

This document contains materials for a caucus debate role-play taught by Dr. Leslie Martin from the University of Mary Washington in SOCG 440 during the Spring 2020 semester:

Caucus One

Caucus Two

Caucus Three

Plan for day of caucus

Evaluation for caucus

SOCG 440 – Caucus One – Prompts & Roles

Caucus on school districts/neighborhood:

Non-leaders: Read these 3 statements, decide which you want to support after doing the readings, and considering the interests of your assigned role. The paragraph you turn in should have your name on top, the role you are embodying, and the NUMBER of the position you are supporting clearly indicated. Please do not rely on stereotypes or outrageous/judgmental assumptions. Use logic, sound reasoning, research, and the assigned reading (where possible.)

Leaders: You've been given one of these positions. Figure out how to support it using the assigned reading, any quick internet searches you choose to do, and what you can think of given the range of roles that will be represented in our caucus.

PROMPTS:

1. Neighborhood schools are valuable institutions that should be preserved and protected. (Why?)
2. School districts should re-draw school attendance boundaries to minimize race & class segregation. (Why?)
3. A system that allows parents and students choices, regardless of the neighborhoods they live in, best protects the interests of all. (why?)

ROLES: (Will be assigned by me, in class, a day before caucus.)

Current teacher in public school system

Aspiring teacher in public school system

Parent of 2 children, lives in suburb in recently purchased subdivision home

Religious parent of 3 children

Resident with no school aged children

Superintendent of public school system

8th grade student in public school system

Principal of private school

Parent of child in “magnet” school

Parent of child in “failing” school

Parent of 2 children in average school

Parent of child with special needs

10th grade student in average school

SOCG 440 – Caucus TWO – Prompts & Roles

Caucus on homeschooling:

Non-leaders: Read these 3 statements, decide which you want to support after doing the readings, and considering the interests of your assigned role. The paragraph you turn in should have your name on top, the role you are embodying, and the NUMBER of the position you are supporting clearly indicated. Please do not rely on stereotypes or outrageous/judgmental assumptions. Use logic, sound reasoning, research, and the assigned reading (where possible.)

Leaders: You've been given one of these positions. Figure out how to support it using the assigned reading, any quick internet searches you choose to do, and what you can think of given the range of roles that will be represented in our caucus.

PROMPTS:

1. Homeschooling should be the right of any parent, child, family – free from interference from the government. (Why?)
2. Homeschooling disadvantages students & school districts. (Why?)
3. Homeschooling can be a good option for some families, if the education provided meets the same standards of traditional schools. (Why?)

ROLES: (Will be assigned by me, in class, a day before caucus.)

Current teacher in public school system

College admissions director

Parent of 2 children, lives in suburb

Religious parent of 3 children

Superintendent of public school system

8th grade student in public school system

Principal of private school

Parent of child in “failing” school

Parent of 2 children in average school

Parent of child with special needs

10th grade student in average school

State legislator

SOCG 440 – Caucus THREE – Prompts & Roles

Caucus on ability grouping:

Non-leaders: Read these 3 statements, decide which you want to support after doing the readings, and considering the interests of your assigned role. The paragraph you turn in should have your name on top, the role you are embodying, and the NUMBER of the position you are supporting clearly indicated. Please do not rely on stereotypes or outrageous/judgmental assumptions. Use logic, sound reasoning, research, and the assigned reading (where possible.)

****Focus on building a strong argument: claim + evidence, in a logical order.**

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Leaders: You've been given one of these positions. Figure out how to support it using the assigned reading, any quick internet searches you choose to do, and what you can think of given the range of roles that will be represented in our caucus.

****Focus on building a strong argument – this is CRUCIAL for your role, and you will only have one chance to be persuasive. Think about what CLAIMS are important to sway supporters, and what KINDS OF EVIDENCE would best support your claims. You want to sway people on the basis of your very strong argumentation skills!!!**

PROMPTS:

1. Ability grouping provides instruction appropriate to the level of different students, so is a good educational strategy.
2. Ability grouping stigmatizes children by separating them and valuing their skills differently and so should not be used, whenever possible.
3. Students learn better in mixed-level groups, and so ability grouping is not the best strategy to promote learning.

ROLES: (Will be assigned by me, in class, a day before caucus.)

Current teacher in public school system

Parent

Superintendent of public-school system

8th grade student in public school system

Literacy specialist in elementary school

Parent of child identified as gifted

Parent of child with special needs

10th grade student in average school

5th grade “gifted” student

ISSUE CAUCUS: What's going to happen here today?

I. First things first - planning:

Caucus leaders: I will find a space for you to meet with the other leader supporting your position. You will have about 10 minutes to talk, refine argument, and plan for making your persuasive pitch for your position.

Caucus participants: Please talk with 1-2 people near you. Who are they? What's their perspective & why? NEXT: work together to develop questions for at least 2 of the positions.

II. Next – make your pitches:

Each pair of leaders will have about 5 minutes to make their best pitch to the class, as to why their assigned perspective is the best one.

III. Q&A:

Caucus goers will now have a chance to ask questions of caucus leaders. The time allotted for this will be at least 5 minutes, may run longer if it is raising good ideas.

IV. Align yourselves with perspective:

Caucus-goers: Consider the arguments you've hear, and consider the interests of someone in YOUR ROLE. You may have changed your mind from what you thought coming in to the caucus – that is FINE!!! Physically move yourself to show your support with whatever position seems to best resonate for someone in your role.

V. Second round?

Depending on how time is shaking out here, we may do a second round.

If that happens:

-caucus leaders, get new ideas from your supporters. Maybe they've thought of arguments or evidence you'd not thought of! Work on collaboratively building the best argument you can.

-then caucus leaders will have 1-2 minutes to make closing argument, to try to persuade MORE people to their side.

VI. Reflective Writing: (I'd like you to do this in class, can use back of this paper. But I'll accept something the next day, if you'd rather. Just don't spend more than 5-10 mins on it.)

At the end of the caucus, everyone will write a brief reflection of the experience.

Caucus Leaders: What did you learn about making good arguments in this process? Did anything change your understanding of the issue being debated? Did you change YOUR mind?

Caucus Goers: What position did you end with, why? Did you change opinions/positions? Why or why not? What was the best argument you heard (and why)?

Education Issue Caucus: Grading Rubric Name: _____

There are several elements of caucus participation; you won't do all of them every time.

1. Prep Paragraph: _____/10

Did you give thought to your role, and the interests of your role? Did you move past stereotype, and even used the reading or other sources to inform your perspective?

2. LEADERS Prep: _____/50

Did you clearly give thought to your perspective, and think about the varied ways to support this perspective? Did you consider all of the parts of an argument that we discussed – the claim, the assumptions underlying it (the warrant), and evidence to support your claim?

3. LEADERS oral communication: _____/30

Did you communicate effectively to the audience – using appropriate language, volume? How did you handle Q/A or other kinds of communication during the caucus?

4. Participants oral communication: _____/5

There are a couple of opportunities to talk during the caucus – during Q/A and when breaking into groups. Did you seize these, and use your time to move forward the content of our conversation?

5. Everyone Reflection: _____/10

Did you address the questions I posed at the end of class?

Total: _____/_____