

MHCC Unit #1
Inquiry & Public Discourse & Decision Making
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Grade Level: 4th and 5th

Abstract: TLW identify and discuss public policy issues, selecting one issue to pursue for further research and development.

Primary standards and benchmarks addressed:

Standard VI.1.LE 1: Identification and analysis of issues

Standard VI.2.LE 1: Group Discussion

Standard VI.3.LE 1: Persuasive Writing

Estimated time to complete all components of lesson: 2-3 class periods of approximately 45-50 minutes each.

Materials needed:

Journal, chart paper, group discussion rubric, guidelines for journal writing, journal writing rubric

Procedure:

Day 1:

1. The teacher will introduce the concept of an issue of public policy as a controversial matter that some level of government may make a decision on and provide students with a few examples of public policy issues at the local and/or state level of government. Some examples might include:
 - Should school buses in Michigan be equipped with seat belts?
 - Should year-round schooling in public and private schools in Michigan take place?
 - Should Michigan consider the addition of new, official state symbols? (i.e. soda pop, insect, etc.)
 - Should all students in Michigan who take the MEAP have the opportunity to earn money toward attending school after graduation?

2. The teacher may then ask students to brainstorm a list of other public policy issues that are important to them at the state level of government. (These issues should be listed as “should questions.”) Once issues are listed on the board or chart paper, the teacher may initiate discussion about some of the public policy issues asking students to identify good points and bad points

about each issue and to determine why each particular issue may cause controversy.

Procedure:

Day 2:

3. The teacher will engage students in a group discussion to identify one issue for the class to further pursue. The teacher will begin by asking students to individually select one of the previously listed issues for further discussion. As students are explaining to their classmates their issue including their rationale for selecting the issue, the teacher will list the issues on the board or chart paper. Once issues have been listed on the board the teacher will ask the students, “What problem (s) may have led to or surround your issue?” Each student should identify at least one problem that caused their issue to be considered important. Once all sharing has been completed the teacher will then take the class through a process of narrowing down the list of issues resulting in one issue that is most important for the class to pursue. (If interest is not common among a single issue, students could be grouped in small groups based on their interest levels and could tackle one or two additional issues.)

Assessment for this activity: See Classroom Analytic Scoring Guide, Holistic Feature Scoring Guide for Group Discussion, and Group Discussion Scoring Table. (downloads)

Procedure:

Day 3:

4. The teacher will then ask students to construct a journal entry where they will write about one issue that they think is important in making Michigan a better state. The journal entry should contain the following components:

- ✓ A clear and supported statement of the author’s position.
- ✓ Support for the position through the reference and explanation of a **core democratic value**.
- ✓ Support for the position through knowledge from history, geography, civics, or economics.
- ✓ An explanation as to how the issue could be investigated further and/or changed.

(For reference, a journal entry assignment information page is included.)

Assessment for this activity: See journal writing rubric

Instructor’s Notes: It is important to remember that there are several connections to other social studies content areas that can be made during the implementation of this lesson. Connections to the “Six Themes of History and the Michigan History

Content Standards” are directly applicable to some of the current issues that students may pursue. Details of The History Themes Project and examples of each theme can be found on the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Department of the Treasury sponsored Michigan Epic website at:
www.michiganepic.org/historythemes/

Pivotal to any well-reasoned persuasive essay is the inclusion of a reference to and explanation of a core democratic value. A list of core democratic values can also be found on the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Department of the Treasury sponsored Michigan Epic website at:
www.michiganepic.org/historythemes/. Once on the site, click on the CDV icon for a list of the core democratic values as well as some excellent K-6 CDV lessons.

<p style="text-align: center;">Journal Assignment Issue Identification</p>
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You have engaged in a discussion with your peers about some issues that you feel are important in Michigan. Now, you need to write about an issue.

1. Select one issue that you feel is important in making Michigan a better state. (This might be one of the issues that was discussed in class or it could be an issue that you personally believe to be important.)
2. Write a letter to your State representative (your teacher can provide you with his or her name) explaining why you think your issue is important and your position on that issue. Be sure to include:
 - ✓ A clear and supported statement of your position on the issue.
 - ✓ Support for your position through the reference and explanation of a **core democratic value**.
 - ✓ Support for your position through your knowledge of history, geography, civics, or economics.
 - ✓ An explanation as to how the issue could be investigated further and/or changed.

**Journal Entry
Worksheet**

Dear _____,

Position statement—take a stand.

I believe.....

Support my position with a core democratic value

Support my position using what I know from history, geography, civics, or economics

Explain how my issue could be investigated further or changed

Restate my position (use “Therefore,” “In conclusion,” etc.)

