

Classroom Strategies for Building Active Listening Skills



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Classroom Strategies

- Continuum/take a stand
- Active Listening/Civil Conversations
- C3 Inquiries
- Guided discussions
- Socratic smackdown
- Moot courts—structured format for considering constitutional issues
- Debates
- Philosophical Chairs discussion
- Legislative hearings—structured format for debating and considering solutions to problems

Take a Stand/Continuum

- Select a controversial topic—immigration
- Phrase either/or question:
 - Those who think the 11 million undocumented or illegal immigrants should be given a path to citizenship stand to the right
 - Those who think they should not stand to the left
 - Those who are not sure stand in the middle
- Ask those at either ends to explain WHY they take their position—no rebuttals, only explaining and listening
- Have people move to better reflect a “continuum” of views
- Ask each person who was unsure if what they heard helped them decide to move one way or the other and ask them to move to the appropriate spot
- Ask others if they changed their views based on what they heard and ask them to move to the appropriate spot
- Value: explaining, listening, reflecting and changing views

Consider a little research...

- Sources
- *Teaching Tolerance—Ten Myths about Immigration*
<http://www.tolerance.org/immigration-myths>
- *Federal Reserve Bank report, "The Effect of Immigrants on U.S. Employment and productivity,"* <http://www.frbsf.org/economic-research/publications/economic-letter/2010/august/effect-immigrants-us-employment-productivity/>
- **Pro-immigration:** *American Immigration Council*
<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org>
- **Anti-immigration:**
 - *Americans for Immigration Control, Inc. (AIC)*
<http://www.immigrationcontrol.com/>
 - *Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)*
<http://www.fairus.org/about>
- Ask for opinions again—what changed your mind?

Active Listening/Civil Conversations

- Select a controversial issue—gun control
- Place 4-6 chairs in front of the classroom
- Forms teams of two, three or four people
- First person states viewpoint and briefly explains why
- No one interrupts
- Opposite side takes turn making argument
- Before person across from him or her can respond, must in some way restate his or her understanding of what has been said.

Socratic Smackdown

- A discussion set up as a game with points.
- Teams of 4-6 students discuss texts and use textual evidence to make connections and ask thought-provoking questions.
- Student will points whenever they make constructive contributions to the discussion and lose points if they exhibit disrespectful behaviors, such as interrupting their teammates.
- By the end of game play, students have learned how to work together as teams and a class and contribute meaningfully to a discussion.
- <http://www.instituteofplay.org/work/projects/print-play-games-2/socratic-smackdown/>

Compare your views with the candidates' views

- Trump position papers:
<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/POSITIONS>
- Clinton position papers:
<https://www.hillaryclinton.com/issues/>

Criteria Category	Candidate 1	Candidate 2
Issue 1:	Position:	Position:
Points	Sources:	Sources:
Issue 2:	Position:	Position:
Points	Sources:	Sources:
Issue 3:	Position:	Position:
Points	Sources:	Sources:
Qualifications		
Points	Sources:	Sources:
Character Traits		
Points	Sources:	Sources:

Candidate Criteria Chart

- Establish a range of points for each criterion: 1-10 (low to high)
- Use the scale of 1 to 10 to measure the candidate's positions as compared to:
 - American Ideals
 - your own views on the issue
 - How realistic the candidate's position is
 - The cost of the candidate's proposal
 - Add other criteria that you think are important
- Measure the candidate's qualifications in terms of relevant experience, skills, dedication, public service
- Measure the candidate's character by selecting positive character traits, such as composure, flexibility, and resolve

The Candidate Criteria Chart is adapted from an article by Brett L.M. Levy, in the Sept. 2016 edition of NJCC's *Social Education*

C3 Inquiries

**Dimension 1:
Developing
Questions and
Planning
Inquiries**

**Dimension 2:
Applying
Disciplinary Tools
and Concepts**

**Dimension 3:
Evaluating
Sources and
Using Evidence**

**Dimension 4:
Communicating
Conclusions and
Taking Informed
Action**

Developing
Compelling and
Supporting
Questions

Planning Inquiries

Civics

Economics

Geography

History

Gathering
(research) and
Evaluating Sources

Developing Claims
and Using Evidence

Communicating and
Critiquing
Conclusions

Taking Informed
Action

C3 Inquiry regarding the presidential election

1. Compelling question: Whose views are more consistent with American values?
2. Apply disciplinary tools and concepts regarding American values
3. Research—evaluate sources and use evidence
4. Communicating conclusions and taking action (voting!)

Questions? Comments?



- Will send Powerpoint
- Will send Survey with pd certificate