



FOUNDATIONS *of* DEMOCRACY

AUTHORITY PRIVACY RESPONSIBILITY JUSTICE

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL



2006 Youth for Justice National Teach-In

CENTER FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

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ABOUT THIS LESSON

This lesson is excerpted from the series Foundations of Democracy: Authority, Privacy, Responsibility, and Justice, middle school level. "Who Should get the Job?" is Lesson 4 of the Justice concept. © 2003, Center for Civic Education. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to freely reproduce and use this lesson for nonprofit, classroom use only. Copyright must be acknowledged on all copies.

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Lesson 4

Who Should Get the Job?

Purpose of Lesson

This lesson gives you the opportunity to use intellectual tools to decide who should receive the benefit of employment. You will examine an imaginary situation in which a newly elected mayor must choose one candidate for a position. Then you will be asked to give your opinion on the issue and defend it.

When you have completed this lesson, you should be able to explain how you have used the intellectual tools you have learned in evaluating, taking, and defending positions on the issue of distributive justice.

Critical Thinking Exercise

SELECTING SOMEONE FOR A POSITION

In this exercise your class will role-play the selection of a Special Advisor on Community Relations. Your class will be divided into five

groups. One group will be the mayor's employment panel, which makes recommendations to the mayor regarding employment decisions. The other four groups will represent the four applicants for the position of Special Advisor on Community Relations. All groups should read the following situation and complete the chart on page 4.

Each of the groups representing the four candidates should develop arguments to persuade the mayor's employment panel to recommend that group's candidate. The fifth group will be the mayor's employment panel. It will hear each group's presentation. Then it will decide who to recommend to the mayor. The mayor's employment panel should develop questions to ask members of the other groups. After hearing the groups' presentations and asking questions, the mayor's employment panel should discuss the candidates and decide who to recommend for the position. Finally, the panel should explain the reasons for its decision to the class.

What arguments can you make to support your group's candidate?



Who Should Be Selected as Special Advisor?

Alicia Olsen ran for mayor of Parkside and won. Parkside is a city of about 100,000 people. The community includes several ethnic and racial groups which have had some conflict in the past.

The mayor appointed a group of people as an employment panel to advise her on employment decisions. She was particularly concerned to get the panel's advice on filling the position of Special Advisor on Community Relations. The person given this job would be responsible for

- meeting with community groups to hear their concerns
- keeping the mayor informed about neighborhood problems
- recommending solutions to those problems
- carrying out programs to improve relations among different ethnic and racial groups in the community

A number of people made recommendations to the mayor about filling the position.

Alicia's campaign manager suggested the job should be given to someone who contributed time, effort, and money to Alicia's campaign for mayor. He said that loyal supporters should be rewarded for their efforts. Giving the job to a campaign supporter would be a good way to show her appreciation for the assistance she had been given. The personnel manager of the City of Parkside suggested the job should be given to someone with experience working with community groups, who had a record of successfully fulfilling the kinds of responsibilities the job required.

The president of a minority rights group reminded the mayor that prejudice had prevented members of minority groups from having a fair chance to work in key positions in Parkside government.



BILL SPANGLER was a newcomer to Parkside. For the past five years he had been a community affairs specialist in a neighboring town. In that job, Bill had developed citizen involvement programs, a "hot line" to the city hall for citizen complaints, and a program to train members of various ethnic and minority groups to fill positions in city government. He had a college degree in city management.



KIM VILLAS had been active for a long time attempting to secure equal rights for minorities. She had received the Parkside Citizen of the Year award for her efforts. She also was one of the most active workers in the campaign to elect Alicia.



CHARLES DALY was one of Alicia's strongest supporters and fund-raisers. He had supported her not only in her race for mayor, but also in other campaigns when she had run successfully for city council. Although Daly had little experience in community relations, he formerly managed the City Parks Department. While doing so, he developed several successful community recreation programs.



DOTTY VICKERS was one of Alicia's oldest friends and supporters. At one time, Dotty contributed \$5,000 to Alicia's campaign for city council. Since then, she had lost most of her money and she was very much in need of a job. She had 20 years of experience as a social worker in a large, nearby city before moving to Parkside.

He suggested that the job be given to a candidate who was a member of a minority group so that the interests of minorities would be represented. This would help make up for past discrimination against minority groups in city government.

Alicia finally narrowed the field to four finalists for the employment panel to evaluate.

