

The Three D's: Decide, Debate, Discuss

Purpose

Students articulate and reflect on their opinions about controversial questions. This protocol not only provides practice in the social dimensions of debate, but encourages students to support, reflect on, and possibly change their opinions based on logic and evidence.

Materials

- Large “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” signs

Procedure

1. Post a sign at each end of the classroom. At one end, post “Strongly Agree.” At the other end, post “Strongly Disagree.”
2. Tell students that today they will be using the Three Ds protocol, which will allow them to share and explain their opinions. After they hear a statement, they will **decide** on their position about the topic and move to one side of the room or the other, or along an imaginary line of “middle ground.” They will have the opportunity to **debate** and **discuss** why they decided to stand where they did.
3. Explain the steps of the protocol:
 - After you make a statement, you will pause for students to think and then ask all students to decide on their position and move to their spot. Point out that since one side of the room is labeled “Strongly Disagree” and the other side labeled “Strongly Agree,” this means that the middle of the room is undecided, but students can position themselves relatively closer to one side or another depending on which direction they are leaning.
 - Ask students to debate and discuss their opinions, making sure to hear from people on different sides of the room. If appropriate, students should use textual evidence.
 - If a student hears an opinion that changes his mind, he can move to a different part of the room.
4. Model how the protocol will work. Make a statement (such as “Chocolate ice cream is delicious”) and show students how you would move to reflect your opinion. The modeling helps students internalize how to position themselves.
5. As you use the protocol, repeat each statement twice.

Variations

- Students may stand up or sit down in their places.
- Use the protocol to enhance the writing process for persuasive or argumentative pieces.
- Use the protocol as an effective formative assessment.