

Features of school science	Features of socio-scientific issues
Linear and straightforward	Complex and messy
Uncontentious	Contentious
Authoritative knowledge	Characterized by emergent knowledge
Teacher as authority figure in terms of knowledge	Teacher cannot claim to have solutions
Subject specific	Interdisciplinary
Asocial or socially decontextualised	Framed by social interests/Socially contextualised
Apolitical	political
Ethically neutral	Ethically-charged
Driven by theory	Led by data and tentative theorising
Hierarchical with scientist and teacher as experts	Dominated by groups with different types of expertise
Scientist as striver for objective knowledge	Scientists and others responsive to various socio-political interests
Closed	Open-ended
Non-emotive	Often affective

Table 5.2: Some of the main differences between substantive school science and socio-scientific issues