



High School

National FFA Organization

Lesson HS.81

DECISION MAKING IN GROUPS

Unit. Stage 3 of Development—WE

Problem Area. How Do We Play as a Team?

Precepts. **J3:** Practice sound decision-making.

National Standards. NSS-C.9-12.5 — Roles of the Citizen — What civic dispositions or traits of private and public character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?



Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will ...

- 1 Describe the benefits of making decisions within groups.
- 2 Identify strategies for arriving at group consensus and decisions.
- 3 Describe individual responsibility in making group decisions.



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Time. Instruction time for this lesson: 100 minutes.



Resources

Kouzes, J. M. and B. Z. Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*, San Francisco. Josey-Bass, 2002.



Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Overhead projector and transparencies
- ✓ Video of parliamentary procedure
- ✓ HS.81.Assess
- ✓ HS.81.TM.A–C
- ✓ HS.81.AS.A–D



Interest Approach

Overall, this lesson focuses on making decisions in groups. Some of the activities will be individual in nature, while others will involve cooperative learning.

Show a video of a parliamentary procedure contest. After the video segment, ask the following questions:

What is the significance of parliamentary procedure?

What is the basic reason for parliamentary procedure?

Intended point: the main answer to this question is that parliamentary procedure sets up an environment where ideas can be exchanged and a group decision can be made based on majority rule (all while still recognizing the rights of the minority--making sure that all ideas are explored). Similar strategies can be used in making other types of group decisions.



Great, thanks for sharing. As we can see, there are ways to ensure a fair and efficient model for group decision-making. There are many other benefits of making decisions in groups. Let's record a few of them in our notes.

How did the students in the video make a decision?



SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. Describe the benefits of making decisions within groups.

Provide the following information on the writing surface and instruct students to capture the information in their notebooks.

Use HS.81.TM.A to teach this portion of the lesson. Relate key terms given in student definitions to the definitions given below.

I. When teams and organizations make decisions as a group, many benefits accrue.

- A. More people become involved with the team's direction.
- B. More people "own" the goals and vision of the organization.
- C. The collective intellectual power and experiences of the group generate more ideas than if only one individual had done all of the brainstorming.
- D. If the group suffers setbacks, no one person can be blamed. All members of the team, because of ownership, may be held accountable for overcoming obstacles.
- E. Generally, teams generate better ideas than any single individual does.

Instruct the students:



Think about the benefits of making decisions in groups. This activity requires you to listen carefully, think creatively, and share your ideas with your team.

►Activity:

This is a leadership/team building/decision making exercise that will help us understand the effectiveness of working together to make a decision and solve a problem—a "whodunit!"

Divide the students into teams of six to eight people to solve the murder mystery. Use HS.81.AS.A–D to accomplish the activity.

Process/Rules:

- 1. Duplicate the murder mystery clues and cut each clue into a separate strip. OR, you may wish to put each clue on a separate index card. Place the clues in an envelope.**
- 2. Distribute one packet of clues to each group.**
- 3. Members are to distribute an equal number of clues to each person, without first looking at the clues.**
- 4. For the remainder of the activity, the clues are to remain in front of the person they were given to. At no time should all the clues be given to one or two people.**



5. Members must share the information with other group members by reading the clues aloud.
6. Given the information, members are to solve the problem.

Objective 2. Identify strategies for arriving at group consensus and decisions.



Think about strategies for arriving at group consensus and decisions. This activity requires you to listen carefully, think creatively, and share your ideas with the class.

Ask the class the following questions:



How can a group arrive at consensus and make decisions?

What are strategies for decision making that you have used?

If the class were given the opportunity to take a field trip next Friday to anywhere at no cost to students, where would you like to go?

Allow the students time to discuss the options, attempt to develop consensus, and make decisions about the field trip. In a moment, you'll find the entire class discussing this field trip



In order to participate, think about all of the decisions that need to be made regarding that field trip. In a moment, I'll ask you to share those decisions and we'll capture them on the board. After each one is listed, we will need to use consensus building to answer it. What questions are there?

