

Lesson 4

The conference

The community members agree on a framework of rules

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.

Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

Competence training	Making a decision.
Learning objective	Compromise, framework consensus.
Student tasks	The students attempt to achieve a unanimous decision. The students reflect on their experience.
Materials and resources	☞ Student handouts 5.4-5.6.
Method	Voting. Teacher's lecture and discussion.
Time budget	1. The students hold the conference. 20 min
	2. The students reflect on their experience. 20 min

Information box

For the students, a conference on a constitution of state founders, as it were, is an exercise in taking part in democracy. The students perform in the role of constitutional legislators. The conference itself requires a framework of rules that the students must adopt before the conference starts. By giving structure to the procedure, the students can take complete responsibility, including the chairing of the meeting.

Task-based learning always requires reflection. Students can only learn by doing if they think about what they are doing, or what they have done. What is its significance? The reflection phase delivers the key insights. The students understand what can be generalised. In this learning sequence, they learn why communities need an institutional framework to survive, and what problems and risks must be observed in giving power to authorities.

For this unit, we suggest a brief lecture by the teacher to bring the richness of insights into focus. The students respond to this input in a discussion round and a feedback questionnaire.

Lesson description

Seating arrangement

In both parts of the lesson – the conference and the reflection – the students are seated in a circle, without desks, or at their desks in a square. The chairperson sits at the teacher's desk with the blackboard or flipchart at hand.

1. The students hold the conference

The students hold the conference as laid out by the rules that they have agreed on. The teacher watches and listens. Unless the students run into very serious problems (arguments over how the rules are to be applied, for example), which is highly unlikely, the teacher need not intervene in any way.

The teacher observes the students acting in their roles. He/she uses the opportunity to adapt the follow-up lecture to the students' experience.

2. The students reflect on their experience

The teacher summarises units 4 and 5 in a lecture

The students receive *≈* student handout 5.5 before the lecture. In this lecture, the teacher reviews what has happened in the two games, the fishing game and the decision-making game. They model an historic process in which a society develops into a community with an institutional framework of rules. Depending on the choice that the conference has made, the society may now have founded a state, complete with a constitution and clearly defined powers of legislation and law enforcement. Or the community members may have chosen a networking approach, perhaps to sidestep the problem of the abuse of power. The teacher adapts the lecture to the results of the game. In addition, the students attempted to overcome the source of permanent conflict in the fishing community by defining a policy of sustainability.

This is essentially a process of modernisation. The games show important parallels to social and historic reality, but also significant differences (see the conclusions).

The students respond to the lecture

Such a lecture gives the students food for thought. They know all the facts from their game perspective. What is new, and important for their reflection, is what can be generalised and applied to other issues and tasks.

The students should be free to ask questions of understanding, and make comments – what they agree and disagree with.

They may raise questions on points that interest them. This opens the door for the teacher and the students to plan further lessons and units together. What can be covered in other units, for example in this manual? What can be linked to curricular requirements? How much time is available? Are the students interested in a research task?

Perhaps the students suggest revisiting the fishing game – to play a few more rounds using the level of reflection and understanding that they have now achieved.

The students give their personal feedback

The teacher distributes *≈* student handout 5.6 to the students. This is a questionnaire that supports the students in reflecting on their process of learning. These statements also deliver important information for the teacher to improve his/her future work. If the students have a portfolio, this questionnaire should be filed there.

If the teacher wishes to read the questionnaires, some students may feel more secure if they may answer anonymously.