



## LESSON 11

### Deliberative Dialogue

*Our ways of handling power differences and diverse points of view and cultures should be models of the civic life we wish to engender in our communities. Encouraging the articulation of differences, and then finding areas for collaboration, should be the norm rather than the exception.*

~ Z.F. Gamson, *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (2000)

# LESSON 11

## Deliberative Dialogue



### Goal

- » To understand and practice deliberative dialogue as a method of addressing controversial issues, such as immigration, and choosing courses of action.

### Objectives

- » Students will learn how to communicate in a way that is respectful of human rights.
- » Students will practice using skills that promote effective and active communication.
- » Students will develop communication tools that allow them to discuss controversial issues with people who have opposing ideas.
- » Students will use deliberative dialogue to explore different opinions and create a plan of action around immigration.

### Essential Question

- » How can I communicate effectively and make collective decisions with people who have different opinions than I do while respecting their human rights?

### Key Skills

- » Improving communication skills through active listening (Activity 1).
- » Using critical thinking skills and reasoned arguments to explore an issue (Activities 3 and 4).

### Materials

- ☑ *Handout 1: Are You an Empathetic Listener?*
- ☑ *Handout 2: Empathetic Listening Exercise*
- ☑ *Handout 3: Debate vs. Deliberation*
- ☑ *Handout 4: Deliberative Dialogue Script*
- ☑ *Handout 5: Deliberative Dialogue Overview*
- ☑ *Handout 6: Deliberative Dialogue Background (Family)*
- ☑ *Handout 7: Deliberative Dialogue Background (Employment)*
- ☑ *Handout 8: Moderating a Deliberative Dialogue*

### Time Frame

5-6 class periods

### Vocabulary

-  **common ground**
-  **communication**
-  **debate**
-  **deliberation**
-  **deliberative dialogue**
-  **dialogue**
-  **listening**
-  **respect**
-  **trust**

## The “Rights” Way to Listen

**Procedure:**

**1. Think.** Ask students the question: “Do people have the *right* to be respected in a conversation? Why or why not? What if the people talking do not agree with each other?” Remind students that every person has human rights, which can be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). If students are not familiar with human rights and the UDHR, Lesson 2 on page 31 provides an introduction to the basic concepts. Write the following articles from the UDHR on the board:

- Article 1: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”
- Article 19: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Let students know that the goal of this lesson is to practice communicating effectively about difficult or sensitive issues in a way that respects everyone’s human rights. Using the above articles, discuss the following questions as a large group:

**Questions for Discussion**

- ? How do these rights apply to having a discussion with someone?
- ? What are some things you can do in conversations that would help uphold the other person’s human rights? (Examples could include: listening carefully, taking the other person seriously, and trying to understand their position.)
- ? What are some things you can do in conversations that might violate the other person’s human rights? (Examples could include: refusing to let the other person talk, personal attacks, threats, and hate speech.)
- ? Have you ever felt like your rights have been violated in a conversation?
- ? Why is it important to uphold human rights in discussions?

**2. Read.** Give the students *Handout 1: Are You an Empathetic Listener?* and have them read through it silently. Ask for volunteers to give an example or a demonstration of each key skill provided. Tell students that these are basic listening skills. They are going to have a chance to practice these skills while discussing something neutral so that they will be ready to apply them again during a dialogue about immigration policy.

**3. Practice.** Pair off students, and have them choose one person in the pair to be in Group A, and the other in Group B. Give each student *Handout 2: Empathetic Listening Exercise*. Tell students to read over the handout and think about the personal story they want to tell their partner. After giving students a few minutes to think of their personal story, have the Group A students tell their story to their partner. At first, the Group B students should use “non-listening” behavior. After a minute, announce that the Group B students should start using their active listening skills. Once the Group A students have finished, the Group B students should summarize what they heard. Have the students change roles and repeat the activity, with the Group A students switching from non-listening to listening behavior halfway through the story. When Group B is done with their stories, Group A should summarize what they heard.

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## The “Rights” Way to Listen

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**4. Debrief.** After the pairs have finished telling and summarizing their stories, have students fill out the questions at the bottom of *Handout 2*. As a class, discuss how students felt during the exercise and whether the active listening skills helped them in the conversation.

**Questions for Discussion**

- ? As a listener, was it easier to follow and understand the story when you used your active listening skills?
- ? How did you feel when you were not listening? When you were listening?
- ? As a speaker, how did you feel when your partner was not listening? When your partner was listening?
- ? Was it easier to tell your story when your partner was listening?
- ? Why is it important to be engaged when listening and speaking?
- ? Do people always have something “earth-shattering” to share? If not, is it still important to listen to them?
- ? Is it insensitive for speakers to go ahead and share whatever they want even if the listener is not interested or paying attention?
- ? How might these active listening skills help respect other people’s human rights during a conversation?

