

Case 4: Who gets a say when a shared room changes?

The Common Room’s board is weighing paid rentals on two free evenings, so the crew prepares a comment before the meeting.

On your own Read What happened. Underline who decides and what the board is considering. About 5 minutes.

Your role: You’re the one who checks the budget figures before the crew speaks to the board. **New skill:** Weigh the trade-offs of each option.



Mari shows Sami a printed schedule.

What happened

It is the Friday after the crew’s first screening, and the board meeting is coming up. A small neighborhood nonprofit runs the Common Room alongside the bookshop. The nonprofit’s board is considering paid rentals on two evenings a week to help cover staffing. No vote has happened yet.

Mari, 19, works the bookshop counter and closes the shop. She knows that “just keep it free” does not pay the evening staff. Sami runs a print workshop in the room after her afternoon shift. It is one of the few step-free rooms nearby.

Caio, 24, runs the crew’s Tuesday film night. Tuesday is one of the evenings Option B would rent out. Mateo already has a headline for a petition. The crew agrees the room matters, but they do not agree on the best schedule.

Your question: Which option should the crew support, and what should they ask the board?

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example. Then write your first guess in the box. About 5 minutes.

Proposal A proposal is a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet.

En español: propuesta

In this case: Option B is a proposal on the board's agenda. No vote has been taken, so it is not a decision yet.

Trade-off A trade-off is a choice where getting one benefit means accepting a cost or giving something up.

En español: compensación entre opciones

In this case: Paid rentals help close the \$200 weekly gap but take away free evenings Sami and Dec use.

Decision-maker A decision-maker is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice.

En español: quien toma la decisión

In this case: The nonprofit board decides, not a city community board and not the crew.

Who is involved



Mari

Closes the bookshop, then stays for zine night

"I'm the one they pay to lock up, and I'm also one of the people using this room after. I can't pretend either half away."



Sami

Runs a print workshop in the room

"We keep deciding what the evening people need. Has anyone asked them yet?"

Before you look at the evidence, what do you think the crew should ask the board for?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Reading passage

A headline is not a budget

On your own Read the passage. At each Stop and think box, pause and answer the question in your head or with a partner. About 5 minutes.

Words to know

- **Proposal:** A proposal is a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet.
- **Trade-off:** A trade-off is a choice where getting one benefit means accepting a cost or giving something up.
- **Decision-maker:** A decision-maker is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice.
- **Framing:** Framing is choosing which parts of a situation a message brings forward.

The story: A room with two kinds of value

It is the Friday after the crew's first screening, and the board meeting is coming up. The Common Room is run by a small neighborhood nonprofit alongside the bookshop, and its board is considering paid rentals on two evenings a week to help cover staffing. Nothing has been decided. Still, the group chat moves fast. Mateo announces that he already has a petition headline.

Mari slows him down. She is 19, works the bookshop counter and is the person paid to close the shop at night. She is also one of the people who use the room afterward, for zine nights with her friends. "I can't pretend either half away," she says. On rental nights, she would be staffing a stranger's event instead of making zines. Maybe that is fine, she admits, but it is still a cost, and nobody has written it down.

Sami, who works afternoons and runs a print workshop in the room in the evening, points to a different gap. The crew keeps deciding what evening users need without asking them. Moving her workshop online would not help. Her printing tools do not fit in a video call. Mateo reads the thread and concedes the point. He had a headline. He did not have the budget.

? **Stop and think.** Mari is paid to close the shop and also uses the room at night. How does that shape what she asks for?

Options, numbers and trade-offs

Start with the Case 1 skill and read the original documents. The board agenda lists three options for discussion. Option A keeps the free evenings, and the funding gap remains.

Options, numbers and trade-offs, continued

Option B replaces the Tuesday and Thursday evenings with paid rentals. Option C pilots one rental evening for six weeks while the board seeks more funding. Each is a **proposal**, a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet.

The weekly budget note shows \$600 in evening staffing and utilities against \$400 in grants and donations, a \$200 gap. Each rental is projected to add \$120 after its extra costs. Two would add \$240 and one would add \$120, but the note warns that demand is uncertain. The listening notes add the human side. Sami works afternoons. Dec rehearses on Thursdays. Mari closes the shop. A nearby resident worries about late noise, and the meeting time overlaps several shifts.

