

Lesson 4

What is a good way to govern a democratic community?

What is fair, and what works?

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	Judgment: balancing criteria.
Learning objective	Dialectics between democracy, fairness and efficiency.
Student tasks	The students judge the draft statutes and explain their reasoning.
Materials and resources	Blackboard or flipchart.
Method	Presentations, discussion.
Time budget	1. The students share and present their results. 20 min
	2. Discussion. 10 min
	3. Conclusion. 10 min

Information box

The students share their results and work out a statement shared by all ("snowball system"). This approach involves all the students, rather than listening to a few individual students and ignoring the majority.

Lesson description

1. The students share and present their results

The teacher first asks the students to vote for a certain statute (or for none) by a show of hands. Then the students with the same opinions form groups of four or five. They share their results and work out a statement. Then the groups deliver a brief statement on the reasons for their choice (see ✎ student handout 7.4).

2. Discussion

Once the students have voted for different statutes, they hold different views on how the group's models are to be judged. In the discussion, they critically question each other's choices.

The teacher chairs the discussion. At the end of the discussion, the students vote once more. Has any group succeeded in convincing the other? Do the majority of students vote for one particular statute?

3. Conclusion

The teacher announces the purpose of the concluding phase: the students now look at their thinking process and its result from a different perspective in order to appreciate its relevance.

The teacher asks one question: in what way does this case study on a small sports club resemble politics?

The students share their thoughts with each other and with the teacher. The teacher listens, and points out which ideas support or contradict each other.

The teacher sums up the discussion, adding the following point.

In politics, discussions on such complex matters are not academic, but practical. A community must make a choice – it needs a statute as a constitutional framework. So after having considered different options and alternatives with their strengths and drawbacks, a decision must be made – ideally by unanimous vote, or as large a majority as possible. In politics, a discussion on such an issue corresponds to the process of legislation or even deciding on a constitution.

Extension: research task

In this unit, the students have acquired a model to analyse an important element of their constitution and legislative system, answering both the question on how it has been constructed and how it works in reality. They carry out research on the following questions:

1. What are examples of the majority/minority issue in our society?
2. Case study: in what way does our constitution and system of laws settle this particular issue?
3. What is our judgment on the solution?