

Objective

To introduce multiple perspectives on a situation within a large group in order for them to engage in meaningful conversation on controversial topics

Risk Level: Intermediate

Cautions: Statements that will be read aloud are somewhat controversial in order for students to really engage within the activity and a level of maturity is required for the activity

Description: Students will draw a scenario from the “fishbowl” to discuss. The scenario will be read aloud and each group of students will play a different stakeholder in the scenario and will be asked to discuss and then report their opinion back to the group at large.

SCM: Citizenship, Common Purpose, Collaboration, Controversy with Civility, Consciousness of Self, Congruence, Commitment

Time: 30-60 Minutes

Materials: Fishbowl of Controversy Activity Sheet, Fishbowl/Jar, Scenarios on paper (to be drawn by students)

Preparation: Review of the activity and an understanding of the debrief

Instructions

1. Facilitator will cut out scenario’s attached below and place them in a jar/bowl
2. Facilitator will divide the students into groups of 5 and a scenario will be drawn for the students to discuss.
3. Facilitator will then assign each group a “stakeholder” role for the scenario that aligns with that scenario (see attached sheet below
4. Groups will be given 10 minutes per scenario to discuss and 1 minute to report out their opinion on the scenario
5. After this process has been completed for all of the scenario’s attached, the facilitator will lead the debrief with the questions included in this activity sheet

Notes:

Follow Up: Facilitate the following questions:

How were you able to determine the values or perspective of your stakeholder?
How difficult/easy was it for you to take on the role of the stakeholder and view the scenario from their perspective rather than your own?

What did you assume about the person/people you were asked to represent?
What did you learn from viewing a scenario from a different perspective?
While working through your scenario, how did you utilize controversy with civility?
Did you find yourself engaging in debate? If so, what could have prevented you from reaching your goal of controversy with civility

Scenario 1: At Montgomery University, the Student Center's exterior is currently under renovation. The renovations has led a group of students to realize that their campus is poorly equipped to accommodate the needs of those with differing physical abilities. Specifically, there is not a ramp for those who may be in a wheel chair to get in and out of the main entrance of the building. A reporter from the campus newspaper interviews the students, causing a stir, however the University will not change the plans for the building:

Scenario 1 Stakeholders: students, students with disabilities, University administration, campus newspaper, Facilities management.

Scenario 2: At The College of Rickels, a group of concerned students are trying to make the College more sustainable by petitioning the College's Food Services to use alternatives to styrofoam for to-go meals. Food Services have offered to change to biodegradable to-go packaging, however this change would cause meal plan prices to increase to fund the project. Some students already feel their meal plan cost is too high.

Scenario 2 Stakeholders: students who want to be more sustainable, students who feel meal plan cost is too high, Director of Food Services

Scenario 3: At Russell College, members of the LGBT student organization have requested that the Residence Halls provide students with unisex bathrooms rather than gender-specific bathrooms. A transgender student, born female but identifying as male, was bullied by male students for using the "wrong" bathroom, and female students feel "uncomfortable" with a male using their bathroom. The Director of Residence Life is leaning towards denying the LGBT student organization's request.

Scenario 3 Stakeholders: Transgender student, LGBT student organization members, The Director of Residence Life, residence hall students who support unisex bathrooms, residence hall students who do not support unisex bathrooms.

Scenario 4: At Walters State University, each year students celebrate Walters Day, the University's founding date. However, in recent years the celebration has been more about drinking and partying than understanding the University's history. Last year, a student attending Walters Day festivities was assaulted and raped near campus. The administration wants to cancel the event but a number of wealthy alumni donors are pressuring the President to keep the tradition. The Student Government has been asked to support the University administration's decision, however the Student Government president does not agree.

Scenario 4 Stakeholders: University administration, the President who is feeling pressured to keep the event, wealthy alumni who want to celebrate Walters Day, the student and the family of the student that was assaulted last year, Student Government president.

