

What to Do, What to Do?

Practice in Making Decisions

Relates to Drama and Language Arts (oral and written language)

Objectives:

The students will learn and practice a decision-making process.

Time:

approximately 45 to 60 minutes

Materials:

the IDEAL decision-making process written on the whiteboard (see below); one copy of the experience sheet, “Make an IDEAL Decision” for each student; decision situations (see next page) written on index cards or slips of paper (enough for each small group to have two situations — duplication is okay); pencils

Directions:

Begin by asking the students to make some “quick decisions:”

- *Would you rather have a hamburger or a hot dog?*
- *Would you rather go to the beach or an amusement park?*
- *Do you want to wear a red shirt or a blue shirt?*
- *Would you rather do math or reading?*

Explain that these are examples of simple, quick decisions we all make daily.

Next, ask the students to think about decisions they have made so far today. These might include what clothes to wear, food to eat, or route to take to school; what games to play, whom to play them with, what book to read at school, etc.

Point out that the more important a decision is, the more care is required in making a final choice. Introduce and explain the IDEAL decision-making process. Illustrate the process using a familiar example, such as deciding what gift to buy for a friend. Write all of your thoughts and alternatives on the whiteboard adjacent to these steps:

Identify the problem or issue to be decided.

Describe the possibilities. (What choices do you have?)

Evaluate your ideas. (Ask, “What could happen if I make this choice?”)

Act. (Make a decision and act on it.)

Learn from the decision. (Evaluate the results of the decision.)

Next, give the students a chance to practice this concrete, easy-to-remember model. Have them form teams of three to four. Distribute the “Make an IDEAL Decision” experience sheets.

Give two decision situation cards to each group. Announce that the groups will have 20 minutes to make both decisions, following the IDEAL process. Tell them to complete their experience sheets in the process. Since the students cannot actually evaluate their decisions (final step), they should describe how they would evaluate them if the situations were real.

Decision Situations:

1. You received incorrect change while shopping. Decide what to do.
2. Several of your friends have gotten trendy haircuts recently. You want one too, and have the money, but your parents don’t like the haircuts at all. What do you do?
3. Your older brother wants to borrow your new T-shirt, but last time he borrowed a shirt, he returned it stained. What is your decision?
4. You love chocolate, but frequently get a headache when you eat it. Your friend offers you a brownie with fudge frosting. What do you do?
5. You want to be in the band, but it would conflict with participating in sports during part of the year. What do you do?
6. Your friend’s parents are not home. The friend gets into the liquor cabinet, opens a bottle of wine, and offers you some. What do you do?
7. You and a couple of friends are shopping. You see one of your friends steal a CD. What do you do?
8. You invite a friend to go with you to the movies. In the afternoon, the friend calls and says he or she was invited to spend the night at another friend’s house. What do you do?

Have the groups explain their decisions to the class. After each report, ask several open-ended questions to stimulate discussion.

Discussion Questions:

1. *How did the “IDEAL” process help you in making a decision?*
2. *What was the hardest part about using it?*
3. *How well did you work together as a group?*
4. *What can you do when you find that a decision isn’t working?*

Extension:

Have each group write a simple play to dramatize their decision. Allow the students to present their play in the Reader’s Theater style, holding and reading from their scripts throughout the dramatization.

Make an IDEAL Decision!

Experience Sheet

Decision Making Step	Situation 1	Situation 2
<p>Identify the issue to be decided or problem to be solved.</p>		
<p>Describe all choices, possibilities and alternatives.</p>		
<p>Evaluate the choices by considering the consequences of each.</p>		
<p>Act on the alternative that has the best chance of succeeding.</p>		
<p>Learn from the decision by evaluating the results.</p>		