Challenge the students to think of all angles and tasks associated with the field trip, making decisions on each.

Provide the following information on the writing surface, and instruct students to capture the information in their notebooks.

Use HS.81.TM.B to teach this portion of the lesson. Relate key terms given in student definitions to the definitions given below.

II. Teams can make decisions using effective and non-effective decision-making strategies.

When decisions are made correctly in the group, synergy builds. Generally, effective means of arriving at team decisions involves mutual respect and trust for all teammates.

A. Parliamentary procedure is an effective method for making group decisions.

1. The rights of the minority are respected and the decisions of the majority are upheld.
2. The use of parliamentary procedure allows all members of the team to voice their opinions.
3. Parliamentary procedure creates an atmosphere where the team makes decisions through democratic means.
4. Ideas and activities are presented one at a time for consideration and decision by the team.



B. Cliques or sub-groups of the team sometimes make decisions. While these specified individuals may have the necessary knowledge and skill to make a decision, the rest of the team feels no ownership, and thus, no motivation to turn the decision into action.

1. Cliques generally exclude some members of the team.
2. Cliques generally have an alternate agenda to the team's goals and vision.

C. Direct orders often come from the team leader. He or she may possess the knowledge and skill to make certain decisions that are necessary for effective teamwork. Sometimes the leader needs to make a decision quickly, due to the value of capitalizing on a fleeting opportunity.

1. Leader-led decisions generally exclude the synergistic effort of consensus.
2. Leader-led decisions generally have the best interest of the team in mind, but often overlook the feelings or attitudes of certain individuals within the team.
3. Leader-led decisions are often less desirable than team-led decisions.



Think about strategies for arriving at group consensus. This activity requires you to listen carefully, think creatively, and share your ideas with the class.

Use a Newton Moment to review this portion of the lesson. Ask students to think of their best “why?” questions after presented a new idea, concept, or process. Challenge students, one at a time, to share their questions, rapid-fire, and see if any of the other students can answer. If not, post the question on the board, but do not stop on it yet. Allow everyone to get their question asked, then go back to the ones that none of the students could immediately answer. See what questions can be answered now. Of those that are left, you can choose to answer or give them back to the class as an assignment or extra credit.

Objective 3. Describe individual responsibility in making group decisions.



Think about the individual's responsibility in making group decisions. For example, think about how a tiny CPU in a computer enables thousands of tasks to be completed simultaneously. It has a vital role among the many parts inside your computer. This activity requires you to listen carefully, think creatively, and share your ideas with the class.

Initiate discussion about individual responsibility in making group decision using a Rapid-Fire Moment. During the Rapid-Fire Moment, students select three class scribes to write all suggestions on the writing surface and one facilitator to direct suggestions to the individual scribes. For several moments, students generate as many ideas, questions, suggestions, or answers as possible—which are all recorded on the writing surface.

Provide the following information on the writing surface and instruct students to capture the information in their notebooks.

Use HS.81.TM.C to teach this portion of the lesson. Relate key terms given in student definitions to the definitions given below.

III. Often, some individuals in a team feel that, Because they are only one of the many on the team, some individuals often feel that their opinions, votes, or actions do not contribute or make a difference to the future of the team. Every individual holds all of the responsibility for the group's success or failure.

- A. The individual is responsible for casting votes during meetings.



- B. The individual is responsible for discussing ideas during meetings.
- C. The individual is responsible for sharing ideas.
- D. The individual is responsible for doing his or her part to accomplish goals and ensure the vision of the team.
- E. The individual is responsible for respecting the ideas of others.
- F. The individual is responsible for listening to others.
- G. The individual is responsible for supporting the team, its goals, and its vision.

Think about how a leader assesses the strengths of others. This activity requires you to listen carefully, think creatively, and share your ideas with the class.

