

POWER ANALYSIS OF NEWS STORIES

Time: 30-50 minutes

Age: 5th and up

WHAT IS IT?

Students read a newspaper story to identify power relations and analyze the story in terms of power.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Team members often do not have a firm grasp on concepts. By doing this exercise they learn to read “events” in terms of power.

WHEN IS THIS USEFUL? Early in PA, but can do anytime.

MATERIALS:

Highlighters, age appropriate news stories that feature young people taking action or involved in politics (a good source is New York Times: www.nytimes.com/learning). Make sure that story involves two or more actors. You can also use a story from the Greenbook or from PA Case Studies.

CORE CONCEPTS: power, diversity, public

SKILLS: critical thinking, using public language

ACTIVITIES / STEPS:

- A. Students will review what power means (ability to influence or make change).
- B. Students will read story “looking for power relations” (this can be done individually or in pairs). Tell them that the word “power” may not be in the story, but you are looking for instance where people are trying to influence or make change.
- C. With highlighters, have students highlight sentences where there are power relations (students can also underline sentences).
- D. Have students complete handout.
- E. Students will gather in group, discuss their analysis of power in the stories.
 - a. Where did students find power in the story? Discuss different responses.
 - b. Who had power? How did they exercise it?
 - c. What could they do differently to be more successful?
- F. In large group have students create “power map” of story (see lesson on “power mapping”)

EVALUATION:

1. Was it difficult to identify power relations (especially if the word power was not in the article)?
2. How is the story different when reading it according to power relations?
3. Can you think of an event in this group where there were power relations?
What event? What were the power relations?