Using the Lesson

1. Write a letter to Mayor Olsen stating who you would select for the job. Explain the reasons for your decision.
2. Interview adults who are responsible for hiring decisions. Ask them to describe the considerations they use in choosing among candidates. Compare their ideas with those you have just studied.
3. Working with your teacher, invite an elected official to class to describe considerations used in selecting persons to work in his or her office.

Intellectual Tool Chart for Issues of Distributive Justice

Questions

Answers

1. What benefit or burden is to be distributed?	
2. Who are the persons being considered to receive the benefit or burden?	
3. What important similarities or differences are there among the persons in terms of <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. needb. capacityc. desert (deserving)	
4. Which of the similarities and differences listed above should be taken into account in deciding who should receive the benefit or burden? Explain your position.	
5. Based on the similarities and differences you have decided to take into account, what would be a fair way to distribute the benefit or burden?	
6. What might be the advantages and disadvantages of doing what is fair? Would other values and interests be served by a different distribution of the benefit or burden?	
7. How do you think the benefit or burden should be distributed? Explain your position.	

Lesson 4 Who Should Get the Job?

Lesson Overview

Students apply the whole set of intellectual tools to a problem of distributive justice. They read a selection in which a newly elected mayor must fill an important position in city government. Students read brief profiles of four applicants for the position and apply the intellectual tools to develop a position on this issue of distributive justice. Finally, they role-play interviews with the mayor's employment panel during which they present arguments supporting the selection of one of the candidates.

Lesson Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students should be able to do the following:

- use the intellectual tools to develop and support positions on which applicant should be chosen to fill a position in city government
- explain the values and interests that underlie their positions
- evaluate various positions in terms of distributive justice and other values and interests

Preparation/Materials Required

A copy for each student of the "Intellectual Tool Chart for Issues of Distributive Justice" on p. 4 of the student text.

Optional: Invite an elected official to participate in the lesson with the class.

Teaching Procedures

A. Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students how they might use the intellectual tools to decide whom to hire for a position in city government.

B. Critical Thinking Exercise Selecting Someone for a Position

This critical thinking exercise involves the class in a role-play activity. Before introducing the role-play, post the following roles on the board:

- mayor's employment panel
- Bill Spangler
- Kim Villas
- Charles Daly
- Dotty Vickers

With the class, read the directions for participating in the critical thinking exercise, "Selecting Someone for a Position." Check for student understanding of the duties of the mayor's employment panel and the manner in which the role-play is to be conducted.

Have the class read "Who Should Be Selected as Special Advisor?" on p. 2. The selection lists the duties of the Special Advisor on Community Relations and describes recommendations to the mayor from her campaign manager and the president of a minority rights group. Ask students to identify the duties of the position; record their responses on the board. Ask students to identify the recommendations of the campaign manager and of the president of the minority rights groups; record their responses on the board. Ask them to identify the values and interests that each recommendation promoted.

Have the class read the portraits of the four candidates for the position of Special Advisor on Community Relations (pp. 2-3). Ask students to describe each of the candidates.

Divide the class into five groups representing the roles posted on the board. Distribute a copy to each student of the "Intellectual Tool Chart for Issues of Distributive Justice." Allow adequate time for the groups to complete the chart and to develop their positions on the issue.

C. Concluding the Lesson

At the conclusion of the role-play, have the mayor's employment panel share their recommendation with the class on who the mayor should appoint to the Special Advisor on Community Relations position.

Ask the members of the panel to offer reasoning that supports their decision. Record their responses on the board. Ask the class to answer the following:

- What kinds of similarities and differences among the candidates did the panel emphasize in reaching their recommendation?
- What relative weight did they seem to give to the considerations of need, capacity, and desert?
- What were the advantages and disadvantages of doing what is fair in this situation?
- What values and interests other than justice might be served by the panel's recommendation?
- In what way were the intellectual tools for distributive justice helpful in developing and taking a stand on this issue?

Have students re-read the "Purpose of Lesson" on p.1. Ask them to describe the extent to which they achieved the objectives of the lesson.

Optional Reinforcement and Enrichment Exercises

You may want to invite an elected official to the class to assist the groups in preparing their presentations. The community resource person might be asked to work with the mayor's employment panel and to participate with the class during the presentation phase of the activity. Be sure that the resource person is familiar with the intellectual tools for distributive justice.

The resource person may also participate in the concluding discussion to help students evaluate the recommendation of the mayor's employment panel and the process used for developing the recommendation.

Using the Lesson

The activities suggested in "Using the Lesson" on p. 3 reinforce or extend what students have learned about using the intellectual tools for distributive justice. You may have students work on these activities individually or in small groups. Activity number 1 can be used as a journal-writing exercise.