Use a Hieroglyphics Moment to review this portion of the lesson. Students create small pictures to represent the information, concepts, or steps in a process. Each picture, or icon, should be unique and distinguishable from the others. Ask students:

What picture or icon will help you remember these pieces of information/concepts/steps in this process?

Review/Summary

Think about decision making in groups. We learned together how decision making in groups can lead to a better solution than just one person working alone, yet, we also discovered that the individual (recall the tiny CPU in a computer) has a very important role in the group decision process. The following activity will help us complete this leg of our journey.

Use a A and Q Moment to review the entire lesson. Students write the facts they learned under teacher-generated categories. In addition, students write the appropriate question for each fact. The teacher collects the facts, divides the class into teams, explains the procedure for the event, and facilitates a Jeopardy-type activity using the students' facts.

Application

Extended Classroom Activity:

Students take a class field trip to a school board meeting, local civic organization, or other business meeting to observe and report on group decision-making strategies and principles that were employed.

FFA Activity:

Instruct students to create placards for each FFA member to keep with them during the meeting that outlines the key points in making group decisions.

SAE Activity:

Students write a paragraph about how decisions are made concerning each student's SAE.



Answers to Assessment:

Part One: Completion

1. intellectual, experiences
2. blamed, ownership, accountable
3. minority, majority

Part Two: Short Answer

1. Parliamentary procedure is an effective method for making group decisions when the rights of the minority are respected and the decisions of the majority are upheld. The use of parliamentary procedure allows all members of the team to voice their opinions. It creates an atmosphere where the team makes decisions through democratic means. Ideas and activities are presented one at a time for consideration and decision by the team.
2. The individual is responsible for casting votes during meetings, discussing ideas during meetings, sharing ideas, doing his or her part to accomplish goals and ensure the vision of the team, respecting the ideas of others, listening to others, and supporting the team, its goals, and its vision.
3. Student answers will vary. Ensure that they employ some of the principles provided in the lesson.



DECISION MAKING IN GROUPS

►Part One: Completion

Instructions. Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. The collective _____ power and _____ of the group generate more ideas than if only one individual had done all of the brainstorming.
2. If the group suffers setbacks, no one person can be _____ and all members of the team, because of _____, may be held _____ for overcoming the obstacles.
3. Parliamentary procedure is an effective for making group decisions when the rights of the _____ are respected, and the decisions of the _____ are upheld.

►Part Two: Short Answer

Instructions. Provide information to answer the following questions.

1. Why is the use of parliamentary procedure effective in making group decisions.
2. What responsibilities does an individual hold in making group decisions.
3. How would you encourage decision making in groups. Write a detailed plan.



BENEFITS OF GROUP DECISIONS

◆ More people become involved with the team's direction.

◆ More people “own” the goals and vision of the organization.

◆ Collective intellectual power and experiences generate more ideas.

◆ All members of the team are held accountable for overcoming obstacles and success.

◆ Teams usually generate better ideas than any single individual does.



METHODS OF MAKING DECISIONS

Parliamentary Procedure

Clique or Select Few

Team Leader



INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY WITH TEAM DECISIONS

- ◆ **Casting votes during meetings**
- ◆ **Discussing ideas during meetings**
- ◆ **Sharing ideas**
- ◆ **Doing his or her part to accomplish goals and ensure the vision of the team**
- ◆ **Respecting the ideas of others**
- ◆ **Listening to others**
- ◆ **Supporting the team, its goals, and its vision**



HS.81.AS.A MURDER MYSTERY CLUES

Mr. Kelley had been dead for one hour when his body was found, according to a medical expert working with the police.

The elevator operator saw Mr. Kelley go to Mr. Scott's room at 12:25 a.m.

The elevator operator went off duty at 12:30 a.m.

It was obvious from the condition of Mr. Kelley's body that it had been dragged a long distance.