## Debate vs. Deliberation


### Procedure:

**1. Brainstorm.** Explain to students that respecting the human rights of others in conversation is only the first step to sharing opinions, discussing options, and deciding on a common course of action. The way people choose to make collective decisions affects what decisions are made, how much support they have, and how effective they are at solving a community problem.

Have the class brainstorm a short list of immigration issues that are difficult to solve and generate a wide range of opinions about the best course of action. These issues could relate to who the United States allows into the country (*Are too many or too few allowed in? Do we prioritize the right things - family, employment, freedom from persecution?*); how the government enforces immigration laws (*Should the border be more secure? Should we be more lenient with immigrants who have U.S. family members?*); what benefits immigrants can enjoy (*Do immigrants have a right to health, housing, or education?*); or the impact of immigration on citizens (*Do immigrants take jobs away from citizens? Is it important that immigrants assimilate?*).

Once the class has brainstormed the list, ask students which communication methods are typically used to help decide and determine these immigration policies. Possible answers might include voting, protests, letters to elected officials, debates in Congress, arguments, and media campaigns. Ask students: do these methods emphasize working together and finding areas of agreement, or prioritizing one's own goals at the expense of other people's? How successful have these methods been at finding solutions to problems in the immigration system?

**2. Discuss.** Tell students that there are other ways of solving community problems or disagreements that emphasize understanding and collaboration instead of winning. One such method is deliberative dialogue. Provide students with the following definition.

 Deliberative dialogue combines open communication, critical thinking, and reasoned argument in order to create mutual understanding, build relationships, solve public problems, address policy issues, and to connect personal concerns with public concerns.<sup>1</sup>

Point out that the term encompasses two important concepts: talking about people's opinions in order to understand them, and using this understanding to craft solutions to community problems.

One way to better understand deliberative dialogue is to understand what it is not. Students will now get a chance to contrast deliberative dialogue with a more common, familiar way of exploring an issue: debate. Give students *Handout 3: Debate vs. Deliberation*. After giving students a few minutes to read over the handout, discuss the differences between debate and deliberation.

**3. Debate.** Students will now have a chance to see the differences between debate and deliberation in action. Choose a topic that the whole class will discuss, first in a debate and then in a deliberative dialogue. The issue should be one where students will be able to generate arguments for and against without needing to do research. One good topic for the activity is whether soda should be allowed in elementary school vending machines.

For the debate, divide the class into two opposing sides. One half will take the position that soda should *not* be allowed in elementary school vending machines, and the other will take the position that soda should be allowed. Have students work in small groups of 3 or 4 to generate arguments for their side of the debate. If they are having trouble coming up with ideas, tell them to consider things like the funding schools receive

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ncdd.org/rc/glossary#D>.

## Debate vs. Deliberation

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from soda companies, the long-term health effects for young children, freedom of choice for children and parents, potential alternatives, the need to teach children healthy choices, or the effects of sugar on children's learning outcomes. The small groups should write down their ideas on a piece of paper.

Choose a volunteer from each side of the issue to present their team's arguments to the class. The volunteer should take a moment to read over the ideas created by the small groups and organize their thoughts. Explain to the class that the goal of the debate is to have one student emerge as the clear winner at the end, with the majority of the class voting for his or her position. The class is not allowed to choose a compromise or take both points of view into consideration.

Tell the class that the students will present their best arguments for and against, but they must respect human rights while debating by refraining from personal attacks, discriminatory statements about the other person or a group of people, hate speech, or other disrespectful behavior. The entire class will monitor and report whether these ground rules are met.

When the volunteers are ready, have them present the arguments for or against that were generated by the small groups. After five minutes is up (or when the students run out of arguments, depending on which comes first), ask the class to vote on the winner of the debate and record the winner on the board.

**4. Deliberate.** Tell the class that they will now revisit the issue of soda in elementary school vending machines, but in the form of a deliberative dialogue. Each student should take a moment to individually think through their actual position on the issue and the arguments they would use to support it. Unlike in a debate, their position does not have to be one extreme or the other; students can argue that soda should be allowed in certain situations or with certain restrictions rather than banned entirely. Give the class a few minutes to write down their thoughts.

Next, act as a moderator for the dialogue, calling on volunteers to share their positions and asking students to speak up when they agree or disagree with one of the arguments or positions. Encourage students to search for common ground with their classmates rather than looking for differences. As in the debate, students should respect human rights during the dialogue. They should also practice the empathetic listening skills they learned in Activity 11.1, trying to understand why their classmates feel a certain way about the issue.

After five or ten minutes, start summarizing the points of agreement and seeing if there is a solution that most students can accept. One way to end the dialogue would be to write down two or three of the most popular options and ask students to vote on their choice. Students may have a tendency towards arguing or debating, and should be guided back to the idea that they are looking for points of agreement and a policy they all can support, even if it doesn't address all the issues. Write the chosen policy on the board. Is it the same as the debate winner? Why or why not?

