

MODULE



Introduction to Activism

"N(OP)EA"

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Introduction

This module serves to give an introduction to activism, one of EnACT's new primary focuses alongside policy creation. Activism vocabulary will be introduced and connections to current events will be made.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to define activism and name its types.
2. Students will be able to name and describe several activist movements throughout history.
 - a. These include examples from inside and outside the United States.
3. Students will be able to identify different examples of activism

Activities

Defining Activism (10 min)

Purpose:

Students will be able to define activism and understand what role it plays in our society. This will also introduce the activity about the types of activism.

Materials:

Definition:

- <http://www.permanentculturenow.com/what-is-activism/>

Directions:

Use the first two discussion questions before beginning to lecture.

Define activism using the source above, and discuss what an activist is. Read the source before beginning to lecture, as the source discusses the fact that someone who carries out activism and an activist may not be the same person. Afterwards use the discussion questions below.

Discussion:

1. What are some activist movements you have heard of?

2. What constitutes an activist?
3. How does activism relate to your projects?

Types of Activism (30 min)

Purpose:

Students will be able to name different types of activism and be able to relate them back to their projects.

Materials:

List of Types:

1. Judicial
 - a. The efforts of public officials. Activists include public watchdogs and whistleblowers, holding the government accountable to oversight and ensuring transparency,
2. Economic
 - a. Involves the use of economic power or change. People will often use economic activism as a means to influence companies and organizations into supporting particular political, religious, or social values.
3. Environmental
 - a. Describes activism that helps protect the earth's natural environment

4. Internet

List of Activist Movements:

1. Indian Independence (for simplicity focus on Gandhi's movement)
2. American Civil Rights movement (for simplicity focus on one famous subset)
3. #MeToo Movement
4. Black Lives Matter
5. Conservationist movement
6. John Snowden incident

Directions:

Begin by identifying the above activist movements and have the students (in groups of four or so) group them into categories before telling them the types of activism. Then each group will explain their categories of the movements.

Discussion:

1. What types of activism relate to your activity?
2. Do activist movements achieve what they want to?
3. What are some examples of unsuccessful activist movements?

Student Activism Over Time (30 min)

Purpose:

To introduce historical examples of student-lead activism and identify changes in methodology over time. Asks students to identify parallels between the pitfalls of activism in the past and things that go wrong in modern activism.

Materials:

- o Bangladesh Student Protest history
- § <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxEbvW0m5A>
- o Current student protests

§ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-PvOMuJ3GE>

Directions:

(Current event: Student Climate Change Protests)

- Start by asking students about historical movements they know of in the U.S. that were led by youth. Discuss examples such as those from the civil rights movement, Vietnam war protests, etc. Try to avoid more modern topics like gun violence because it'll probably be discussed a lot in EnActivism.
- Show the two videos of Bangladeshi student protests from history to current times

Discussion

If discussion gets dull or people don't know the answers, know a little bit of history behind the older movements before the module or have students do a bit of research during the module.

- In the older demonstrations held by Bangladeshi students, what methods/types of activism were used?
- How did the government react?
- What outcomes did they reach?
- What didn't work?
- What are the differences in today's movement? Similarities? (In methods, outcomes, and reactions)
- Would you consider any of the demonstrations radical?
- What are the benefits and fallbacks of radical activism?

Student Passion Talks (20 min)

Purpose:

Allow students to practice their public speaking abilities and identify common pitfalls of a public speaker.

Materials:

N/A

Directions:

Optional: Facilitators will start out with their own 1 minute facilitator talks, with a 1-minute preparation time and 1-minute critique period afterward.

Have each student in class prepare a 1-minute speech for 2 minutes (while one student speaks, have another prepare). The topic can be of their own choosing or of yours, but make sure they have a topic before they go to prepare. After each speech, the class will give constructive criticism.

Discussion:

N/A

Snowballs of Activism (20 minutes, supplemental)

Purpose:

Students will be in the headspace to think about problems and how to solve them. It will give them the basic, barebones ideas of activism and then they will go more in depth as the module continues.

