

Today's Challenges; Today's Leaders:

REAL WORLD CONVERSATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Lesson Number: **TCTL.2.1**

Understanding Advocacy

Quick Reference:

Time Required:

45 minutes

Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Define advocacy.
2. Contrast advocacy and lobbying.
3. Describe the characteristics of an advocate.

Materials:

- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Random items from the classroom- stapler, paper clips, eraser, coffee cup, markers, etc.(one item per student)
- ✓ Internet access
- ✓ TCTL.2.1.AS.A (one copy)
- ✓ TCTL.2.1.AS.B (one copy)
- ✓ TCTL.2.1.AS.C (one copy)

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the topic of advocacy and define the characteristics of an advocate.

Directions:

The bulleted information below is important to know as background information.

- This lesson is an introduction to advocacy and being an advocate. **Advocacy** is defined as: active support, especially of a cause. **Advocate** is defined as: 1) to support or recommend publicly; plead for or speak in favor of; 2) a person who upholds or defends a cause; supporter; 3) a person who intercedes on behalf of another.
- Individuals can become advocates on behalf of many causes. Some examples include legislative, child, consumer, health, lobbying and environmental advocacy.
- Often the term advocacy is connected to government and political matters. But individuals can be advocates for much more than just legislative issues. The term lobbying is often used when an individual attempts to influence legislation, but advocacy is not limited to just lobbying. Advocacy supports any cause an individual believes in and encompasses a wider variety of activities.
- Once an individual has a belief or a cause to support, there are characteristics that the individual demonstrates in being an effective advocate. Those characteristics include learning, listening, communicating, persevering, trustworthiness and focus.
- Each student will be driven to advocate for different areas depending upon one's beliefs, values and knowledge. Use this lesson to build an understanding for future lessons in developing the skills necessary to be an effective advocate.



After reviewing the information above, begin with the lesson activities below.

1. To begin the lesson, have the students work in pairs or teams. Instruct each student to practice being an advocate for a random item in the room (i.e., stapler, paper clips, eraser, coffee cup, markers, etc.). Tell the students that they are not attempting to “sell” the item but rather convince their partners/team of the importance of the item. Allow all students to have a chance being an advocate. If you have students that do a really good job, you may want them to demonstrate to the class.
 - a. Upon completion, ask the students what characteristics made the presentations effective or how they could have been improved.
 - b. Gather those ideas on a writing surface with the thought that the ideas will be brought back into the final section of the lesson.
 - c. Explain to the students that what they just engaged in was advocating for an item. This quick activity sets the frame of mind for the lesson.
2. Share with the students the dictionary definitions of advocacy and advocate found on TCTL.2.1.AS.A so that everyone is clear on the terms.
 - a. Ask the students to share times that they have been advocates. As the teacher, you may give a personal example of when you have been an advocate to get students thinking.
 - b. Discuss how there are many different issues that individuals advocate for and that they are surrounded by advocacy all the time.
3. One item that should be discussed is the difference between advocating and lobbying. Often the words are used interchangeably and may constitute a negative reaction. Use TCTL.2.1.AS.A to differentiate between the two and discuss the difference.
4. Bring back the list of effective characteristics that the students mentioned while describing their classmates’ attempts at advocating for the importance of the random items. The characteristics that the students mentioned probably overlap with the six characteristics that are on TCTL.2.1.AS.B. Attempt to connect the list the students gave with the final section of the lesson.
 - a. Show students the six icons on TCTL.2.1.AS.B. Each icon represents a characteristic of effective advocates.
 - b. Have students guess what each icon represents.
 - c. As they are guessing, provide the students with the terms and definitions found on TCTL.2.1.AS.C so they can record the information in their notes. Have the students draw the icon next to each term to aid them in remembering the characteristics.
 - d. Have students provide an example of a time when they have seen each characteristic demonstrated by an advocate.
5. At the conclusion, take a few minutes to have students watch the short clip of Mike Rowe, from the television show “Dirty Jobs,” discuss the importance of advocacy in agriculture to farmers and ranchers at the American Farm Bureau’s annual convention (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMkDMw3-pSI>).
 - a. Challenge the students to watch the clip and provide examples of the characteristics of effective advocates displayed or mentioned by Mike Rowe, Bruce Jackson and Janice Swanson.

- b. An example might include when Rowe discusses that agricultural producers need to remind everyone over and over again that food is not produced magically. This would be an example of demonstrating perseverance by the agricultural producers.
 - c. Jackson proposes that agricultural producers should get out and talk to at least four people in the community and beyond about their agricultural practices. This would be an example of communicating.
 - d. Swanson discusses making sure that the consumers know that the agricultural producers are “just one of them.” Meaning that the agricultural producer also consumes the same products and is concerned with health and the quality of food just like the nonfarming consumer. This would be an example of building trustworthiness.
6. Conclude the lesson with a quick final review of the materials presented.
- a. Ask students to repeat the definitions of advocacy and advocate.
 - b. Have one student describe the difference between advocating and lobbying.
 - c. Have the students recall the characteristics of an effective advocate by presenting the icons.
 - d. Future lessons will provide the opportunity for students to connect those traits with historical leaders and begin developing those characteristics within themselves to become effective advocates.

Connection Questions:

1. What are two areas that you would like to become an advocate for in your community?
2. Who is someone that you see as an advocate in your community? What characteristics does that individual demonstrate?
3. What characteristics of being an advocate will you need to become better at in order to effectively advocate for an issue in your community?

LifeKnowledge Connections**Precept(s) addressed:**

Awareness

E2. Perform leadership tasks associated with citizenship

Continuous Improvement

F5. Acquire New Knowledge

LK Lesson Suggestion:

AHS.40 – Becoming an advocate for agriculture and natural resources

Resource:

- advocacy. (n.d.). *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition*. Retrieved August 01, 2011, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/advocacy>
- advocate. (n.d.). *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition*. Retrieved August 01, 2011, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/advocate>
- Halperin, S. (2001). *A guide for the powerless – and those who don't know their own power: A primer on the American political process*. Washington, D.C.: American Youth Policy Forum.
- VanHaitsma, D., & Dillbeck, B. (2011). *Understanding advocacy*. Learning to Give: Points of Light Institute.

Key Definitions

Advocacy – active support, especially of a cause

Advocate – 1) to support or recommend publicly; plead for or speak in favor of; 2) a person who upholds or defends a cause; supporter; 3) a person who intercedes on behalf of another.

Advocating vs. Lobbying

Advocating includes any activity utilized to influence change in happenings or in the way another person thinks about something. It is an ongoing process that is rooted in relationship building, education, and action.

Lobbying is an attempt to influence specific legislation. It has legal definitions and guidelines that frame interactions with policymakers.

Advocacy is to support a cause you believe in through a variety of activities and *might* include lobbying. Lobbying always involves advocacy, but advocacy does not necessarily involve lobbying.

Characteristics of an Effective Advocate



Characteristics of an Effective Advocate

Learning – the advocate continually researches the issue and attempts to view the issue objectively

Listening – the advocate hears what others are saying and communicates an understanding of what is being said

Communicating – the advocate is able to clearly and persuasively articulate personal perspective

Persevering – the advocate is determined and remains firmly committed to the issue

Trustworthiness – the advocate values the need for being credible and honest to everyone involved

Focused – the advocate is passionate about the issue while speaking to others and promoting action