**5. Debrief.** Have students stand around the outer periphery of the classroom. Ask them to volunteer similarities and differences between debate and deliberative dialogue that they observed in the activity. Encourage them to think of things not found on their handout. With each correct answer, have everyone take one step toward their desks. When they are close enough to their desks or have answered enough questions, allow them to sit down. If they have not covered all of the answers below, go over the remaining comparisons as a large group.

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## Debate vs. Deliberation

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- Both explore community issues or problems.
- Both can be intense and can elicit emotions and argument.
- Both can highlight critical facts and important considerations.
- Both should respect basic human rights.
- The style is different. In debate, participants focus their attention on preparing their arguments without considering the feelings or motivations behind the other side's position. In deliberative dialogue, participants use empathetic listening skills to understand the personal basis for people's positions and to foster an environment of openness and mutual understanding.
- The questions are different. In debate, rhetorical questions are often asked to make a point (e.g., "Doesn't this country stand for freedom of choice, even in what we drink?"). In deliberative dialogue, questions are asked in order to get a real answer and to better understand the person's perspective (e.g., "Why do you believe students might not make good decisions about drinking soda?").
- The answers are different. Debate presents a choice between two contrasting viewpoints while deliberation explores many different opinions, not all of which conflict with each other.
- The process is different. In debate, the parties try to connect their reasoning in a logical chain that inevitably leads to their preferred result. Debaters typically do not change their positions or reasoning, but can instead become more committed to their own opinion. In deliberative dialogue, the progression towards a solution may not be straightforward and can allow for many different results. Participants are open to new possibilities, influenced by the input of group members.
- The end goal is different. In debate, it is winning an argument; in deliberative dialogue, it is finding a solution that people can truly support based on common concerns and understandings.



## Deliberating Immigration

### Procedure:

**1. Apply.** Now that students are familiar with what deliberative dialogue is, they will get an opportunity to see this method used to discuss an immigration issue. This activity is a great way to explore immigration through deliberative dialogue when there may not be class time or resources to conduct the full dialogue offered in the next activity.

**2. Read.** Put students in groups of three to read through *Handout 4: Deliberative Dialogue Script*. Have them select one of the three roles: the moderator, David, or Maria. Tell them they will be reading through a script of a deliberative dialogue about undocumented immigrants being perceived as “taking away” jobs from U.S.-born workers. Remind them of the goals of deliberative dialogue, both in the process (respecting the other person as you dig deeper and try to understand their viewpoint) and in the result (reaching common ground in order to make a plan of action). Have students highlight areas of common ground or potential solutions as they read the deliberative dialogue.

**3. Analyze.** After students finish reading the scripts, bring the class back together and write one or two sentences describing David’s and Maria’s positions. Ask for examples of underlying issues or concerns driving their individual opinions. Then, ask students for examples of when David or Maria learned something new about the other person’s ideas or the issue itself that changed their original understanding of the issue. Have students refer back to the script to look at the questions that “dug deeper,” or brought about these understandings. Did discussing the issue through deliberative dialogue help David and Maria better understand each other?

**4. Propose.** One of the key purposes of deliberative dialogue is to reach an agreement on possible solutions to community problems. In this example, David and Maria’s dialogue did not finish; they are going to return for another discussion. The class has an opportunity to finish the dialogue for them by thinking of potential solutions that might be supported by both people. Have students return to their small groups of three and review the text they highlighted while reading the script, showing areas of common ground or potential solutions. Next, each group should write an ending to the dialogue that has Maria and David agreeing on a solution to the issue. Once the small groups have finished their dialogues, have them take turns acting out their ending for the class.



## Participating in a Deliberative Dialogue

### Procedure:

**1. Review.** Remind students of the basic principles of deliberative dialogue. Deliberative dialogue is a type of public discussion that addresses a question through deliberation instead of debate to:

- collectively explore a question;
- weigh the strengths and weaknesses of alternative perspectives;
- move beyond clash of opinions and reach shared understanding; and
- search for common ground and decide on a course of action.

**2. Set up.** Divide the class into two groups to conduct a dialogue about whether the United States should prioritize family- or employment-based immigration if the government decided to increase the number of visas it gives out. After assigning the groups to a position, give them *Handout 5: Deliberative Dialogue Overview*, and their respective position backgrounder, *Handout 6: Deliberative Dialogue Background (Family)* or *Handout 7: Deliberative Dialogue Background (Employment)*. The handouts provide students with an overview of the dialogue structure, background for their position, and resources for further research. The dialogue can either be based on the information in the background handouts only, or students can be asked to do research to find more data on their topic. Give students one or more class periods to research and prepare their positions with their group.

