

Considering intellectual freedom and censorship

Outcome: Students discuss internet censorship in the context of controversial web sites in order to consider the issues of intellectual freedom and differing points of view.

Curriculum: internet censorship, intellectual freedom

Learning Activities:

1. Visit the ALA Intellectual Freedom page and read the definition of intellectual freedom:
<http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/>
Students comment and state whether they agree or disagree. Instructor prompts "Can you think of any situations where this idea might be problematic?"
2. Students break into small groups and each group is given a "controversial" web site address on a strip of paper. Each site should be given to 2 groups. Web sites could be about hate crimes, extreme political views, religion, offensive music lyrics, or based on course issues. Student fill out attached worksheet on which they list 1) situations or circumstances in which the web site should be banned or restricted 2) any situations in which the site would be useful. The groups report back to the class.

Assessment:

Students complete web form with the question: Based on our discussion today, do you think web sites should ever be restricted? (yes, no, it depends) Give a reason why you selected that answer.

Criteria:

Student selects one answer and provides an explanation based on the issues discussed in class.



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With your group members explore the web site listed on the slip of paper given to you by your instructor.

1. List situations or circumstances in which this web site should be banned or restricted.

2. List situations where this web site would be useful:

Be prepared to report back to the class.