
Deliberative Democracy: Overview

What is Deliberative Democracy?

- Deliberative Democracy (DD) is a consensus model of decision making
 - Deliberation (*noun*): a long and careful consideration or discussion
 - Consensus (*noun*): a general agreement
 - **NOT** an argument (*noun*): a reason or set of reasons given with the aim of persuading others that an action or idea is right or wrong
- Deliberative Democracy in the classroom
 - Students act as science advisors on a current controversial issue or policy of public interest
 - Each group of students deliberates to arrive at a consensus on a science advisory statement

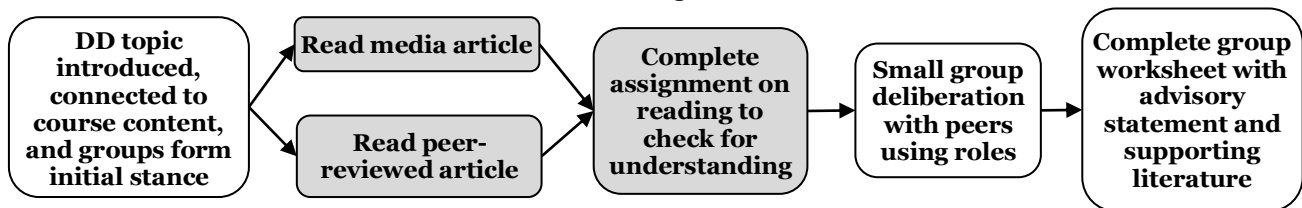
Goals of Deliberative Democracy

- During a Deliberative Democracy module, students will
 - Connect course content with real-world issues
 - Gain exposure to peer-reviewed scientific research and media depictions of scientific research
 - Engage in communication with peers about scientific topics
 - Understand the role of science in informing decision-making on real-world issues

Implementation Suggestions

Suggested Module Structure

Activities in shaded boxes can be done as out of class assignments.



Recommended Group Roles

Depending on class size and room layout, multiple roles can be combined to form smaller groups.

- Leader: Keeps group on task, focused, and moving forward
- Recorder: Fills out student group worksheet with help of all group members
- Spokesperson: Presents group ideas and summarized deliberation process during report-out
- Facilitator: Makes sure everyone speaks and that a single view doesn't dominate
- Summarizer: Pulls together discussion and helps to identify "big themes"
- Devil's Advocate: Makes sure minority views are kept alive and thinks outside of the box

Reporting Out

A critical component of a DD module is the report-out. Students are called upon to share their group's progress along the way as well as their final consensus statement. The spokesperson from each group is responsible for reporting out when the group is called upon. Suggestions for reporting out include:

- On day 1, groups report out to the whole class one question they need to answer in order to form their science advisory statement
- On day 2, groups report their final science advisory statement to the class
- While facilitating the activity, identify a few groups that have opposing advisory statements and ask them to report out to the class
- Toward the end of discussion, have the group spokesperson swap with a spokesperson from a neighboring group, listen to the group's science advisory statement, and report back to their own group