Instructional Unit Title: Take a Stand

Colorado's District Sample Curriculum Project
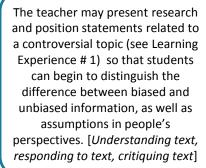
The teacher may introduce a "controversial" topic (e.g., the use of hormones in cattle, genetically modified organisms) so that students can discuss and identify the issues of justice/injustice related to this topic.

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The teacher may present research and position statements related to a controversial topic (see Learning Experience # 1) so that students can begin to distinguish the difference between biased and unbiased information, as well as assumptions in people's perspectives. [*Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text*]

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The teacher may introduce/utilize a school-related controversy (e.g., school uniforms, school bullying policy, food in classrooms) so that students can begin collaboratively exploring and identifying the "sides" and perspectives related to this topic.

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The teacher may use examples of productive group work and group roles so that students can begin to understand the relationship between collaborative (research) processes and effective group functioning.
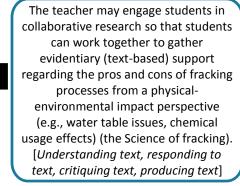
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The teacher may facilitate a debate and consensus building activity (e.g., a Structured Academic Controversy) around the school controversy so that students can experience and determine a process for (orally) presenting, valuing, and respecting opinions in a negotiation process. [*Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text*]

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The teacher may engage students in collaborative research so that students can work together to gather evidentiary (text-based) support regarding pro and con effects of fracking policies on individuals and communities (e.g., mineral rights ownership, noise/water pollution) (the policies/legislation of fracking). [*Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text*]

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The teacher may engage students in collaborative research so that students can work together to gather evidentiary (text-based) support regarding the pros and cons of fracking processes from a physical-environmental impact perspective (e.g., water table issues, chemical usage effects) (the Science of fracking). [*Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text, producing text*]

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The teacher may utilize diverse texts (e.g., video clips, media reports, articles) about hydraulic fracturing so students can use informational texts to gather evidence on the specifics of fracking processes in relation to natural gas/fossil fuel extraction (the Science of fracking). [*Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text*]

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The teacher may provide criteria and materials for evaluating the reliability of print and internet resources so that students can effectively assess biases/assumptions and distinguish between "more reliable" and "less reliable" resources. [*Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text*]
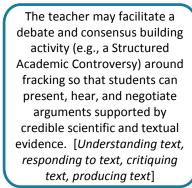
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The teacher may brainstorm a specific controversial topic relevant to Colorado communities (e.g., hydraulic fracturing/fracking) so that students can begin identifying different perspectives on the topic.

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The teacher may engage students in collaborative research so that students can work together to gather evidentiary (text-based) support regarding pro and con effects of fracking policies on individuals and communities (e.g., mineral rights ownership, noise/water pollution) (Social Studies lenses). [*Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text, producing text*]

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The teacher may facilitate a debate and consensus building activity (e.g., a Structured Academic Controversy) around fracking so that students can present, hear, and negotiate arguments supported by credible scientific and textual evidence. [*Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text, producing text*]

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The teacher may facilitate the collaborative researching process on controversial issues so that student teams can understand collaboration throughout the research and presentation process. [*Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text, producing text*]

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PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: You and fellow members of your expert team have been asked to participate in a mock trial on whether a local policy, rule, or "way of doing" things (a "practice") is the right thing to do. Is the policy, rule, or practice right? Fair? Just? You are asked to "take a stand" and debate an opposing expert team on the issue. You will need to work collaboratively with your teammates to reach decisions, research, and plan your side of the mock trial. You will also need to explore your own biases and assumptions on the topic so that you are considering different perspectives by understanding your own stance on the issue.

Colorado Teacher-Authored Instructional Unit Sample Storyboard