consensus reached?	strong and vigorous	24 (33)	
	moderately strong	36 (27)	
	weak	27 (17)	
	very weak	13 (23)	
Overall, how strong was the debate?	strong and vigorous	24 (33)	
	moderately strong	36 (27)	
	weak	27 (17)	
	very weak	13 (23)	
To what extent was consensus reached?	very strongly	39 (33)	
	moderately strongly	47 (53)	
	minority dissenting	8 (7)	
	no consensus	6 (6)	

Commentary:

Most teams reached at least a moderately strong consensus, even though the cases for and against cutting down the tree often were not presented very strongly. Overall, the results achieved by the 2001 students were similar to those of the 1997 students.