**Name:**

**Handout 1—Deliberation Guide**

History of Deliberation

Idiot (idiotes) was a term of reproach in ancient Greece reserved for persons who paid no attention to public affairs and engaged only in self-interested or private pursuits, never mind the public good. Puberty today refers to the transfer to adulthood from childhood but its origin comes from the word public and referred to the transition into public life from narcissistic pursuits. Democratic living is not given in nature, like gold or water. It is a social construct like a skyscraper, school playground or new idea. Democracy’s basic tenets include; individual liberty, equality, and popular sovereignty. Among those, popular sovereignty or self-governing is democracy’s defining attribute. Accordingly, there can be no democracy without its builders, caretakers and change agents: democratic citizens. These citizens are to determine the policy formation, direction of the public agenda, and size and scope of the government.

What Is Deliberation?

Deliberation is the focused exchange of ideas, and the analysis of multiple views with the aim of making a personal decision and finding areas of agreement within a group.

Why Are We Deliberating?

Thomas Jefferson famously said: “If we're going to have a successful democratic society, we have to have a well-educated and healthy citizenry.” Developing citizens capable of making rational decisions in public policy contexts means embracing individual differences, listening, avoiding egocentric or ethnocentric distortion, and acting as a change agent not spectators of policy formation. Consequently, democracy requires the idiot who has not yet met the challenges of puberty to throw off self-interest and think rationally as a part of the social community and transition to public life and become a citizen.

People must be able and willing to express and exchange ideas among themselves, with community leaders, and with their representatives in government. People and public officials in a democracy need skills and opportunities to engage in civil public discussion of controversial issues in order to make informed policy decisions. Deliberation requires keeping an open mind, as this skill enables people to reconsider a decision based on new information or changing circumstances.

Deliberation can lead to deep understanding of competing perspectives about controversial issues.

Deliberating Practice

To determine how rationally you approach a problem consider the following dilemma:

A woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1,000 which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: “No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it.” So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz have broken into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?

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Importance of Deliberation

Heinz's dilemma, used in [Lawrence Kohlberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Kohlberg)'s [stages of moral development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kohlberg%27s_stages_of_moral_development), provides a theoretical point of view in which it is not important what the participant thinks that Heinz should *do*. Kohlberg's theory holds that the justification the participant offers is what is significant, the *form* of their response.

Lawrence Kohlberg reasoned that frequent extended involvement in discussion of genuine value conflict would promote development along the various stages. To move along the stages of development, however, Kohlberg believed that the discussion group needs to be free of coercion and must have exposure to reasoning and social perspective different from their own, thereby increasing the likelihood of genuine exchange of intellectual conflict.

If a man’s conduct and discourse ceased to be politic, it became “idiotic”-self-centered, disregarding his fellow man, inconsequent in itself, and without consequence. The contrast between the self-centered individual (the “idiot”) and the public actor (the “citizen”) is what we will work on through continuous debates and discussions in this class. “Minds must be improved to a certain degree” as Thomas Jefferson said or “developed” as Kohlberg says. Debate and discussion will help us accomplish these goals.

**Other Reasons To Deliberate**

In a back-to-school commentary published in *The New York Times*, Gerald Graff, the well-known University of Chicago scholar, offered some advice to college students. “Recognize that knowing a lot of stuff won’t do you much good,” he wrote, “unless you can do something with what you know by turning it into an argument.

Indeed, researchers say, the ability to argue is getting fresh recognition as a skill that is vital to success in college and the workplace. But logical arguments differ from the kinds of emotional arguments families experience, experts say, and most students possess only weak knowledge of how to recognize, understand, and construct one.

Ms. Britt, in [her own studies](http://gradstudents.wcas.northwestern.edu/~mjl578/LarsonBrittLarson.pdf) of high school and college students, has found that they were able to identify the main claims and reasons in an argument only 30 percent of the time. In 16 percent of the errors, students mistakenly identified the counterclaim as the main argument.

Students have an even harder time when it comes to identifying the perspective of the other side and marshaling evidence to weaken that opposing argument, according to Deanna Kuhn, a professor of psychology and education at Teachers College, Columbia University, who has been studying the development of children’s argumentation skills since the 1980s. More often, she said, students exhibit what researchers call the “my-side bias” in their arguments.

“What they tend to do is give all the reasons supporting their side and absolutely ignore the alternative,” Ms. Kuhn said. “They say what they have to say, and then say it louder, and hope the other side will go away.”

Another hurdle in improving such skills, Ms. Kuhn wrote in her 2005 book *Education for Thinking*, is that students aren’t necessarily disposed to see the value in arguing, especially as they reach adolescence. She wrote that teenagers will say, “There’s no point because you’re not going to get anywhere,” or “Everyone has a right to think what they want to.” Faced with a practical dilemma, they also tend to favor solutions that incorporate both sides, compromise, or defer to the opposing side.

“Children need to learn that argument is more than something to be avoided,” she wrote in a paper published last year on the project. “This understanding is not intuitively given.”

Now let’s see what stage you fall on Kolberg’s scale. Below are some of many examples of possible arguments that belong to the five stages Remember, we are hoping to improve our debating skills in this class, rationale thinking and hopefully move you along this scale.

**Stage 1:** (*obedience*):

---An individual is behaving rightly is she is obedient and escaping punishment.

 ---Decisions are based on consequences of actions. **“Will I be punished?”**

**Stage 1:** **Heinz's Dilemma**

---Heinz should not steal the medicine because he will consequently be put in prison which will mean he is a bad person **Or:**

---Heinz should steal the medicine because it is only worth $200 and not how much the druggist wanted for it; Heinz had

 even offered to pay for it and was not stealing anything else.