Materials:

- Piece of paper for each student
- Pens

Directions:

Each student will get a piece of paper. Ask the student to write down one big problem in the world such as Hunger. Then they will crumple up the papers and throw them around the room like a snowball fight. After that, ask the students to pick up the closest snowball and write down one solution to the problem. Throw it around a few more times to get more solutions and then, finally, have everyone pick their final ball and read aloud the problem and solutions.

Discussion:

1. Looking at these problems, are they conceivable to try to fix?
2. Read over the solutions, are they also possible or too out there?
3. How would you go about doing the solutions put on the paper if you were put in charge of this project?
4. People who have the same problem, are your solutions different? The same? Have you thought of different ways to implement them?
5. How do people with different solutions to problem come together in a group and implement things? (How do activist groups form with so many people?)

Rules for Radicals (30 minutes, supplemental)

Purpose:

Students will critically engage with methods used to engage in activism and be able to evaluate how these methods can stem from a certain activist philosophy and can be effective or ineffective in certain circumstances.

Materials:

Excerpt below.

Resources:

1. <http://www.openculture.com/2017/02/13-rules-for-radicals.html>
 - a. Source of the excerpt
2. <http://documents.theblackvault.com/documents/fbifiles/100-BA-30057.pdf>
 - a. Playboy interview with Saul Alinsky (scroll down a bit)

Directions:

Facilitators will give a summary of the life of Saul Alinsky and read the thirteen rules from *Rules for Radicals*. Then, the class will break out into a discussion.

Discussion:

1. What are some implicit assumptions made about activism in Saul Alinsky's rules?
2. Can any evidence of these assumptions be found in Alinsky's own activist philosophy and upbringing?
3. In what situations would these rules be effective and ineffective? (Optional due to required research) What are some real examples of Alinsky's rules being used in politics (both successful and unsuccessful)?

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Saul Alinsky is widely considered to be the father of community organization. He was born in a Chicago slum and this upbringing influenced him to try to de-slum the Back of the Yards neighborhood in Chicago which became infamous in Upton Sinclair's novel, *The Jungle*. Alinsky went on to create the Industrial Areas Foundation, that would organize social movements in neighborhoods by invitation from the poor or religious groups in those neighborhoods. Towards the end of his life, he published a book detailing his organization philosophy entitled *Rules for Radicals*. Below is an excerpt that details his thirteen rules.

1. "Power is not only what you have, but what the enemy thinks you have." Power is derived from 2 main sources – money and people. "Have-Nots" must build power from flesh and blood.
2. "Never go outside the expertise of your people." It results in confusion, fear and retreat. Feeling secure adds to the backbone of anyone.
3. "Whenever possible, go outside the expertise of the enemy." Look for ways to increase insecurity, anxiety, and uncertainty.
4. "Make the enemy live up to its own book of rules." If the rule is that every letter gets a reply, send 30,000 letters. You can kill them with this because no one can possibly obey all of their own rules.
5. "Ridicule is man's most potent weapon." There is no defense. It's irrational. It's infuriating. It also works as a key pressure point to force the enemy into concessions.
6. "A good tactic is one your people enjoy." They'll keep doing it without urging and come back to do more. They're doing their thing, and will even suggest better ones.
7. "A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag." Don't become old news.
8. "Keep the pressure on. Never let up." Keep trying new things to keep the opposition off balance. As the opposition masters one approach, hit them from the flank with something new.
9. "The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself." Imagination and ego can dream up many more consequences than any activist.
10. "The major premise for tactics is the development of operations that will maintain a constant pressure upon the opposition." It is this unceasing pressure that results in the reactions from the opposition that are essential for the success of the campaign.
11. "If you push a negative hard enough, it will push through and become a positive." Violence from the other side can win the public to your side because the public sympathizes with the underdog.
12. "The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative." Never let the enemy score points because you're caught without a solution to the problem.
13. "Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it." Cut off the support network and isolate the target from sympathy. Go after people and not institutions; people hurt faster than institutions.

References (use as bibliography)

1. Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing, Abridged Edition*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

http://www.apu.edu/live_data/files/333/blooms_taxonomy_action_verbs.pdf

- a. Provides a list of action verbs that can be used when writing objectives.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/finding-lessons-todays-protests-history-political-activism-180961309/>

2. I know this is wikipedia but its super tight

- a. Has really good stuff on types of activism

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Activism#Types_of_activism