

## Difficult issues – dialogue teaching



# Education for Sustainable Development Goals

**1** NO  
POVERTY



**2** ZERO  
HUNGER



**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



**4** QUALITY  
EDUCATION



**5** GENDER  
EQUALITY

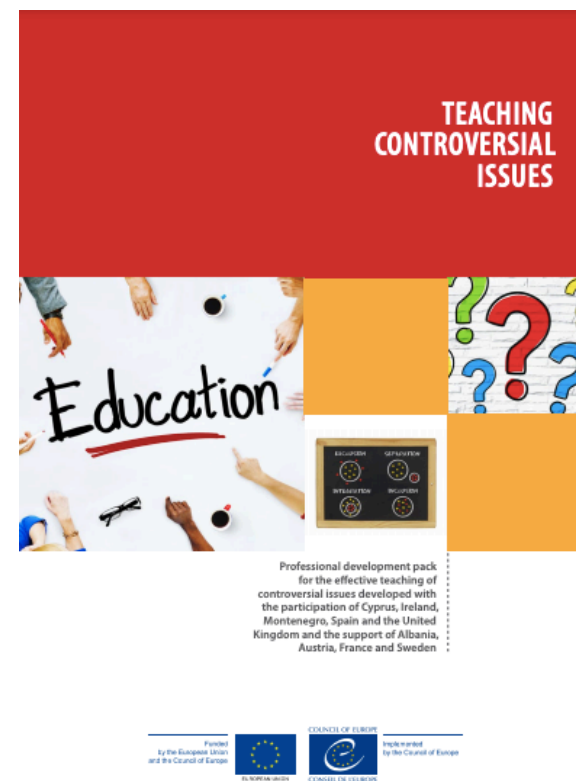


*You are checking your Facebook and you notice that a relative of yours has shared an article with racist content. It is not the first time this happens.*

- **What would you do?**
- **Have you had any similar experiences?**

## Controversial issues – what and why?

- Issues which arouse strong feelings and divide opinion in communities and society.
- They vary with place and time.
- They tend to be complex with no easy answers.
- Teaching controversial issues is part of the democratic process – it helps young people to develop some of the essential competences of democratic citizenship.



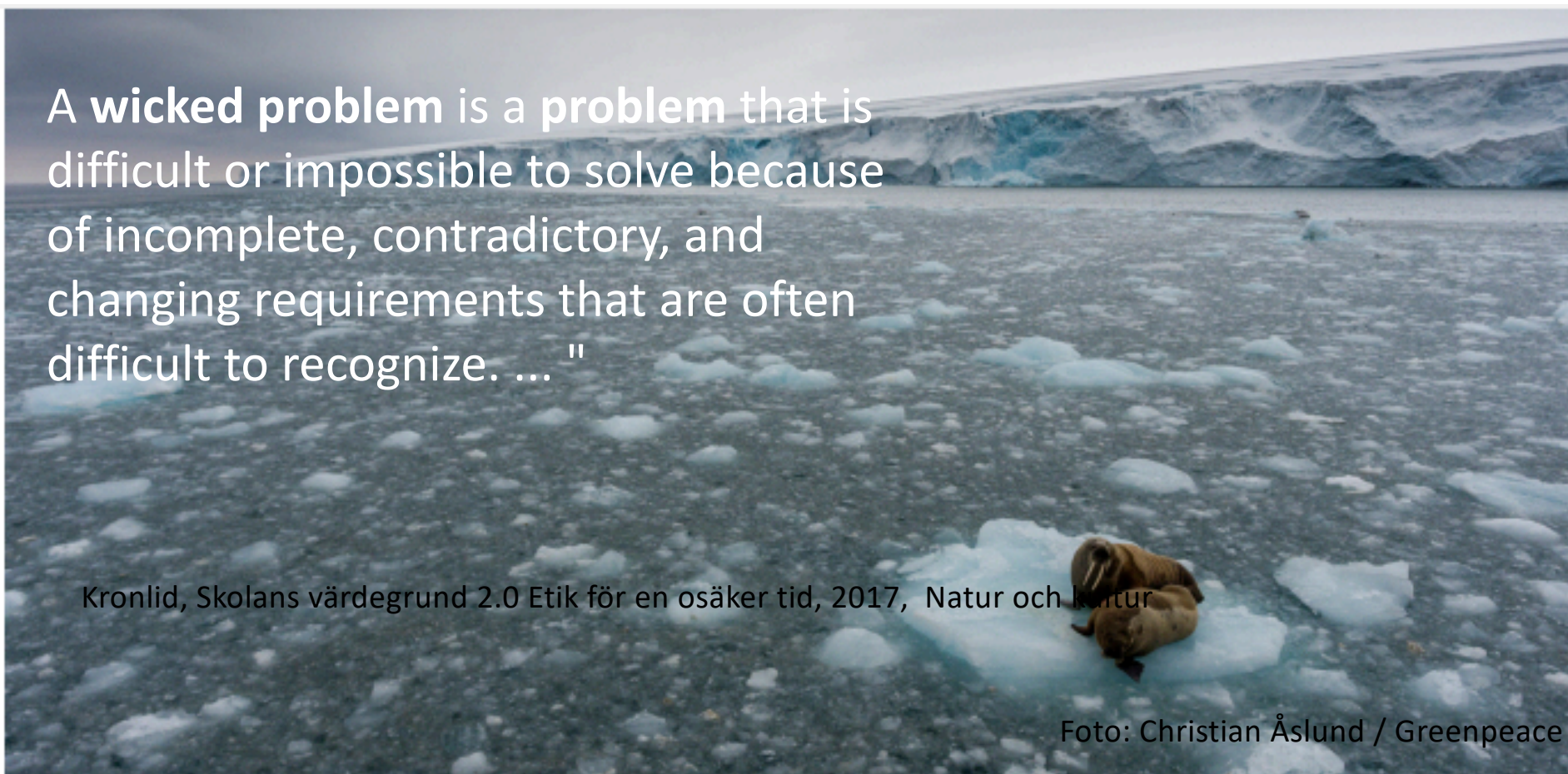
<https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/resources/living-controversy-teaching-controversial-issues-through-education-democratic-citizenship>

