

Using the Take-a-Stand Method

Purpose of Method

The take-a-stand method is a more complex version of the barometer method, because students choose from seven possible positions in response to a statement or question, forcing them to more precisely identify their opinions. Like the barometer method, this method ensures that all the students express their reactions to the statements or questions posed and offers the students the opportunity to get up, walk around, and nourish their brain cells through action and thought.

This exercise invites all the students to develop their understanding of a concept by hearing other perspectives, understanding others' points of view, and developing the ability to empathize with viewpoints differing from their own. This exercise invites the students to understand the concept according to understanding facets four and five of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's *Understanding by Design* (Prentice Hall, 2005): interpretation and empathy.

Materials You Will Need to Prepare Ahead of Time

- a list of fifteen to twenty statements or questions about a particular topic
- a roll of masking tape
- seven signs of a size that can be read by all when posted on the walls of the room:
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Undecided
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

The Take-a-Stand Method in Steps

1. Prepare for this exercise by creating a list of fifteen to twenty statements or questions about a particular concept. Post the seven signs you created ahead of time around the perimeter of the classroom.

2. Ask the students to stand in a circle around the perimeter of the classroom. Explain to them the reason for the signs around the classroom and ask them to move to one of the signs after you read each statement or question.

3. Read the first statement and wait for all the students to stand beneath the sign of their choice. When all the students have "taken a stand" on the statement, invite one student from each sign to explain his or her reason for choosing that particular position.



4. Repeat step 3 until you have read all of the statements. If some of the earlier statements on your list spur deep discussion, you may choose to forego some of the later statements.

5. When the list has been exhausted, lead a discussion with the students about what all of the statements have in common.