**3. Simulation.** Once students have finished preparing their positions, it will be time to set up the deliberative dialogue. Please use *Handout 8: Moderating a Deliberative Dialogue* to aide the deliberative dialogue. Before beginning, go over the agenda with the class and answer any questions students have. Remind students to use the active listening skills they practiced in Activity 11.1. Once students are ready, begin the deliberative dialogue.

**4. Debrief.** After the simulation, debrief the class using the following discussion questions:

#### Questions for Discussion

- ? What was the hardest part of the dialogue?
- ? Was it hard to maintain an open-minded attitude and not get defensive? Why or why not?
- ? Do you think it would be more difficult with an issue very close to you?
- ? Did you find deliberative dialogue to be an effective way of talking about the issues?
- ? Did the communication skills that we practiced earlier in the lesson help you in the simulation?
- ? Do you think this method of discussion would be useful in other situations? If so, which kind? Provide a few concrete examples.

**5. Closure.** Have students free write for ten minutes about what they learned, both about the immigration issue they discussed and about deliberative dialogue as a method of group problem-solving.

## ARE YOU AN EMPATHETIC LISTENER?

**Empathy:** The ability to identify with, understand, and even vicariously experience another person's thoughts, emotions, motivations, or circumstances. Empathy asks the question, "How would it feel to be in their shoes?"

**Empathetic Listening:** Empathetic listening (also called "active listening") is a communication technique that enables the listener to understand, interpret the speaker's message, and respond appropriately. Empathetic listening not only elicits information, but also allows for deeper understanding, builds trust and respect, reduces tension and conflict, and creates a safe environment that is conducive to collaborative problem solving.

Sometimes, when people are listening, they are distracted, thinking about other things, or thinking about what they are going to say next. Empathetic listening is a structured way of listening and responding to others, focusing attention on the speaker. Suspending one's own frame of reference, reserving judgment, and avoiding other internal mental activities are important to fully attend to the speaker. Through empathetic listening, the listener lets the speaker know, "I understand your problem and how you feel about it, I am interested in what you are saying, and I am not judging you."

Skills	Explanation
Attention	Give your undivided attention. Provide non-verbal and verbal recognition of the other person through eye contact, head nodding, and having your expressions/mood match the speaker. Keep a relaxed body, and respond to statements with "mm-hmm," "uh-huh" or "I see."
Support	Show warmth, caring, and concern. Offer encouragement or support if the speaker is upset.
Quiet	Allow for quiet time. Give the speaker time to think, as well as to talk.
Mirroring	Mirror back what you hear. Reword, or paraphrase, a person's basic verbal message to confirm your understanding. Example: "What I hear you saying is..."
Questioning	Ask questions to get more information and to find out if your interpretations and perceptions are accurate. Example: "Did you mean...?" "How did you feel...?"
Patience	Be patient if the person is having trouble saying something that is emotionally difficult, or if the person's first language is not English.
Feedback	Share perceptions of the other's ideas or feelings, without judging or trivializing their experiences. Disclose relevant personal information (without bringing the focus back to you). Summarize or synthesize information, if appropriate. Example: "It sounds like that entire trip was one headache after another."

Source: Adapted from Richard Salem, "Empathic Listening," in *Beyond Intractability*, eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess, (Boulder: Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, July 2003), [http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/empathic\\_listening/](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/empathic_listening/).

## EMPATHETIC LISTENING EXERCISE

### Instructions:

1. Decide which of you will be in Group A (speaking first), and which will be in Group B (listening first). You will get a chance to play both roles. Set up your chairs so that you are facing one another.
2. Think about a personal story that is important to you. You will tell this story to your partner. The story should last at least two minutes. Take notes to outline the story, if that is helpful. Possible topics include:
  - What was your favorite vacation?
  - What has been an influential experience or person in your life?
  - What is one of your aspirations?
  - What band or singer do you admire, and why?
  - What do you like to do on your free time?
  - What is your favorite book or movie, and why?
3. The teacher will tell you when to begin the exercise. Whoever is in Group A should start telling his or her story, while the Group B person listens. Group B should begin by using “non-listening” behavior such as:
  - Body language such as turning away, slouching back, or looking around the room
  - Pretending to check your cell phone, ipod, etc.
  - Twiddling with a pen or doodling
  - Making impatient noises, such as sighing
4. When the teacher announces it, switch to using the active listening skills listed on *Handout 1: Are You an Empathetic Listener?* Try to use as many different skills as you can.
5. After the Group A person is done telling his or her story, the student in Group B should summarize what he or she just heard.
6. Now, switch roles so that the person in Group B is the speaker and the person from Group A listens. The person from Group A should follow the same steps, starting out using “non-listening” behavior and then switching to using active listening skills when the teacher gives the signal. After the Group B person is done telling his or her story, the Group A student should summarize what he or she just heard.
7. Answer the following questions:

When you were the listener	When you were the speaker
How did your partner respond to your non-listening behavior? To your listening behavior?	How did you feel during the first part of the exercise?
Did you feel differently about the conversation when you started actively listening? What changed?	What did you notice about your partner’s behavior?
Was it easier to follow and understand the story when you used your active listening skills?	Did you notice when their behavior changed? How did you feel after they started listening?
	How well did your partner summarize your story? Why do you think that is?

