



# *Teaching Wisdom*

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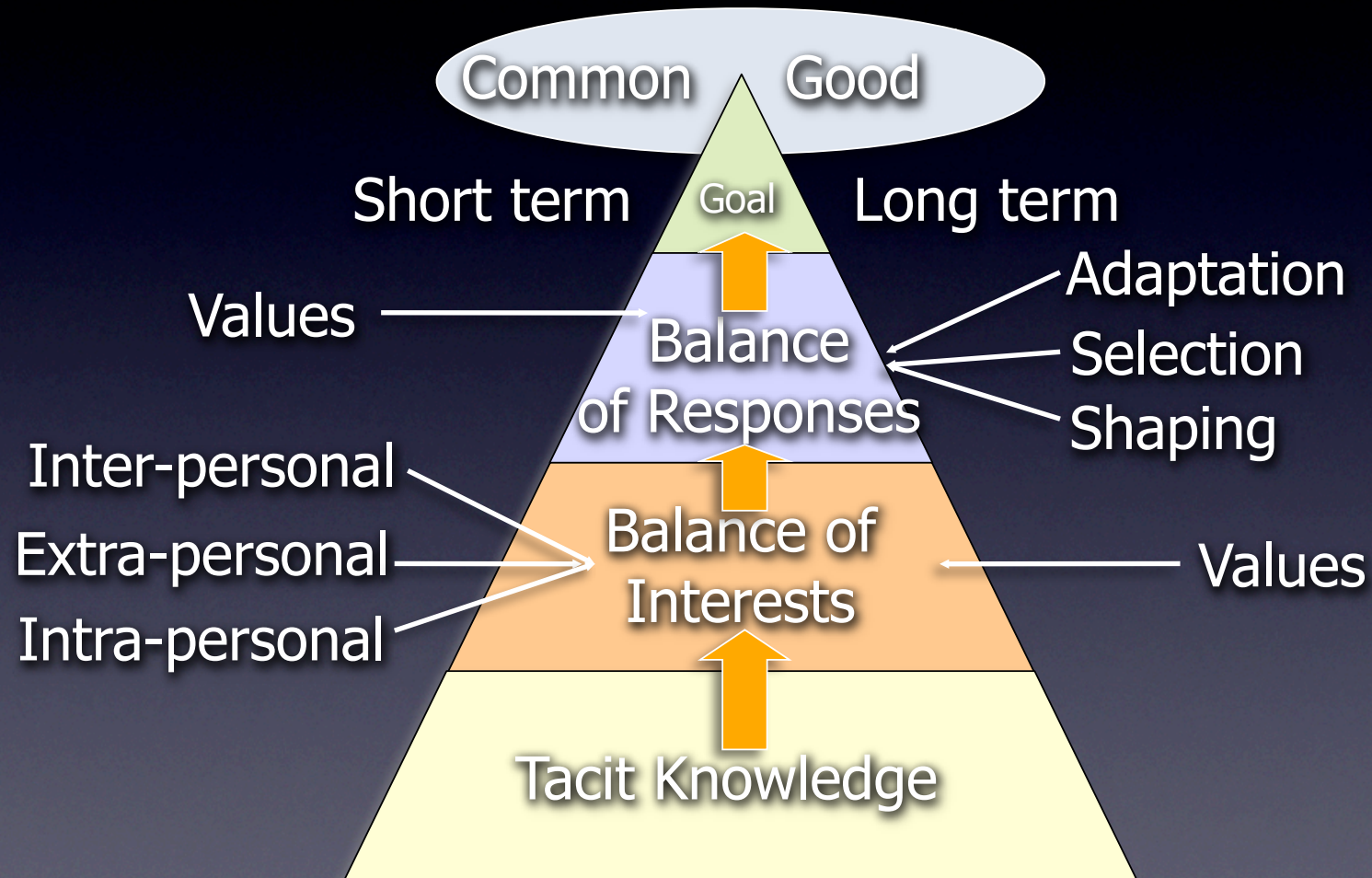
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Why should wisdom be included in the school curriculum?

# A balance theory of wisdom

(Sternberg, 1998)



# Wisdom Curriculum

- Have students read about wise judgments and decision making.
- Help students to learn to recognize their own interests, those of other people, and those of institutions.

## Thinking Wisely About History Teacher's Manual



### The Birth of The Nation

#### Unit 1

The Yale University PACE Center

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# Wisdom Curriculum

- Explore with students the notion that conventional abilities and achievements are not enough for a satisfying life.
- Demonstrate how wisdom is critical for a satisfying life.

## Becoming Wiser




- ✓ What is the "common good"?
- ✓ What values do I have?
- ✓ What is the relationship between values and actions?
- ✓ How can I become a better person?
- ✓ What can I learn from others?
- ✓ What is a rational argument?
- ✓ What should I believe?

