

Thoughts on cloning

Josée Bolduc, Collège Laflèche, and Lucie Bolduc, Cégep de Sherbrooke

This learning activity was developed as part of a College teaching certificate (CEC) at Université Laval. It was field tested during a practicum in the course Physiology of Living Things, which is part of the Natural Science program.

It requires three hours of class time over two periods and was carried out with groups of approximately 30 students.

This activity leads students to critically examine cloning and familiarizes them with the technical and theoretical elements of this area of biotechnology.

The introduction to this activity features the fictitious story of a woman, Mrs. Genolac, who wants to have one of her organs cloned in order to fight a disease. A text in the form of a newspaper article is given to students in an effort to give the case a real-life dimension.

Once they have read the text, the students consider the issue, take a stand, work in teams, read articles on cloning and do research on the Internet in order to be able to participate in discussions based on well-structured arguments.

Each team of students must defend the point of view of a specific sector of society that is involved in the debate on cloning. The groups are as follows:

- Scientists and/or doctors (for)
- Scientists and/or doctors (against)
- Mrs. Genolac's family (for)
- Church or pro-life groups (against)
- Industry (for)
- Psychologists (against)

The teacher's role is to guide the students in their learning by verifying their previous knowledge, distributing sources of information, pointing out other resources, observing whether their work methods are effective, helping them develop good work methods—research methods, for example—etc.