



TEACHING ELECTIONS

Reflections from the classroom



- When I taught about elections, I taught about the process, but also the foundation, the thought process, and the sociological adventure.
- These are MY thoughts -- if any are both new and are worth stealing, feel free -- but you know your curriculum, your goals, and your students.
- Want more ideas? Ask us. Want lots of resources? Wait 5-10 minutes.

When I think ELECTIONS, I think of:



- One-person, one-vote is what we have , but it isn't what we HAD to have. Other forms of government? How old are societies vs. how old is democracy? Why not a pure democracy, rather than representative democracy?
 - How to decide what movie we watch for a special day in class vs. how movies are decided at home.
 - On the playground, who makes the rules, and who has a say?

When I think ELECTIONS, I think of:



- What happens when someone DOESN'T vote, or pay attention to what laws are passed, or care what happens to their neighborhood? What's the difference between acting before things happen to you and trying to act after they happen?
 - Fractions: Smaller denominator means every vote is more powerful.
 - Have you ever told someone who asked you for your vote/thoughts/opinion that you don't care-or they should decide- and then regret it because they chose something you didn't like?
 - When we voice our opinions, how hard is it to think about the future? (Answering to "What do you want for dinner?" when you aren't yet hungry.) How hard is it to consider others?

When I think ELECTIONS, I think of:



- Civil conversations. Discussing topics that inspire passion with kindness. Listening rather than setting up a counter argument. Do you want to understand the perspective of others, or do you want to win? Asking questions to learn about others' beliefs.
 - What does a kind disagreement get you that an angry, closed-minded , hurtful disagreement does not? (Keeping the friendship after.)
 - When you argue, is it hard to focus on the IDEAS, and not the person, or anything outside of the ideas?
 - Have you ever used language when angry that you didn't mean? How hard is it to apologize? Do they ever really forget? What does it do to the relationship?

And one more slide about civil conversations



DEBATE

- Expert position
- Scrutiny
- Constituents
- Winning
- Conviction

DIALOGUE

- Own experiences
- Safe space
- Everyone
- Understanding
- Uncertainties

Small group discussions:



- Why is talking and listening to each other important for students?
- What skills can students learn from dealing with controversial or divisive issues?
- When you are teaching about a divisive issue, what is your goal for students?
- What role does school play in helping students deal with controversial issues?



Questions?

Michael.Wall@ymcanorth.org

Interested in more information on THE Minnesota statewide mock election for your school? [See more HERE.](#)

Sign up for Students Voting [HERE.](#)