## DEBATE VS. DELIBERATION

In DEBATE, you...	In DELIBERATION, you...
Assume you have all the right answers	Assume many people have pieces of a workable solution
Search for weaknesses/what does not make sense in the other's position	Search for strengths/what does make sense in another position
Invest wholeheartedly in your beliefs	Temporarily suspend judgment of other's beliefs
Remain oppositional and seek to prove the other wrong	Remain collaborative and seek common ground
Defend your own assumptions as truth	Reveal your assumptions in order to reevaluate them
Listen primarily to find flaws and counter-arguments	Listen to understand and find agreement
Defend your own solution	Are open to the possibility of different solutions
Try to win even if it only confers a short-term advantage	Try to build a common ground for action, which is the basis for long-term change
Submit your best thinking to defend it	Submit your best thinking to expand or improve it

Source: Adapted from Sandra Hodge, "Debate vs. Deliberation," in *Discovering Common Ground*, Community Development, University of Missouri Outreach and Extension and National Immigration Forum (2003), <http://extension.missouri.edu/cd/pubdelib/trainmaterials/deliberationmanual2.pdf>.

## DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE SCRIPT

### Topic: Should we prioritize native-born Americans over immigrants in the workplace?

**Moderator:** Welcome. Today we have Maria Valdez and David Hartwell with us to discuss an issue that concerns many people in our community. Maria and David, please read over the following ground rules. If you are in agreement, let's say them together.

**Moderator/Maria/David:**

- I will be respectful.
- I will be honest.
- I will maintain an open mind.
- I care about this issue. I know that the other person cares about this issue, too.
- I want to understand  (name of other individual)'s  reasoning and values.
- My primary goals are expanding my own understandings and finding common ground. In accomplishing these goals, we will find some solutions that we both can agree upon.

**Moderator:** Let's start by having you each give your name, as well as a brief personal story that relates to the topic at hand today.

**Maria:** Hello, my name is Maria Valdez. I am here today, because I help some immigrant families through my church, St. Joseph's, and they told me that they were scared to come here today. They are really good people, and they can't move back home because there are no jobs there. The family I work with the most has two little girls. The girls go to school here, and sometimes they are picked on. I know that life is not easy for them. I also have a personal connection to this issue. My parents came to the United States in the 1980s from Guatemala, and although I was born in the United States, I saw them struggle and I know that their lives have been very hard. They were fleeing for their lives and got asylum, but they received very little help from the government. They had to take whatever jobs they could find when they got here. They didn't have a choice; it was about feeding their families.

**David:** Hi, my name is David Hartwell. Two of my uncles lost their jobs to immigrants. One of them had worked at a meat-processing plant as a union employee for over 20 years, and now the plant has almost all Mexicans and Somalis working there. His family lost their home. They had to move into an apartment, which was in a different part of town. My younger cousins had to switch elementary schools. My aunt got a job to cover the bills while he went to the community technical college to learn something else, but she ended up injuring her back, so she can't work anymore. My uncle just got a job driving a forklift, so we'll see how that goes. He should've been able to retire at the plant he worked in for 20 years. I've heard that companies will shut down plants and hire cheap labor to break up unions. That's not right, and I think we should prevent that from happening.

**Moderator:** It does sound like you're both concerned about people being able to find jobs to take care of themselves and their families. You've both stated pieces of the issue we're talking about. Can you say a little more about the topic?

**David:** Well, I guess part of my concern is that people who have worked somewhere for many years should not have their jobs taken by cheaper foreign labor. I don't think immigrants should break the law by coming

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here and then fill jobs they know are being taken away from Americans. Companies can just pretend to close a plant and then “re-open” with immigrant workers and pay them less to get rid of union labor.

**Maria:** Do companies do that?

**David:** All the time. And not just here. They do it all over. Are the immigrants you work with aware of that?

**Maria:** To be honest, I don’t know. I would totally agree that companies shouldn’t try to break up unions – I didn’t realize that was happening. I would agree to laws to prevent that.

**Moderator:** Great, we already have one agreed upon solution.

**Maria:** Going back to the initial question posed by the moderator, I think the problem is that people living in other countries sometimes have hardships that drive them to the United States and sometimes there aren’t other jobs for them to take. They need to support their families, too.

**David:** Don’t you think that is the responsibility of their home country’s government? Not to be mean or anything, but maybe some of those problems should be solved back in their home country.