# Wisdom Curriculum

- Teach students to search for and then try to reach the common good.
- Teach students that the “means” by which the end is obtained matters, not just the end.

transparency 2A

Achieving The Common Good = Reaching A Balance



You Others

Achieving the common good involves trying to find a solution that works best for everyone involved, not just for yourself or those like you.

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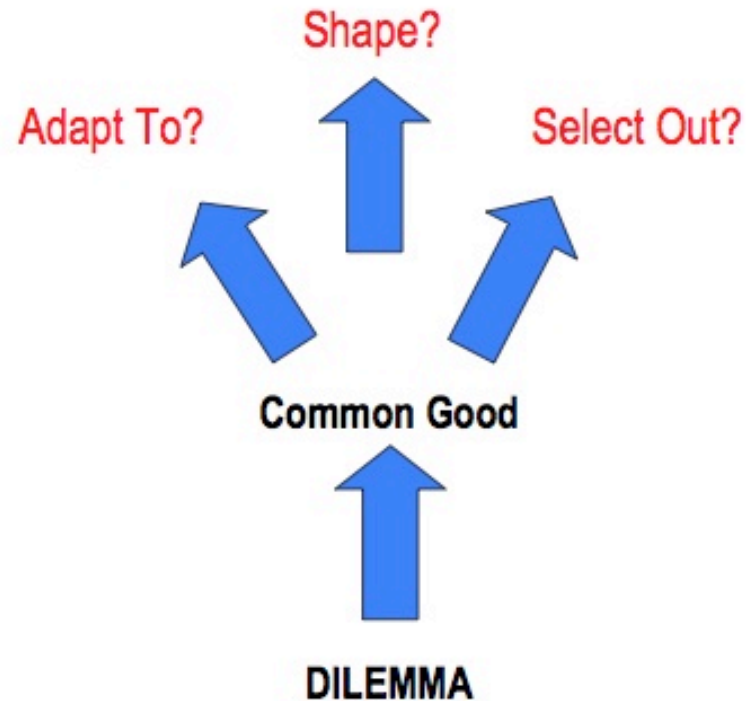
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# Wisdom Curriculum

- Help students learn the roles of adaptation, shaping, and selection, and how to balance them.
- Teach students the usefulness of interdependence.

## Solving A Dilemma



# Wisdom Curriculum

- Encourage students to think dialectically, realizing that the answer to an important life question can differ at different times in one's life.
- Help students learn to balance their own interests, those of other people, and those of institutions.

Transparency 36A

## Resolving Dilemmas

A **dilemma** is a problem that requires a choice between several solutions.

### Mike's Dilemma

Mike has been having trouble with another boy in his class, David, who keeps making fun of him, calling him nasty names, and telling him he is a wimp. One day Mike confronts David and tells him to stop bothering him and his friends. David challenges Mike to a fight after school.

Given this situation, what should Mike do? Why?

Dilemmas of the American colonists:

Dilemmas of the British:

Your dilemma:



*hmm.....*

# Wisdom Curriculum

- Encourage and reward wisdom.
- Teach students to monitor events in their lives and their own thought processes about these events.

## Thinking Wisely About History Teacher's Manual



## The Land of the Free? Slavery in the United States

### Unit 2

The Yale University PACE Center

The Yale University PACE Center

# Wisdom Curriculum

- Show students the importance of dialogical thinking - understanding interests and ideas from multiple points of view.
- Encourage students to form, critique, and integrate their own values in their thinking.

Transparency 1A

## Questioning the Credibility of Columbus's Accounts

- ✓ Is it a primary or a secondary source?
- ✓ How large is the lapse of time between the described events and the reporting?
- ✓ Does Columbus ever reflect the point of view of the locals?
- ✓ Was the accuracy of Columbus's account affected by the fact that he did not try to reflect the perspectives of the locals?
- ✓ Did he write his description using a systematic, deliberate process?
- ✓ Did Columbus have motivation (i.e., his religious or political beliefs) to distort the information?



# Wisdom Curriculum

- Help students understand the importance of inoculating oneself against the pressures of unbalanced self-interest and small-group interest.
- Role-model wisdom - because what you do is more important than what you say.

## Solving Dilemmas: Useful Questions

1. Who is involved in this dilemma?
  - a. Main individual:
  - b. Other individuals or groups:
2. What are the interests, points of view, or deeper goals and concerns of the individual or groups involved in the situation?
  - a. Interests of main individual identified in question 1:
  - b. Interests of other individual or group identified in question 1:
3. What are the values or principles deemed important by the main individual or group solving the dilemma?
4. Identify the desired result that is shared by everyone involved. What is the "good" in common for all involved that the main individual or group should work toward?
5. List two or more possible and realistic responses to the dilemma.
6. Which of the responses listed above is the best response, and why?



# “Coaching for Wisdom”

Peter Webb (2008)

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