

Asking Questions, Getting Answers:

Setting the Right Pace with
Pennsylvania's Civic Engagement and
Voting Initiative

PAACE Midwinter Conference, February 11, 2009
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Technology Center



Making Decisions

The Right Question Project Civic and Voter
Engagement Initiative
Voter Engagement for Election Day and Beyond

Making Decisions Activity

Every day you make decisions.
Small decisions and big ones.

A **decision** is the choice you make when you choose from among two or more choices.

Another word for choice is **option**.
So a decision is the "option" you choose from among two or more options.



For example, everyday you make decisions about what to wear . . .

You consider a lot of things when you make decisions – even when the decision is a simple one.

What did you do and think to make the decision of what to wear today?





There is a process or steps you take to make a decision – for example, before choosing what to wear, you might check the weather.

There are reasons for choosing an option – for example, you might choose to wear boots because it is snowing.



There are many times when you are not the decision maker and other people make decisions that affect you.

Knowing how to ask the right questions can help you:


- When you make decisions;
- When other people make decisions that affect you.

Imagine . . .

Today you decided what to wear, but imagine that tomorrow there's an election.

You will have a chance to choose between two candidates for the position of **Clothing Director**.


The person elected will make decisions about what you will wear for the next year.



Think about the things that you would like to know about the person who will be making these personal decisions for you.

Make a list of the questions you want to ask about the Clothing Director candidates . . .

Brainstorm some questions.





To support their adult learners' roles as active and engaged citizens, teachers need instructional materials and strategies that will increase their learners' critical thinking skills and engage them in civic responsibilities – including registering to vote and voting – based on informed decision-making processes.



The Right Question Project
Equal Conditions • Better Decisions • A Stronger Democracy

The Right Question Project has developed easy-to-use methods to help adults learn to think critically and participate in decisions that affect them.

The Right Question Project

A non-profit organization developing new methods and materials to assist people in low and moderate-income communities become active, more self-sufficient citizens.

www.rightquestion.org

**The Right Question Project
Voter Engagement Strategy for
Election Day and Beyond**

Teaches essential self-advocacy and democratic skills to potential voters

The RQP non-partisan strategy helps citizens learn to:

- Focus on key decisions that affect them.
- Ask good questions about those decisions.
- Expect and require accountable decision-making in all their encounters with public agencies and officials.

Questions and Decisions

- How to formulate your own questions
- How to focus on decisions and use specific criteria for accountable decision-making

Question Formulation Technique

- Produce questions
- Improve questions
- Strategize on how to use the questions

Framework for Accountable Decision-Making

- The reasons for the decision
- The process for making the decision
- The role you can play in the decision-making process

Research

2004 RQP Voter Education Pilot
New Hampshire and Arizona

A researcher at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University found clear examples of “strong success . . . particularly in strengthening critical thinking skills.”

PA Initiative

Practitioner Professional Development and Research

(Arizona, Indiana, Missouri,
New Mexico, Pennsylvania)

Research Component

Yale University's
Institution for Social and Policy Studies
www.yale.edu/isps

Professor Donald Green
Get Out the Vote
<http://research.yale.edu/GOTV>

Dr. Shang Ha

The Right Question Project

www.rightquestion.org