**Maria:** Yes, of course, but the world isn’t black and white like that. They don’t have control of their government. Sometimes, people who come without permission are even fleeing from their own government. My parents fled Guatemala because people were being killed across the country. They watched many of their relatives die before coming.

**David:** There should be exceptions in extreme cases like that. Your parents should have been able to come.

**Moderator:** So, we’ve identified another solution — providing special protection for people fleeing persecution.

**Maria:** My parents did get asylum eventually, but they entered as undocumented immigrants, just like some of the people being called “illegals” and risking their lives in the desert.

**David:** I’ve read that most immigrants come to join their families or get a job. In that case, I don’t think they should be prioritized. I said a little about my uncle’s family, but there’s a lot more. They really suffered when he lost his job, and there’s no country close by with a better economy that he can just pick up and move to.

**Maria:** I never thought about it like that. I think I need more time to process that ... I mean, I think the worst of what people experience in the United States isn’t as bad as some countries, but for young entrepreneurs just seeking opportunity, maybe we should consider people here first. How do we establish immigration policies based on need? Or do we?

**David:** I think we should. Well, when I think about it, that might not be best for our economy, just allowing in everyone who needs it the most.

**Moderator:** I just wanted to point out that you both have again identified the common concern of ensuring that people are able to find jobs that meet the needs of themselves and their families and that governments hold some responsibility for making sure that happens. Go on.



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**Maria:** Well, I just thought of something else. If we did just give visas to low-skilled workers, then they wouldn't have to live in the shadows and people like David's uncle might not be laid off. It would put people on a "level playing field," so they are hired for the right reasons. We only give out 5,000 low-skilled visas every year, which everyone knows is not enough.

**David:** Is that right? Why don't we give out more?

**Maria:** Because we can't pass comprehensive immigration reform. When immigrants don't have legal status, it puts them in a vulnerable position where employers can treat them worse than American workers. So, not only are Americans like your uncle being hurt, but the immigrants can be exploited and abused in the workplace, too, and they don't have anyone to advocate for them, like a union.

**David:** When I think about it, though, if we did that, then wouldn't there just be others who would come illegally and work for less? It seems like a cycle.

**Maria:** We just need to enforce immigration laws and actually fine companies hiring undocumented workers. If there was a functioning legal system, I really don't think — based on the immigrants I've talked to — that very many people would risk living here illegally if they didn't have to.

**David:** I would agree to changing laws to give more visas to low skilled workers, if we actually enforce them.

**Moderator:** Another area of common ground.

**David:** I would add a caveat – if a company could hire an American or an immigrant with the same skill set, don't you think they should hire the American?

**Maria:** Regardless if they are an American or an immigrant, they need jobs equally – they're human beings with families to support. Practically, I understand the U.S. government has to take care of its own people. How often would two people have the exact same skill set, though? If it's a job that doesn't require any experience or education, then, I don't know.

**David:** Well, I think Americans should get the job first.

**Maria:** Who do you mean by "Americans"? People born here? Citizens?

**David:** I mean people who were born here. And there should be training programs for Americans who want to switch careers or are being forced out.

**Maria:** Well, I think your idea makes sense if we had such programs for all people living and working in the United States. If we provide skilled labor education to all people, they can have backup careers if they lose their jobs. Everyone living here contributes to our economy.

**Moderator:** Okay, well, with that, I will ask you both to wrap it up, as we've run out of time for today. We'll be having another meeting next week. For now, could you both reflect on what you've learned? Do you have deeper understandings?

**David and Maria:** (Answer the question as you think your character would.)

## DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE OVERVIEW

**Deliberative dialogue** is a type of public discussion that addresses a question through deliberation instead of debate to:

- collectively explore a question;
- weigh the strengths and weaknesses of alternative perspectives;
- move beyond a clash of opinions and reach a shared understanding; and
- search for common ground and decide on a course of action.

### How to Participate in a Deliberative Dialogue

#### Step 1: Preparing for the deliberative dialogue

1. **Identify:** Using the background information and any further research you have done, identify key information and data supporting your position, core values and concerns that motivate you to support this position, and your desired policy outcomes.
2. **Relate:** Try to identify with the issue and your position by thinking of how it relates to your life. You can do this by thinking of personal stories about your experiences or imagining a relevant situation happening to you or a loved one.
3. **Prepare:** Gather all of your research, analyses, and personal narratives and prepare for the deliberative dialogue by choosing how you will go about presenting your opinions and addressing the questions.

#### Step 2: Staging the deliberative dialogue

You will now have a chance to simulate a deliberative dialogue. Your teacher will serve as the moderator for the deliberative dialogue. During the dialogue, you should use the empathetic listening skills you have practiced in this lesson, and find ways to respect your fellow participants' human rights.

##### *Part 1: Welcome and Introductions*

1. The moderator will begin the deliberative dialogue by welcoming participants, explaining the format, laying out ground rules, and identifying the topic.
2. Participants will introduce themselves and share personal connections or experiences with the issue.
3. Participants will name the issue by agreeing on what it is they are discussing and trying to solve.

##### *Part 2: Purposeful Deliberation*

1. Participants will draw on their background research to lay out their competing concerns and choices.
2. Participants will work through conflicts that arise from competing values or viewpoints.
3. Participants will uncover and examine the assumptions behind their positions.
4. The moderator will help the group identify common values and objectives, as well as points of disagreement.

##### *Stage 3: Summary and Conclusion*

1. The moderator will help participants summarize key points and conclusions made during the dialogue.
2. Participants will choose a course of action that reflects the core values of the group.

Source: Adapted from Sandra Hodge, *Discovering Common Ground*, in Community Development, University of Missouri Outreach and Extension and National Immigration Forum (2003), <http://extension.missouri.edu/cd/pubdelib/trainmaterials/deliberationmanual2.pdf> and Scott London, "Thinking Together: The Power of Deliberative Dialogue" (2005), <http://www.scottlondon.com/reports/dialogue.html>.

## DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE BACKGROUND (FAMILY)

### Deliberative Dialogue Topic

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act created our current immigration system, under which permanent residency is granted to people trying to reunite with family members living in the United States, to people with job offers or important job skills who want to work in the United States, to refugees or people seeking asylum, and to a small number of other groups that receive special protection or priority in immigrating to the United States. Currently, around two-thirds of all permanent residents come to the United States to join family members. 15% come on employment-related visas. In both categories, many applicants face backlogs and long wait times before they are allowed to come. **If the United States was considering granting 500,000 additional visas each year, would you give priority to individuals who want to be reunited with their families, or prospective workers from other countries?**

### Your Position

If the United States decided to grant 500,000 additional visas each year, the visas should be given to individuals seeking reunification with family members already living in the United States.

### Supporting Facts

The presence of one or more family members in a particular country can draw other family members to try to immigrate to that country to join them. When families are divided across borders, it can be emotionally and financially trying for all family members. According to human rights law, families have the right to be together,<sup>1</sup> and immigration systems should recognize this right.

Although the number of individuals who enter the United States to be reunited with family members significantly outnumbers those who enter with visas for other reasons, the United States still does not issue enough visas to satisfy the demand for family reunification. As of October 2011, most family members coming to the United States have to wait for a minimum of nearly three years to a maximum of 23 years before being allowed to immigrate.<sup>2</sup> Over 3 million people are currently waiting for their family-based immigration application to be processed.<sup>3</sup>

Because there are not enough visas for everyone who wants to join their family in the United States and because the wait times are so long, thousands of people come to the United States without authorization to be with their families. Undocumented immigrants, if found by immigration, are usually deported to their home country and face additional barriers to returning to the United States legally. Since 1997, at least 500,000 legal residents and citizens were separated from their family members by deportation.<sup>4</sup> Some people believe that if the United States provided more visas to individuals hoping to join their families, the number of undocumented immigrants would drop significantly, removing this threat to family unity.

### Resources for further research

- Migration Information Source, "U.S. Focus," [www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/](http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/).
- Immigration Policy Center, "Immigration Problems and Solutions: A Resource Page," [www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/immigration-problems-and-solutions-resource-page](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/immigration-problems-and-solutions-resource-page).
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).
- Department of Homeland Security, *2010 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, [www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtm).

1 UN, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16 (Dec. 10, 1948), <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>.

2 U.S. Department of State, "Visa Bulletin for October 2011," Number 36, Volume IX, [http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/bulletin/bulletin\\_5560.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/bulletin/bulletin_5560.html).

3 Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, *2010 Annual Report to Congress* (June 30, 2010), [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/cisomb\\_2010\\_annual\\_report\\_to\\_congress.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/cisomb_2010_annual_report_to_congress.pdf).

4 Human Rights Watch, *Forced Apart (By the Numbers): Non-Citizens Deported Mostly for Nonviolent Offenses* (April 15, 2009), <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/04/15/forced-apart-numbers-0>.

## DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE BACKGROUND (EMPLOYMENT)

### Deliberative Dialogue Topic

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act created our current immigration system, under which permanent residency is granted to people trying to reunite with family members living in the United States, to people with job offers or important job skills who want to work in the United States, to refugees or people seeking asylum, and to a small number of other groups that receive special protection or priority in immigrating to the United States. Currently, around two-thirds of all permanent residents come to the United States to join family members. 15% come on employment-related visas. In both categories, many applicants face backlogs and long wait times before they are allowed to come. **If the United States was considering granting 500,000 additional visas each year, would you give priority to individuals who want to be reunited with their families, or prospective workers from other countries?**

### Your Position

If the United States decided to grant 500,000 additional visas each year, the visas should be given to individuals seeking employment in the United States.