## Sustainability issues are often wicked and controversial

A **wicked problem** is a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. ... "

Kronlid, Skolans värdegrund 2.0 Etik för en osäker tid, 2017, Natur och Kultur

Foto: Christian Åslund / Greenpeace



**What issues are controversial in your classroom/context?  
Why are these issues controversial?**

## A non-confrontational approach

- Having a non-confrontational approach as a teacher and facilitator is often the most efficient way to deal with controversial issues.
- Thus, participants and students are encouraged to approach their problems in the context of a discussion, not a confrontation.
- Confrontation has proved to be counterproductive and harmful when difficult and sometime controversial issues are being discussed.

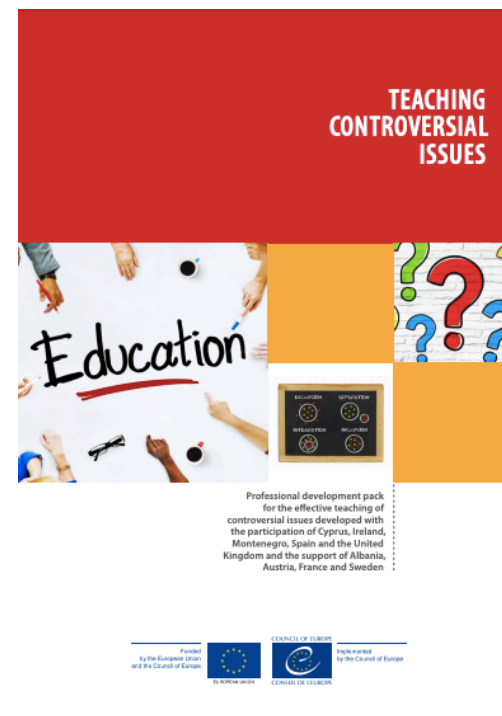
## Safe space

- When you think of your good conversations with pupils in school *what made them so good?*
- What methods/skills do you use in order to strengthen the dialogue and safe space in your classroom?



## The Classroom: “a safe space”

- Make the classroom a *safe space* where the pupils could speak freely and discuss issues that are relevant/meaningful.
- As an educator use strategies that create an open and respectful dialogue



<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806d8d5>

## SAFE SPACE - DIALOGUE

- 1. Thinking time** – encouraging pauses for thought. Remember to provide at least three seconds thinking time after you have asked a question and three seconds thinking time after a child gives an answer.
- 2. Think – pair –share** – allow individual thinking time about a question, invite discussions on the question with a partner, then open up for class discussion
- 3. Asking follow-ups** – ask children to extend or qualify what they said by asking questions that challenge their thinking such as ‘Why?’ ‘Do you agree or disagree?’ Can you say more? ‘ Can you give an example?’ Describe how you arrived at that answer
- 4. Encourage student questioning** – invite students to ask their own questions before, during or after discussion. ‘Has anyone a question about what has been said?’