Every option is a **trade-off**, a choice where getting one benefit means accepting a cost or giving something up. Case 2 taught you to ask what a task is meant to measure. Ask the same of each option: what problem is it designed to solve? Case 1's idea of **framing** helps too. Option B frames the \$200 gap as the problem and the free evenings as the price. That frame leaves two questions open. Who loses those evenings, and what happens if bookings come in lower than projected? Ask the same questions about your own favorite option.

 **Stop and think.** Option B frames the \$200 gap as the problem. What does that way of stating the problem leave out?

Who decides, in the room and in the city

A **decision-maker** is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice. The nonprofit's board controls its own schedule. A city is different. When budget cuts closed New York's libraries on Sundays, Brooklyn's last Sunday of service was December 17, 2023 (NY1, November 17, 2023). The restored funding, part of a \$58.3 million investment, let the libraries resume Sunday service in July 2024 (NYC Mayor's Office, July 1, 2024). Council members credited New Yorkers who called and wrote (New York City Council, July 14, 2024).

Other communities have handed more of the choice to residents. Evanston, Illinois, let anyone 14 and older help decide how to spend \$3 million in public money (PBS, May 29, 2024). Your role in this case is to check the budget figures before the crew speaks to the board.

 **Stop and think.** If the board chooses an option the crew did not support, how should the crew tell the group what happened?

Sources

Real source | NY1 | November 17, 2023

Public libraries over the next two weeks to begin closing on Sundays

Real source | NYC Mayor's Office | July 1, 2024

Real source | New York City Council | July 14, 2024

Real source | PBS (Preserving Democracy) | May 29, 2024

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Look at the evidence

On your own Read each document. For each one, write what it shows and what it leaves out. About 10 minutes.

Evidence A | Board agenda, Wednesday 6:30 p.m. meeting

The proposal

Evening rentals, for discussion. Option A: keep the current free evenings; the funding gap remains. Option B: replace Tuesday and Thursday evenings with paid rentals. Option C: pilot one rental evening for six weeks while seeking additional funding. No vote has been taken.

Look closely: Is this a vote or a discussion? Which words tell you?

What it shows

What it leaves out

Evidence B | Weekly budget note for the board

The budget note

Evening staffing and utilities: \$600. Current grants and donations: \$400. Each paid rental is projected to add \$120 after its extra costs. Two bookings would add \$240; one would add \$120. Demand is uncertain.

Look closely: Which number is a guess, and what could change it?

What it shows

What it leaves out

Look at the evidence, continued

Evidence C | Listening notes from evening users

The missing voices

Sami works afternoons. Dec rehearses on Thursdays. Mari closes the shop. A nearby resident worries about late noise. The proposed meeting time overlaps with several shifts.

Look closely: Whose voice is missing from these four notes?

What it shows

What it leaves out

What is still missing from the evidence?

Notes

Key idea: trade-offs

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics. Then answer the question in the box. About 8 minutes.

The board is weighing a **proposal** about the free evenings. A proposal is a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet. Option B would help close the \$200 weekly gap, but it would end the free Tuesday and Thursday evenings. A **trade-off** is a choice where getting one benefit means accepting a cost or giving something up. Every option on the agenda has one, including the one you prefer.

Carol Bacchi’s policy-analysis approach asks what a proposed solution assumes the problem is. Option B treats the \$200 gap as the problem and two free evenings as the price. That leaves two questions open: who loses those evenings, and what happens if bookings come in lower than projected? Ask the same questions about your own favorite option.

A **decision-maker** is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice. Here, the nonprofit’s board controls its own schedule. A community board or a city agency would follow other rules. A strong comment names the proposal, explains one effect with evidence and asks for a decision the board can make. The board can still choose an option the crew did not ask for.

Professional standards

Real source | American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

ASPA Code of Ethics: 5. Fully Inform and Advise

“Provide accurate, honest, comprehensive, and timely information and advice to elected and appointed officials and governing board members”

In plain words: ASPA members agree to give decision-makers, such as board members, accurate and complete information.

Question: The budget note projects \$120 more per rental. What should it also tell the board about how certain that is?

Your answer

The note should also say ____, because ____.

A real district let students propose and vote on how shared school spaces and money would change.



A city pilot that changes a shared space for a trial run, so neighbors can test trade-offs before anything is permanent.