### Supporting Facts

The number and quality of opportunities for employment in the United States exceeds that of many other countries; therefore, the United States draws both high-skilled and low-skilled immigrants looking for jobs. The United States sets an annual limit for employment visas each year; on average, less than 160,000 visas — representing just 1 in 7 new immigrants — are available to people seeking employment.<sup>1</sup>

One effect of the cap on employment visas is long wait times for certain kinds of workers and people from certain countries, China and India in particular. People without graduate degrees face waits of six to nine years before being eligible for permanent residency.<sup>2</sup> Many of these workers are able to live in the United States on a temporary visa while waiting for permanent residency. However, getting a temporary visa is also very difficult. One of the most common temporary worker visas has an annual cap of 65,000. In 2008, demand for these visas was so high, the cap was reached the first day the visas were available.<sup>3</sup>

The shortage of employment visas has two effects. First, it deprives the United States of the economic benefits generated by immigrant workers. Immigrants help the U.S. economy by starting businesses, filling gaps in the U.S. workforce, and increasing demand for goods and services. Limiting their potential contributions with low visa quotas hurts the economy. Second, the visa shortage encourages many people to bypass the immigration system and become undocumented workers instead. Undocumented workers are vulnerable to exploitation by employers, which hurts all workers in the United States by allowing companies to evade labor protections and minimum wage standards. If the United States changed its immigration laws to provide legal status to undocumented workers and grant more visas to people seeking employment, the country could add \$1.5 trillion to the economy in just ten years.<sup>4</sup>

### Resources for further research

- Migration Information Source, "U.S. Focus," [www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/](http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/).
- Immigration Policy Center, "Immigration Problems and Solutions: A Resource Page," [www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/immigration-problems-and-solutions-resource-page](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/immigration-problems-and-solutions-resource-page).
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).
- Department of Homeland Security, "2010 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics," [www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtm).

1 Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, *2010 Annual Report to Congress* (June 30, 2010), [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/cisomb\\_2010\\_annual\\_report\\_to\\_congress.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/cisomb_2010_annual_report_to_congress.pdf).

2 U.S. Department of State, "Visa Bulletin for October 2011," Number 36, Volume IX, [http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/bulletin/bulletin\\_5560.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/bulletin/bulletin_5560.html).

3 Migration Information Source, "H-1B Temporary Skilled Worker Program" (October 2010), <http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?ID=801>.

4 Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda, *Raising the Floor for American Workers*, Center for American Progress (January 2010), <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/01/pdf/immigrationeconreport.pdf>.

## MODERATING A DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE

During this activity, you will be serving as the moderator of a deliberative dialogue. Your job will be to guide students through the process of deliberative dialogue outlined in *Handout 5*. An important part of your job will be to steer students away from debating tendencies and encourage them to use the active listening and deliberation skills that they have practiced throughout this lesson.

### Suggested Questions for Moderators

#### *Part 1: Welcome and Introductions*

Start by welcoming participants, explaining the format, laying out ground rules, and identifying the topic. Then begin the discussion by having participants introduce themselves and their views on the topic.

- How has this issue affected you personally? Why is this important to you?
- What problem do you want to solve today?

#### *Part 2: Purposeful Deliberation*

- When you think about this issue, what concerns you?
- What are the strongest arguments in favor of your position?
- What do you see as the conflict among the choices?
- Why is this issue so difficult to decide?
- What would be the consequences of doing what you are suggesting?
- What would be an argument against the choice you like best? Is there a downside to this course of action?
- If the policy you favor had the negative consequences some fear, would you still favor it?
- What trade-offs are you willing and unwilling to accept?

#### *Stage 3: Summary and Conclusion*

- Can we detect any shared sense of direction or common ground for action?
- Which direction seems best? Where do we want this policy to take us?
- What are we willing and unwilling to do as individuals or as a community in order to solve this problem?

### Resources on Deliberative Dialogue

- National Issues Forum, [www.nifi.org/](http://www.nifi.org/).
- Community Deliberation Program, University of Missouri Extension, [extension.missouri.edu/cd/pubdelib/](http://extension.missouri.edu/cd/pubdelib/).
- National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, [ncdd.org/](http://ncdd.org/).
- Citizens and Public Choice, Kettering Foundation, [www.kettering.org/foundation\\_programs/citizens\\_and\\_public\\_choice](http://www.kettering.org/foundation_programs/citizens_and_public_choice).

Source: Adapted from Sandra Hodge, *Discovering Common Ground*, Community Development, University of Missouri Outreach and Extension and National Immigration Forum (2003), <http://extension.missouri.edu/cd/pubdelib/trainmaterials/deliberationmanual2.pdf>