## SAFE SPACE - DIALOGUE

5. **Withhold judgement** – respond to student answers in a non-evaluative way e.g. a positive but neutral response such as ‘Thank you’, ‘That’s interesting’.
6. **Invite the whole group to respond** – by saying things such as; ‘How many people agree or disagree with that point of view?’ (Hands or thumbs up, down or side) You can also ask questions such as ‘Having heard that, what questions might we ask?’
7. **Ask for a summary** – promote active listening e.g. ‘Could you summarise Kim’s point?’ ‘Can you explain what Jane has just said?’
8. **Invite a range of responses** – model open mindedness by inviting students to consider different points of view: ‘There is no single correct answer to this question. I want you to consider alternatives.’

## Paper folding activity

**Rationale:** When in a conflict situation, parties to the conflict can become convinced that their truth is the one and only truth. This exercise encourages participants to consider that one experience may lead to multiple interpretations.

### **Objectives:**

1. To understand the importance of viewing a situation from multiple perspectives.
2. To consider how understanding multiple perspectives relates to managing conflicts.

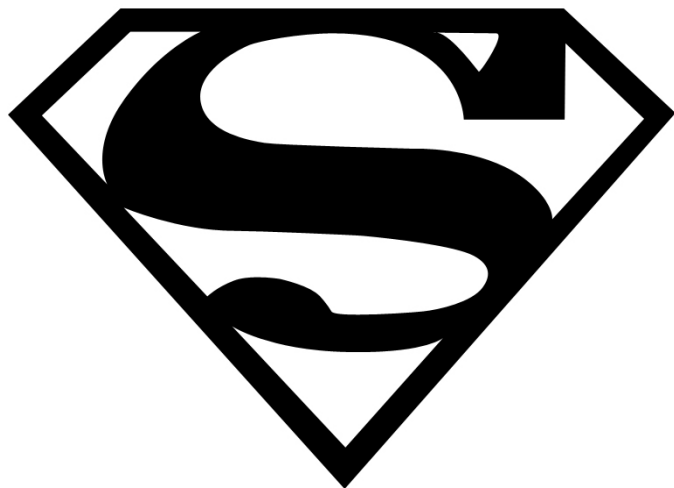
Read more: <https://www.usip.org/public-education/educators/paper-folding-activity>

## FOLD A PAPER

Open their eyes and hold the paper over their head so everyone can see it.

- What do you notice?
- How did you feel when you saw what your paper looked like in comparison to everyone else's papers? Did anyone think they had done the exercise incorrectly when they saw others' papers?
- How could there be so many interpretations when I gave everyone the same instructions? Was there one right way to do this exercise?
- Let's consider that the paper represents your opinion or perspective, what does the exercise tell you about perspectives?
- Why might it be useful to look at something in a different way or from a different perspective? What can we learn from looking at things differently?

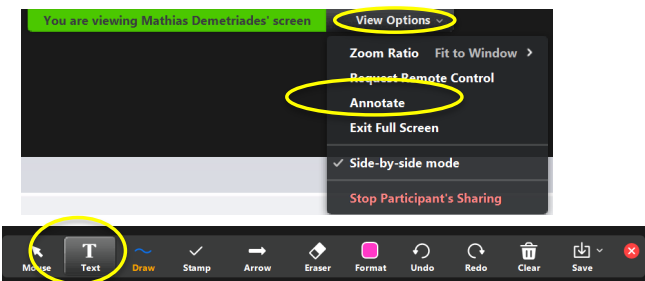
## My super woman – On whose shoulder do you stand....



1. Write down the name of a person who meant a great deal to you in your life, professionally and/or personally.
2. What is it that you appreciate with your role model? Mention a few things...

## What did the role model do?

- Use the zoom tool annotate and write here!



## What are your most important values?

1. What are your core values. Write down 10 of them!
2. Erase the 5 less important!
3. Remove 2 more!
4. Now you have your *three* most important values!



## What are your most important values?

- What do you feel about the values you have chosen?
- When you look back, have your choices in life been guided by these values? Give examples!
- What do you need to stop/start doing in order to live closer to your values?
- How do your chosen values come across in your professional life as a teacher?

## Critical thinking – to reflect upon one's values

**Critical thinking competency:** the ability to question norms, practices and opinions; to reflect on own one's values, perceptions and actions; and to take a position in the sustainability discourse.

*Education for Sustainable Development Goals. Learning objectives.*  
UNESCO, 2017



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**THANK YOU!**