Miss Smith saw Mr. Kelley go to Mr. Jones' apartment building at 11:55 p.m.

Mr. Kelley's wife disappeared after the murder.

Police were unable to locate Mr. Jones after the murder; they discovered that he had disappeared.

The elevator operator said that Miss Smith was in the lobby of the apartment building when he went off duty.

Miss Smith often followed Mr. Kelley.

Mr. Jones had told Mr. Kelley that he was going to kill him.

Miss Smith said that nobody left the apartment building between 12:25 a.m. and 12:45 a.m.

Mr. Kelley's bloodstains were found in Mr. Scott's car.

Mr. Kelley's body was found in the park.



Mr. Kelley's body was found at 1:30 a.m.

Mr. Kelley's bloodstains were found on the carpet in the hall outside Mr. Jones' apartment.

When he was found dead, Mr. Kelley had a bullet hole in his thigh and a knife wound in his back.

Mr. Jones shot at an intruder in his apartment building at 12:00 midnight.

The elevator operator reported to police that he saw Mr. Kelley at 12:15 a.m.

The bullet taken from Mr. Kelley's thigh matched the gun owned by Mr. Jones.

Only one bullet had been fired from Mr. Jones' gun.

When the elevator operator saw Mr. Kelley, Mr. Kelley was bleeding slightly, but he did not seem too badly hurt.

A knife with Mr. Kelley's blood on it was found in Miss Smith's yard.

The knife found in Miss Smith's yard had Mr. Scott's fingerprints on it.

Mr. Kelley had destroyed Mr. Jones' business by stealing all his customers.

The elevator operator saw Mr. Kelley's wife go to Mr. Scott's apartment at 11:30 p.m.

The elevator operator said that Mr. Kelley's wife frequently left the building with Mr. Scott.



MURDER MYSTERY ANSWER

Mr. Kelley received a superficial gunshot wound from Mr. Jones at 12 midnight (when Mr. Jones shot at an intruder). Mr. Kelley later went back to Mr. Scott's apartment, where he was killed by Mr. Scott with a knife at 12:30 a.m. Mr. Scott was having an affair with Mr. Kelley's wife, and Mr. Kelley had destroyed Mr. Scott's business.

The leader of each group should conduct a discussion on what happened in the group while trying to complete the assigned activity. Examples of questions that may be used are:

- a. What steps did you use to solve the problem. Ask several groups. Were there several ways to solve the problem.
- b. Are there problems in your daily life that may be solved by more than one method.
- c. Did someone step forward to be a leader. How did that happen.
- d. Comment on the fact that everyone reached the same conclusion (as eventually they all do); however, each group had a different process.



MURDER MYSTERY

“Someone killed someone else somewhere in the city, with an unknown weapon sometime during the night for what he/she thought to be a very good reason.” It is now up to your group to work together with clues you’ve been given to solve the mystery.

You will be given a packet of 26 clues by the coordinator at the beginning of this project, after some verbal instructions have been given to you. Without reading the clues, a member of your group is to distribute an equal number of clues to each member of your group. The clues you receive may not be given to any other member of your group to read.

The clues are to remain in front of the person they were given to for the remainder of the activity. At no time should all the clues be given to one or two people to read or look over. However, you must share your information with other group members by reading the clues aloud.

Given the information, your group is to solve:

1. Who committed the murder.
2. Who was killed.
3. Where was it committed.
4. What weapon was used.
5. At what time was the murder committed.
6. Why was the crime committed.

Once you have established a fact, write that information on the Problem-Solving Sheet provided with these instructions.

You will be given approximately 30 minutes in which to complete this assignment. At the end of the time period, discussion will be held on the mystery.



PROBLEM-SOLVING SHEET

“MURDER MYSTERY”

1. Who committed the murder.
2. Who was killed.
3. Where was the murder committed.
4. What weapon was used.
5. What time was the murder committed.
6. Why was the crime committed.

