

GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF THINGS

A negotiation education activity created by

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Summary

Using a “four corners” activity, we learn why we each hold our own positions on statements and discuss them using vocabulary that can help us make inquiry, acknowledgement, and advocacy statements. The activity starts off generic and is then used to help review *All My Sons*. (This activity can be adapted to be used for any literary piece where characters have conflicts with one another, or it can be done without the literature component as a speaking activity using generic controversial topics.)

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to use inquiry statements, acknowledgement statements, and advocacy statements to get to the bottom of their own and/or a literary character’s viewpoint in a conflict.

Lead-in / Preparation

If using this activity to review a literary piece, then that should have been completed. In this case, *All My Sons* should have been completed.

Print out the statements to be posted in the four corners of the classroom: Totally Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Totally Disagree.

Projector for slides on Inquiry-Acknowledgement-Advocacy (Slides titled: Getting to the Bottom of Things) that show sample questions and statements that can be used.

Print out (and laminate) cards for statements that class can use when discussing their position on any of the “controversial statements” during the Four Corners activity.

Estimated Class-Time Required



2 x 45 minutes (90 minutes)

Description of Activities

1. Pre-discussion
 - a. Discuss concept of “difficult conversations” – conversations we would probably rather not have. Brainstorm some “difficult conversations” – breaking up with someone, politics, coming out, telling parents you are failing a class, abortion rights, gay rights – these are only difficult if the other person holds a different opinion...
 - b. Discuss concept of “inquiry” – the fact that it is beneficial to find out **why** the other side thinks the way they do, and you can try to understand the other side – you don’t need to agree with it. Provide example of type of questions.
 - c. Discuss concept of “acknowledgement” – which means in difficult conversations, someone who holds a point of view usually has some feelings and emotions associated with it, and it is beneficial to acknowledge the other side’s feelings and their point of view – it shows you understand their “why” – and yet you still don’t need to agree to it. Provide example of acknowledgement statements.
 - d. Discuss the concept of “advocacy” – in order to state your opinion/facts as you see them, you use advocacy statements to make your point. Provide example of advocacy statements.

2. Point out the four corners in the classroom and explain that you will provide the class with a statement and they need to decide for themselves where they stand on that statement. After they have all decided where to go, ask a few students to share **why** they are standing in any particular corner. They can use the laminated cards to help them with the discussion. Hopefully there will be students in different corners, so we can practice having discourse.
 - a. Statement 1 (practice): **Students should never have to take tests.**
 - b. Statement 2: **My immediate family is more important than anyone else in the world.**
 - c. **People need to take responsibility for their actions.**
 - d. **Businesses are run to make money, no matter what.**
 - i. After each statement, ask for volunteers to explain why they chose their specific corner.



3. Ask the students now to think of the characters in *All My Sons* and how they would feel about these statements. Count off the class from 1-6, and everyone that is 1 is Keller, 2: Chris, 3: Kate, 4: Ann, 5: George, 6: Steve
4. Redo the activity with statements 2-4, and ask the class to position themselves in the corners that their character would choose. Ask different “characters” to explain why they chose that specific corner. Discuss with class.
5. Put following pairs on board:
 - a. Keller / Kate
 - b. Kate / Ann
 - c. Kate / Chris
 - d. Keller / Steve
 - e. Chris / Ann
 - f. Chris/ Keller
 - g. George / Ann
6. Brainstorm with the class what each pairs’ potential conflicts are. (I.e.: Chris / Keller: Chris wants Keller to take responsibility for his actions. Keller doesn’t feel it’s entirely his fault and did what was necessary.
7. Role-play any character-set and ask each to state their position using advocacy statements and taking turns, they should use inquiry questions and acknowledgement statements to get to the bottom of things.

Key Vocabulary / Phrases

- inquiry: חקירה
- acknowledgement: הכרה
- advocacy: סנגור
- advocate: לסַנְגֵר
- impact: השפעה



Assessment

Based on the brainstorming of conflicts, the teacher can determine whether the students have understood the character relationships in the play *All My Sons*. Based on student participation in the Four Corners activity, the teacher can glean whether the class understood why the characters would hold a certain position. The students' appropriate use of inquiry-acknowledgement-advocacy statements during the four corners activity and role play will show the teacher that the class has understood the concept in relation to *All My Sons* and possibly generic controversial subjects.

Reflection

The students can discuss the different views held by the characters and whether or not they agree – either with the character, OR of another students' assessment of the character's views.

Comments

Details of inquiry, acknowledgement, and advocacy statements adapted from material provided by Pathways.