Sincerely Yours,

Journal Entry

Holistic Scoring Rubric

Points	Description
4	<p>In order to receive a 4-point score, the entry must show evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ A clear and supported statement of the author's position on the issue.✓ Support for the author's position through the reference and explanation of a core democratic value.✓ Support for the author's position through knowledge of history, geography, civics, or economics.✓ An explanation by the author as to how the issue could be investigated further and/or changed.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ A clear and supported statement of the author's position on the issue.✓ Support for the author's position through the reference and explanation of a core democratic value.✓ One of the two remaining elements.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ A clear and supported statement of the author's position on the issue.✓ One of the three remaining elements.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ A clear and supported statement of the author's position on the issue.

CLASSROOM ANALYTIC SCORING GUIDE

Standard: VI.2				
Group Discussion		Later Elementary		
	Made a relevant statement	Applied core democratic values	Responded appropriately	Asked a pertinent question
Performance Level 4	Participated in the discussion by making many highly relevant, insightful, and complex statements throughout the discussion	Demonstrates an understanding of the competing core democratic values relevant to the issue under discussion.	Responded appropriately at all times and made a concerted effort to invite and acknowledge the contributions of others.	Asked in-depth questions that led others to think about different views directly related to the issue being discussed.
Performance Level 3	Participated in discussion by making relevant statements	Correctly applies at least one appropriate core democratic value to support their position on the issue.	Responded appropriately at all times.	Asked relevant questions that kept others on topic.
Performance Level 2	Participated in discussion but statements were only marginally relevant	Student alludes to a core democratic value but does not make a clear connection to their position	Responded inappropriately but made some appropriate comments.	Questions posed were either marginally relevant or inappropriate.
Performance Level 1	Did not make any relevant statements during the discussion	Student makes no reference to core democratic values, <u>OR</u> the value cited has no apparent connection to the issue under discussion	Responded inappropriately and made no appropriate comments <u>OR</u> did not take part in the discussion	Asked no questions <u>OR</u> the questions were irrelevant.

The student is responding **appropriately** when he/she exhibits one or more of the following behaviors:

- Invites the contributions of others
- Acknowledges the statements of others
- Challenges the accuracy, logic, relevance, or clarity of statements made by others
- Summarizes points of agreement and disagreement

The student is responding **inappropriately** when he/she exhibits one or more of the following behaviors:

- Making irrelevant distracting statements
- Interrupting
- Monopolizing
- Engaging in personal attacks

PLEASE NOTE: Performance Level 3 is the standard. The student is successful and has met the standard when he/she reaches Performance Level 3. Performance Level 4 is included for comparison purposes only.

**HOLISTIC FEATURE SCORING FOR
GROUP DISCUSSION:
GRADES 3-12**

Points	Description
4	In order to receive a 4-point score, during discussion the student must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate an understanding of core democratic values• Make at least 2 relevant statements• Respond appropriately at all times• Ask at least 2 pertinent questions
3	In order to receive a 3-point score, during discussion the student must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate an understanding of core democratic values• Achieve the performance standard on 2 of the remaining 3 elements
2	In order to receive a 2-point score, during discussion the student must <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieve the performance standard on 2 of the remaining 4 elements
1	In order to receive a 1-point score, during discussion the student must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieve the standard on 1 of the remaining 4 elements
0	In order to receive a 0-point score, the students' discussion will show no evidence of any of the elements associated with this standard.

PLEASE NOTE: This scoring guide is designed to be used with its corresponding Classroom Analytic Scoring Guide. There are four elements (features) to this task. The four elements are listed in the 4-point score description. To receive credit for the elements listed above, a student must reach or exceed Performance Level 3 (see Classroom Analytic Scoring Guide) for that element.

GROUP DISCUSSION SCORING TABLE

Question Discussed:

Date: _____

Discussion Time: _____ minutes

Teacher: _____

Students: #1 _____ #2 _____ #3 _____
 #4 _____ #5 _____ #6 _____

#1 #2 #3 #4 #5 #6

Student used core democratic values
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Student made a statement about the issue that was accurate and relevant
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Student asked pertinent questions
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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Responded Appropriately</i></p> <p>Invited the contributions of others Acknowledged statements of others Tactfully challenged the accuracy, logic, relevance, or clarity of statements made by others Summarized points of agreement and disagreement</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Responded Inappropriately</i></p> <p>Made irrelevant/distracting statements Interrupted Monopolized the discussion Engaged in personal attacks</p>
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Rating for Responded Appropriately

FINAL SCORE
