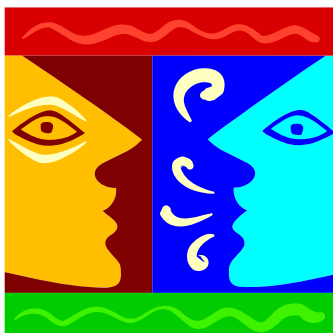


Teacher Notes: Team Deliberation



In a team deliberation, unlike a formal debate, there are no winners or losers. Team deliberation enables students to discuss an issue and to develop and apply cooperative learning skills. It encourages the consideration of diverse perspectives without creating an adversarial situation.

It is recommended that teachers, with the input of students, choose one or two particular skills to target during the activity. Prior to the deliberation, the class may develop a set of descriptors to help them focus on successfully applying these target skills

(e.g., "shows a willingness to reconsider his or her opinion when presented with strong evidence or arguments," or "attacks the argument, not the individual").

The following sequence of steps is suggested in carrying out a team deliberation. Teachers may adapt the procedure based on their time and the abilities of their students.

1) Propose a question that lends itself to a for-or-against position.

- The question may be selected by the teacher with input from students.
- The question must deal with a subject that is familiar to the students
- Information or sources must be available to support both the negative and affirmative positions.

2) Determine teams and roles.

- Place students in teams of four, assigning two students to the affirmative position and two students to the negative position.
- Allow time for students to gather information on their assigned position.
- Provide background information and guidance in assessing the validity of sources (e.g., useful Internet addresses, articles, editorials...).

3) Students prepare their initial statement or point of view.

- Students work with their partners to prepare a brief statement, supported by evidence and solid reasoning.

4) Student pairs present their statements.

- Each pair of students presents their position statement to the other pair in their team, sharing speaking tasks between the two of them.
- The "listening" pair of students note important points, without interrupting or commenting.

5) Student pairs switch affirmative and negative positions.

- Each pair of students changes position, and prepares a short statement in support of the opposite point of view from their initial statement. Positions must be supported by solid evidence and reasoning.

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6) Student pairs present their second statement of position.

- Each pair of students presents again, taking the opposite position. The “listening” pair notes important points.

7) Groups of four make a collective decision.

- Each group objectively examines both the affirmative and negative positions, summarizing the most convincing arguments and evidence for each point of view on the question. The group seeks to make a consensus decision as to which position they found to be most defensible.

8) Groups of four share their decisions with the class.

- Each group presents a short statement summarizing their position on their selected issue for the entire class.

9) Students evaluate their target skills.

- Each student evaluates his or her participation based on the descriptors of the targeted skills developed at the outset. The teacher may choose to provide the students with a rubric or scale, or may simply ask students to self-evaluate using comments.*



* Adapted from a strategy by Linda McDowell.