Council of Experts

Grade Level: 4-9
Time: 45-90 minutes

Objectives:
- Identify personal assumptions regarding an issue.
- Research each issue for the truth underlying assumptions.
- Involve students in cooperative sharing and discussion.
- Encourage students to use evidence and research when considering an issue.

Curricular Connections: Civics

Materials/Resources: Chalkboard or flip chart paper

Procedure:
1) The team sits in a circle. Each team member takes two minutes to express his or her opinion on their chosen issue. Each issue should be presented as a simple statement such as: the water quality in our community’s homes is bad. Students are not allowed to make comments about others’ opinions, whether showing agreement or disagreement.
2) After all students have spoken, each opinion is open for a group discussion with the goal of answering two questions:
   - This opinion is true because (evidence of truth)
   - This opinion is untrue because (evidence of the contrary)
3) Once the group comes to a consensus, they research the issue to determine the “truth”.

Reflection:
- Discuss assumptions they may have about an issue and their research findings.

Assessment:
1. Ability to communicate reasoning and identify assumptions.

Source: Adapted from Keystone Science School’s Inquiry Workshop, May 2000