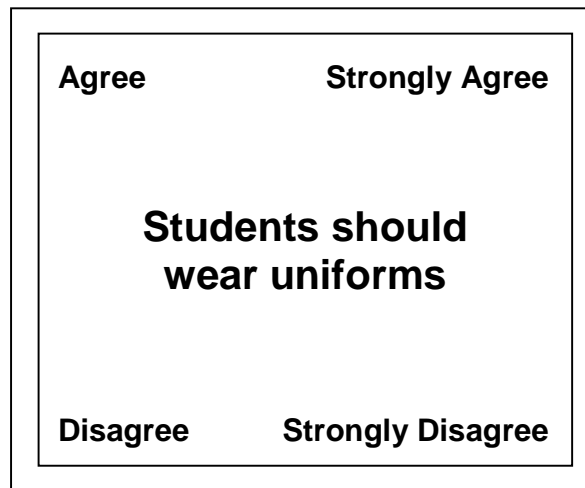


Four Corners

Overview

The Four Corners strategy is an approach that asks students to make a decision in relation to a problem posed or a question asked. Possible responses (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) are placed in each of the four corners of the classroom. Students move to the corner that best aligns with their thinking. They share their ideas within their corner and then come to consensus. One member of each group shares the result of the discussions with the whole class.



Steps

1. Present a statement or issue, or pose a question.
2. Provide four alternate responses (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), and place one response in each corner of the classroom.
3. Give students at least 10 seconds to think on their own ("think time").
4. Ask students to choose the corner with the response that best represents their point of view.
5. Ask students to pair with a partner in their corner and share with their partner the reasons behind their decision.
6. Ask each group to come to consensus and select one person to share the group's reasoning and decision with the whole class.

Four Corners (continued)

Hints and Management Ideas

- Inform students that they should be prepared to share their own responses or their partner's responses if asked.
- Give "think time" (at least 10 seconds) in order to encourage independent thinking and prevent students from simply going to the corner a friend selects.
- Make sure that students get into groups of no more than two or three, which will make them more accountable for their reasoning and give them time to talk.
- Monitor the discussions. It is important to listen to some of the discussions so that common confusions can be addressed and unique ideas shared with the whole group.

Benefits of Four Corners

- When students have appropriate "think time", the quality of their responses improves.
- Students stay on track because they are accountable for sharing with the rest of the class.
- More of the critical thinking is retained after a lesson in which students have had an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the topic.
- Many students find it safer or easier to enter into a discussion with a classmate, rather than with a large group.
- It is important for students to learn that, by listening to different point of views, they can build on the ideas of others.

For more detailed information, refer to Bennett, B. and Rolheiser, C. (2001). *Beyond Monet: The Artful Science of Instructional Integration*. Toronto, Ontario: Bookation Inc.