



Lesson 3 – Active Citizenship

Putting Democracy to Work Solving Local Problems

Introduction and Motivation:

Is Democracy a skill, like hitting a cricket ball, that you can improve with practice?

In the prior lesson, students learned to spot the steps of a democratic problem-solving approach. Are there problems here at the school or in town that you'd like to fix? How would you go about it?



SMART¹ Objective:

At the end of the lesson, the student will be able to: Apply the democratic process to develop an action plan to solve a local problem.

National Standards met in this lesson:

- ✓ The Ministry of Education’s mission statement calls on Bhutan’s schools to *“create the necessary learning space and opportunities to engage the genius and potentials of all the children and youth of the country in keeping with provisions of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan...”*, which this lesson does by introducing students to democratic skills necessary for action under Bhutan’s Constitution.
- ✓ Where appropriate, use this lesson to reinforce national grade-level curriculum and standards.

News Literacy concepts or skills to be incorporated

- ✓ Evaluating Evidence: In looking up facts on the problem the class selects, who has found weak evidence and who has found trustworthy evidence (such as data, descriptions or photos)
- ✓ Analyzing Sources: When researching the problem, were students able to find information from authoritative, independent people who provided verified facts as opposed to assertions?

Values/Life Skills:

The concept of GNH, coined by His Majesty the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, focuses national efforts by measuring four pillars: good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation.

This lesson develops student understanding of good governance and skills in democratic participation.

¹ SMART is an acronym that reminds us our lesson can be more effective if the objective is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.



Suggested Vocabulary:

- Democracy (look up definitions. It's an eye-opener!)
- Experience
- Expert
- Power
- Influence
- Political Pressure
- Constituency
- Partisan
- Principles
- Role Model
- Authoritative
- Independent (Self-interested)
- Players: Participant/Observer/Victim/Investigator

Teachers should explain and replace vocabulary words as needed.

Strategy for the lesson

(I do, we do, you do)

The Democratic Approach:

- ✓ Identify Problem
- ✓ Gather reliable information
- ✓ Identify and recruit allies
- ✓ Examine alternative policies
- ✓ Propose public policy, or
- ✓ State grievances to government representatives
- ✓ Develop an action plan to win official adoption of policy

Guided Practice: Teacher reviews the class's work from prior lesson: comparing and contrasting the stories of two Bhutanese groups or persons who solved a problem using the democratic institutions in place in the country.

Group Practice: Create a list of local issues or problems that affect students, then hold a vote to determine which one the class will tackle. This can include dangerous roads, lack of safe drinking water, leaky school roof, etc.

Independent Practice: Now students break into small groups to brainstorm solutions to the local problem of their choosing and then stand and present to the class their action plans. (Alternatively – Divide class into groups and have each group work with a particular issue.)



Pivotal Questions:

- During the Guided Practice, ask students if they themselves have used any of these democratic skills. What was hard about speaking up, writing a letter, asking for change, criticizing a decision, etc.
- During Group Practice: You answer the phone and it is the Prime Minister. He wants your advice. What one problem could he fix that would make people want to vote for him?
- After Independent Practice: When you were listening to presentations, what came up the most often? And what action was missing?

Lesson Summary:

(Best if there is at least one at the midpoint and another at the end)

- ✓ Drilling during discussion: “Quick! What are the steps of democratic action?”
- ✓ After presentations: Tell the story of a local problem solved democratically. As you do this, tick off on your fingers the steps that were taken.

Lesson extensions and connections:

Often bridges the lesson to future instruction and may, at times incorporate the original aim/problem. May be part of a final or concluding summary.

- Write to a school administrator with a full-class report on suggested solutions to the problem.
- Organize a service project to fix the problem, using the solution agreed on by the students.

Attachments, materials and sources:

To be collected by teacher