**Stage 2:** (*self-interest*):

 ---An individual can take the perspective of another person, but only in the limited sense of fair exchange. Here, two wrongs

 can indeed make a right, and is compelling logic. Common among children in middle school (and not that rare in adults),

 stage two morality compels us to do what is necessary to please *ourselves*.

---Decisions are made on the benefits derived from the actions. **“Will I get what I want?”, “What’s in it for me?” “You scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours”**---Decisions are also based on reciprocity, slogans of fairness according to a stage two reasoned.

  **”Does the victim deserve it?” “An eye for an eye”-**---The fundamental goal at stage two is to maximize personal gain and to minimize losses in any interaction with

 others. Greed, self-protectiveness, and opportunism are part of this way of thinking.”

**Stage 2:** **Heinz's Dilemma**
---Heinz should steal the medicine because he will be much happier if he saves his wife, even if he will have to serve a prison

 sentence. **Or:**

---Heinz should not steal the medicine because prison is an awful place, and he would more likely languish in a jail cell than over his wife's death.

**Sage 3:** (*conformity*):

---Moral decisions are determined by evaluating the actions in terms of love and the approval of family and friends. A view

 that is bound up with what others think including; peers and family members, the neighbors, the people at church or

 temple, youth group members, and adult mentors.

---Peer pressure and the drive to conform govern one’s view of right and wrong.

---Right action is that which pleases others and is approved by them.

 **“good boy/good girl morality”, “Will my family or friends get mad at me?”**

**Sage 3:** **Heinz's Dilemma**

---Heinz should steal the medicine because his wife expects it; he wants to be a good husband. **Or:**

---Heinz should not steal the drug because stealing is bad and he is not a criminal; he has tried to do everything he can

 without breaking the law, you cannot blame him.

**Stage 4:** (*law-and-order*):

---Moral decisions are based on the precepts of law and/or religion.

---The reference point shifts from the peer group to abstract, imagined groups such as “my country” or “humanity.”

 **“Is it right according to the law?”
Stage 4:** **Heinz's Dilemma**

---Heinz should not steal the medicine because the law prohibits stealing, making it illegal. **Or:**

---Actions have consequences.

**Stage 5:** (*human rights*):

---Moral decisions are based on fairness, justice, and truth. Oftentimes, civil law is superseded by a highest moral law as

 determined by conscience.

 **‘Is there a higher good that come from the action I do?”**

**Stage 5:** **Heinz's Dilemma**

---Heinz should steal the medicine because everyone has a right to choose life, regardless of the law. **Or:**

---Heinz should not steal the medicine because the scientist has a right to fair compensation. Even if his wife is sick,

 it does not make his actions right.

**What stage did your response to the dilemma place you? Explain why.**

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**Civil Discourse-This is the heart of democracy-to be able to give your opinion and to listen to others present their own.**

* Think about whether or not a law or policy advanced a legitimate government interest. Laws and punishment are designed:
* to DETER others from engaging in such behaviors
* to express societies MORAL OUTRAGE against certain behaviors
* to REHABILITATE a member of society to get help for unhealthy behaviors
* to seek RETRIBUTION for victims by providing punishment for the perpetrator
* to protect society through INCAPACITATION of the perpetrator
* to address RESTITUTION by ensuring the perpetrator pays back the victim to make them whole again
* What interests are at stake?
* Democratic Challenge: How do we protect society from one another but not infringe upon one’s rights.
* Think about
* Power, authority and legitimacy
* Undue burden
* Arbitrariness of the law—i.e. school bullying law (hurt feelings?)
* Does the law create a “chilling effect”
* Remember that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Are you giving the government too much power over an area you disagree with but could also be used against you?
* How far do you give government power? Fitbit to track movement and tax you if you do not exercise since society pays for your healthcare?
* Does the action address or solve a problem or is the solution create more of an issue than the original problem
* Think of the *Law of Unintended Consequences* i.e. bicycle helmets, screw caps on medicine, etc.

**Items to Think about when Discussing**

* Respect one another’s right to speak in class and give one’s opinion in an atmosphere free of judgement. Last year students felt they were respected by their teacher but less so by their peers.
* You have no right not to be offended-listen to what others say and do not silence their view, instead convince them why they are wrong.
* Political correctness was used by the communists to get everyone to conform to communist political orthodoxy. Do not require your peers to be in lock step, but do require them to validate their reasoning. After all, you have a right to your opinion but not to your own facts. If you cannot validate an opinion, it’s not worth of class time.
* You have a lot to offer your classmates, do not deprive them of your personal outlook shaped by your unique life experiences.
* Are my arguments furthering clarification on this issue and based on verifiable fact rather than
* An anecdote that could be the exception to the rule and not the rule
* Is it true or a restatement of a false fact-Churchill quote about lies crossing the globe
* An ad hominem attach

**When debating/discussing, remember to:**

* Be respectful of everyone’s opinion. The very essence of a democracy is respect for not just those opinions that agree with our own but those we most vehemently disagree with. i.e. religion, gun rights, abortion rights, capital punishment, etc.
* Stay focused to the question at hand.

Direct discussion towards the class as a whole, not a single individual nor the person making the argument.

* Try to restate the position of the person before you share your idea.
* Stand when you agree with what is being said and lightly tap the desk when you disagree with the speaker.
* Raise your hand when you would like to speak and wait to be called and keep quiet in the peanut gallery.
* If you want to talk on the issue, use your spine and talk about the issue with the class, not just those friends around you.
* Get out of your comfort zone and learn to speak in front of a crowd. Don’t deprive your classmates your unique life experiences and outlook.
* Get the most out of the class by being involved in the class discussion, not your side conversation.