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Sort the evidence

On your own Follow each option to its consequences. Mark the consequences that depend on a projection. About 8 minutes.

Follow each option to its consequences. Which consequences depend on a projection, and who carries the cost if it misses?

Option B: paid rentals replace Tuesday and Thursday evenings

A projected \$240 would cover the \$200 gap if both evenings book

Who is affected

Check: What happens if bookings fall short of the projection?

Dec loses Thursday rehearsals and Mari’s late evenings stop being usable

Who is affected

Option C: one rental evening piloted for six weeks

A projected \$80 gap remains while the board seeks funding and reviews the pilot

Who is affected

Check: What happens if bookings fall short of the projection?

Whose perspective is missing?

Whose view is missing from these documents? What would you ask them?

The view that is missing is _____. I would ask _____.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose what the crew should ask for first and explain why. Then fix the two marked lines. About 6 minutes.

What should the crew ask the board for first?

- ☐ **A** Post that the board is taking away the free nights.
- ☐ **B** Ask for the budget assumptions, who uses each evening and a way to comment without attending.
- ☐ **C** Support whichever option brings in the most money.

Why I chose it

Improve a draft

A student's first draft

1 The board should not take away our free nights. The Common Room is important to the community and a lot of people use it. I have been coming here for movie nights since it opened and it's one of the only places we can all hang out without paying. Renting it out just shows **2** the board cares more about money than people. Sami and Dec would lose their spot and that is not fair. Please keep it free for everyone. Thank you for listening.

Rewrite each marked phrase so it says only what the evidence supports.

Rewrite phrase 1

Rewrite phrase 2

Grades 9–10

Your task

On your own Read the steps. Fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft. About 8 minutes.

Prepare a 90-second public comment recommending an option, using at least one figure accurately.

Use: All three evidence cards.

You'll make: 90-second spoken comment (about 200 words) with written script

Time: 50 minutes

- 1 Choose one option from the agenda in Evidence A to support.
- 2 Find one figure in Evidence B that supports your choice.
- 3 Name one person in Evidence C whose evening your option changes.
- 4 Write a comment of about 200 words on the Your draft page.
- 5 Ask the board for one decision or follow-up it can make.
- 6 Read your comment aloud to a partner and time it at 90 seconds or less.



Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

The option I support

One figure, stated as a projection

Someone the choice affects

My request

On your own Write your draft in the boxes. Use your planner from the page before. About 18 minutes.

Good evening.

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Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions and mark your level in each rubric row. Then write one change you made. About 8 minutes.

Does your comment name the option you support?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Does it use one figure correctly, with words like “projected”?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Does it name someone the change would affect?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Does it ask for a decision the board can make?	☐ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ No figures or perspectives.	☐ Mentions money or people vaguely.	☐ Uses one figure and one affected perspective accurately.	☐ Uses figures conditionally and names an uncertainty.
Reasoning	☐ Assigns bad motives to the board.	☐ States a preference without addressing the gap.	☐ Recommends an option and addresses the gap.	☐ Weighs trade-offs across options and explains the choice.
Audience & purpose	☐ Speaks to the wrong decision-maker.	☐ Addresses the board but asks for nothing specific.	☐ Makes a request the board can act on.	☐ Requests a process that includes people who can't attend.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Tone edits only.	☐ Replaces a motive claim with evidence.	☐ Adds a figure, a perspective and a follow-up request.

My time when I read it aloud

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I changed ___ because ___.

I changed ___ because ____.

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Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question. Then finish My take. About 10 minutes.

- 1** Option B treats the \$200 gap as the problem. What does that way of stating the problem leave out?

- 2** Mari is paid to close the shop and also uses the room at night. How does that shape what she asks for?

- 3** If the board chooses an option the crew did not support, how should the crew tell the group what happened?

My take

My claim: ____.

The best evidence is ____, because ____.

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

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Talk about this case at home

Case 4: Who gets a say when a shared room changes?

In this case, a community room's board is weighing whether to rent out two free evenings to cover its costs. Your student used a budget note and notes from evening users to write a comment the board could act on.

Questions to talk about

- 1 Who decides the hours at a public library or community center?
- 2 What should a group know before it asks a board for a change?
- 3 How can people give input if they cannot attend a meeting?

Nobody needs to share personal stories or private information to talk about this case.



See the case online.