

Issues that influence people's lives are often controversial in nature

We can take some of the guesswork

out of these problems if we have a framework

for categorizing controversial

public issues

The first step is to identify whether the public issue has a direct link to an underlying problem

An approach to deal with education on a topic like this is to determine the clarity of the underlying problem

- obesity
- teen pregnancy
- · the opioid epidemic
- · climate change
- GMO's
- COVID-19
- pesticide spray drift
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Let's look at a framework

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Conducting educational programs on these topics can put outreach educators in a position where they feel uncomfortable

There is a fear of being labeled as "biased"

Or being criticized for "crossing the line"

Education versus advocacy - is there a line?

If so, where is it drawn, and who draws it?

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A typology of public issues

Type I Type II Type III

Underlying Problem

Solution to Problem

Clear Clear Unclear

Solution to Problem

Clear Several To be alternatives discovered

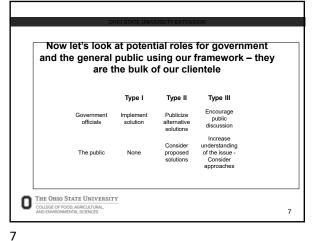
Examples Potholes in streets Inadequate school funding sprawl

Let's think of some Type I, II and III issues that outreach educators face

- How easy is it to identify the underlying problem associated with a public issue?
- What about measuring the clarity of the problem?
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Again let's do some examples on issues that may arise Some from your own experience Others you have heard about Hypothetical ones that might appear in the future THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Now let's look at educator roles Type II Type III Content Expert Provide information Analyze Conduct proposed solutions research & analysis Frame the issue in Facilitate Process Experts None public - Facilitate deliberation THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Content expert roles (focus on research and teaching) Issue monitor – identify emerging public issues Issue researcher - conduct applied research, including public Information provider - teaching of actual content related to issue/problem THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Content expert roles (Continued) Technical advisor – interpreting information for stakeholders Policy analyst – analyzing policy alternatives with their likely consequences THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Process Expert Roles (focus on facilitation) Stakeholder analyst - meeting with stakeholder groups to understand their views on the issue Meeting convener/facilitator – bringing stakeholders together to exchange views and build understanding Issue framer – finding a way to describe the issue in public terms to increase the chances of public participation THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY 12

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Process Expert Roles

(Continued)

- Public forum convener developing a process to involve the public in seeking solutions to a public problem
- Forum moderator facilitating a public discussion to produce deliberation and shared understanding
- Designer/facilitator of a formal dispute resolution process functioning as part of a trained outreach team in dealing with polarized issues/disputes
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Thanks for attending!

Good luck in your outreach!

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Conclusions and Caveats

- Be very careful about using the following terms: scientific, researchbased and unbiased. They are all over-rated and over-used. Besides, they can backfire on you, and you don't need that
- Instead, use the term "evidence"
- Be aware of the limits of your own knowledge and expertise, but if you are staying within those limits, there is no need to be deferential
- "Balance" is NOT necessarily appropriate in educational outreach can you think of circumstances in your own field where it would or would not be?
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References/ Reading (continued)

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