

MAKING AND EVALUATING DECISIONS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Planet Exploration: Making the Choice
- Because...
- One More Time
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will demonstrate the decision making process by making the final decision in the planet exploration simulation.

Students will explain and defend their decisions.

Students will review the decision making process.

Students will recognize that some decisions need to be modified and will reflect on the decisions made by their groups.

Materials Needed

- Planet Exploration sleeves (Part I)
- One copy of the “Evaluating Planet Exploration Decisions” activity sheet for each student (Part II)

- Books or writing paper for student responses (Part III)

Starter (2 minutes)

Tell students that “a stitch in time saves nine” is a maxim, or well-known saying. Lead students to the understanding that it means that if we do things in a timely manner, we will save ourselves work.

Explain to students that the same is true for decisions. Ask for a show of hands from students who feel they often procrastinate when they make decisions. Explain that this is common. Ask students to suggest reasons why this happens. (Students might respond: people can’t make up their minds, they believe that there are going to be bad consequences no matter what.)

Explain that if people procrastinate as they make decisions, opportunities can be lost and the consequences can be serious. Explain to students that they will now have to make a timely decision.

Part I Planet Exploration: Making the Choice (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students review the decision making process as they make their final decisions in the simulation.

1. Students review the decision making steps they have taken.

Distribute the plastic sleeves to the groups.

Review with students the first four steps of the decision making process that you have covered so far:

1. Define the issue.
2. Gather information.
3. Develop alternatives.
4. Analyze the consequences.

Call on volunteers to name the steps. Ask each volunteer to explain what their group did while working on that step. As appropriate, ask what difficulties the groups faced as they worked and why those difficulties occurred.

2. Student groups make the final decision.

Explain to students that in today’s session they will decide which characters will be accepted into the planet exploration expedition.

Have students recall their assignment: they must choose four people who will not be allowed to partake in the exploration and the six who can.

Allow students five minutes to make their decisions. Remind them to review the data, issues, and considerations they had gathered in order to make their decisions.

3. Groups prepare to present their decisions.

While students are working, write the following questions on the board:

- What critical issues and considerations did you have to take into account?
- Who did you choose to go?
- Why did you choose these people?

Explain to the groups that they will present their decisions and their reasoning to the entire class. Tell the class that each group will have two minutes for its presentation. Have each group select one or two spokespersons and allow them five minutes to organize their answers. Instruct students to address the specific questions above in their presentations.

Part II Because... (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students explain and defend their decisions.

1. Groups present their decisions to the class.

Distribute copies of the “Evaluating Planet Exploration Decisions” activity sheet to each student. Then, call on each group to present its decision and explain its reasoning within two minutes.

2. Groups are questioned about their decisions.

After each presentation, allow a brief question and answer period, during which the class asks about and comments on the decision. Remind students that some groups may have different information because they asked the characters different questions.

If necessary, remind students about the importance of being respectful of other people’s decisions. Point out to students that some of the factors involved in the decision making process are a person’s personal beliefs and values. For that reason, even people who have the same information might make different decisions.

3. Students evaluate each group’s decision.

After each presentation and discussion, allow students several minutes to complete the activity sheet by rating the decisions and the justifications on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely poor and 5 being outstanding.

Have students place all material, including the evaluations, into the group sleeves.

Part III One More Time (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that some decisions need to be modified and reflect on the decisions made by their groups.

1. Students have an opportunity to revisit their decisions.

Remind students that the last step of the decision making process is to revisit, revise, and modify decisions if necessary or if more information becomes available.

Ask students to respond to the following prompt in their books: “Explain what you would change about or why you stand by your group’s decision.”

2. Students examine their own performance during the planet exploration simulation.

Ask that students try to disregard the content of the activity and instead examine the process.

After several minutes, prompt students to consider how their experiences in this activity relate to their decision making processes in general. Ask the following questions and have students continue to write their responses in their journals:

- What influenced your decisions in this activity? What factors influence your decisions on a daily basis?
- What did you find difficult in this simulation? How does that compare with the decisions that you are faced with every day?
- What would have helped make the decision making process easier?
- If you were to do this again, what would you do differently? What do you think you did well?
- How will you use the decision making process in your life?
- Why is it important to understand how good decisions are made?

Conclusion *(3 minutes)*

Ask students why following the decision making process is helpful. Ask students to explain why knowing how to make good decisions can help guide them in the future. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Decisions must be made in a timely manner.
- Part of the decision making process is the opportunity to revisit and modify decisions we have made.

Student Assessment

1. What does it mean to make a timely decision? Why is making a timely decision important?
2. When, why, and how would you revise a decision?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“We can try to avoid making choices by doing nothing, but even that is a decision.”

Have students give examples of choices that were made because they took no action.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Have students choose a step of the decision making process and create a presentation that illustrates that step.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students read the “Everyday Heroes” activity sheet and write their reactions.

Have students discuss making the choice to become an organ donor. Ask, “What might the decision making process for becoming an organ donor look like?”

Using Technology

Have students research news articles about a recent decision the government has made.

Divide students into groups. Have students discuss and evaluate the decision making process that was used.

Homework

Have students research the reasons why people may immigrate to another country. Make a pro and con list for this decision.

Additional Activity

Have students list and research three career pathways they may consider when they leave school.

EVALUATING PLANET EXPLORATION DECISIONS

Directions: Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely poor and 5 being outstanding, evaluate the work done in the fallout shelter simulation.

| Group Members | Score for the Decision | Score for the Justification | Comments |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
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EVERYDAY HEROES

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON LIVING

Tiffany Culy urges teens to become organ donors.

When she started feeling sick to her stomach, Tiffany Culy figured it was the flu. But a few days later, the Saline, Mich., teen woke up with yellow eyes and yellow skin and an “unbelievable pain” in her belly. Rushed to a hospital, she began slipping into a coma.

Tiffany had Wilson’s disease, which was destroying her liver. Doctors said she would die without an immediate liver transplant.

After reviewing four possible organ donations, surgeons were able to find a liver that would work for her. Tiffany spent three months in the hospital. Now 19 and a freshman at Hope College in Holland, Mich., Tiffany is so healthy that she competed in two swimming events. She also has become a crusader for organ donations.

“Over 61,000 Americans are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant,” Tiffany says. And an average of 12 Americans die each day waiting for a new liver, heart, kidney or other organ, according to the nonprofit Coalition for Donation.

Tiffany gives talks at schools and for youth groups, telling kids that needing an organ can happen to anyone. “It took me totally by surprise,” she says.

Tiffany tries to dispel myths about organ donation. For example, she says celebrities are not put at the top of the list for donations. “And there is no black market for stolen organs.”

Tiffany says she got a liver because “I was basically healthy and my chances for survival were good.” When deciding who gets an organ, the coalition says it does not take into account race, gender, age, income or celebrity.

Becoming a donor is simple, Tiffany says. “All you really have to do is tell your next of kin, because that’s who will be asked at the time of death. You can also sign up when you get your driver’s license.”

And you shouldn’t wait. “Even though you’re a teen, you’re not invincible,” she says. “Talk to your family. Tell them you want to save someone’s life.”

—Nancy Vittorini

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