**Instructional Unit Title: Take a Stand**

**6th Grade**

The teacher may introduce a "controversial" topic (e.g., the use of hormones in cattle, genetically modified organisms) so that students can discuss and identify the issues of justice/inequity related to this topic.

The teacher may present research and position statements related to a controversial topic (see Learning Experience #1) so that students can begin to distinguish the difference between biased and unbiased information, as well as assumptions in people’s perspectives. [Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text]

The teacher may introduce/utilize a school-related controversy (e.g., school uniforms, school bullying policy, food in classrooms) so that students can begin collaboratively exploring and identifying the “sides” and perspectives related to this topic.

The teacher may use examples of productive group work and group roles so that students can begin to understand the relationship between collaborative (research) processes and effective group functioning.

The teacher may present research (e.g., video clips, media reports, articles) about hydraulic fracturing so students can use informational texts to gather evidence on the specifics of fracturing processes in relation to natural gas/fossil fuel extraction. [Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text]

The teacher may introduce diverse texts (e.g., video clips, media reports, articles) about hydraulic fracturing so students can use informational texts to gather evidence on the specifics of fracturing processes in relation to natural gas/fossil fuel extraction. [Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text]

The teacher may provide criteria and materials for evaluating the reliability of print and internet resources so that students can effectively assess biases/assumptions and distinguish between “more reliable” and “less reliable” resources. [Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text]

The teacher may provide a debate and consensus building activity (e.g., a Structured Academic Controversy) around the school controversy so that students can experience and determine a process for (orally) presenting, valuing, and respecting opinions in a negotiation process. [Understanding text, responding to text, critiquing text]

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**PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT:** You and fellow members of your expert team have been asked to participate in a mock trial on whether a local policy, rule, or “way of doing” things (a “practice”) is the right thing to do. Is the policy, rule, or practice right? Fair? Just? You are asked to “take a stand” and debate an opposing expert team on the issue. You will need to work collaboratively with your teammates to reach decisions, research, and plan your side of the mock trial. You will also need to explore your own biases and assumptions on the topic so that you are considering different perspectives by understanding your own stance on the issue.

This unit was authored by a team of Colorado educators. The unit is intended to support teachers, schools, and districts as they make their own local decisions around the best instructional plans and practices for all students. To see the entire instructional unit sample with possible learning experiences, resources, differentiation, and assessments visit [http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples](http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples).