EXAMPLE:

**Define Problem**

**Problem, stated as an open-ended question**

We debated about the possibility of tweaking our question to investigate whether schools should even be faced with the controversy and responsibility of sex education. Although we will certainly examine that idea in our discussions, we have decided that for now we would rather keep our question in an open-ended format. Thus we will keep our original question:

**What would be the best approach to sex education at Whispering Pines High School?**

**Analyze the Problem**

**Characteristics** (Mark Schneider): Some symptoms that indicate that there is a problem concerning the issue include the continuing occurrence of teen pregnancies, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)—including AIDS—sex crimes (including rape), and heated debates sparked by the moral/religious differences that exist in communities. The issues appear to be perceived health, morality, and control.

There could be a violation of freedom of speech by preventing schools from teaching a comprehensive course, while the rights of those opposing any sex education in school stand in jeopardy (citation). A compromised solution implies that many do not get what they want.

Creating a solution to our problem is difficult because of the diverse views we are addressing. Sex education is a very sensitive subject, and it is involves a variety of opinions for parents, children, and teachers. The parents that are involved at Whispering Pines are split into three groups that have different ideas about sex education for their children. This gives us no choice but to develop a more complex program with different options in order to satisfy each group. However, because it is a private school, the process of getting approval for our program is far less time consuming.

OURS:

Once you’ve defined your problem, you now need to research aspects of the problem so you don’t duplicate mistakes or miss solutions already done.

Each member will research one or more of the areas below and bring the information to your next meeting. Remember to bring your source citations as well.

#### Problem Analysis Areas

1. Characteristics:What are the symptoms of the problem? Include positive as well as negative aspects of the current situation.

### The problem:

You work with a team of fifteen coworkers. Each of you works four hours a day, five days a week, on either the morning, afternoon, or evening shift. Your manager has left it up to the fifteen of you to work out who will work what shift. No one really wants the evening shift. Right now, the six workers who are married are refusing to work the evening shift, arguing that they need time to be home with their spouses. They claim that their family needs are more important than the wishes of the unmarried workers, who would like evenings free to study or socialize. Your manager does not want to get involved in deciding who works which shift, but wants to approve your final proposal.

### Your problem question:

"How can we assign shifts in a way that is acceptable to all fifteen workers?"

### Some sample criteria:

Our solution

* must ensure that the office is staffed with five workers on all shifts.
* will be acceptable to the manager.

Define Problem

How do we staff all shifts with 5 people, and make it equal for everyone?

Some symptoms that indicate that there is a problem is that no one really wants to work the evening shift, but five people need to cover that shift. There are those that are married, that want to be with their families and spend time with them, whereas there are those who are not married but are going to school and need to study and want to socialize outside of working.

On the positive side of picking out the schedule without the manager, there is more talking amongst coworkers and a little more flexibility to choose what shift. You can work through problems as a team. As a group, we discussed the possibility of having a raise whilst working the evening shift to give an incentive to want to work. We also discussed the possibility of making it mandatory to work so many evening shifts a week so that it is equal amongst coworkers and not just the same people. There is also the possibility of switching shifts so that everyone gets a chance to work all the shifts and switch every couple of months so that those going to school will have a heads up and can plan accordingly.

On the negative side, not all coworkers may take their turn in working the evening shift. Many may not be as flexible and the incentive for a pay raise may not work for some people. With being put into groups of 3, one coworker may get stuck with four other coworkers who don’t want to work as hard and slack off a bit, leaving that coworker to lift every one’s weight on the job. Switching every so many months may also be tedious and with school, may become more of a burden to some.