

Deep Democracy – The wisdom of the NOs

Introduction

Deep Democracy is an approach that encourages open and inclusive communication, allowing all voices to be heard and considered in decision-making processes. This template provides a structured format for implementing Deep Democracy in our classrooms.

Purpose

The purpose of this Deep Democracy template is to foster a more inclusive and participatory learning environment.

Five Steps of Deep Democracy

Issue/Topic is identified. Example: Uniform should be mandatory in schools.

****Speaking and Participation Safety Rules****

- Each participant has [insert time limit] to speak.
- No interruptions are allowed.
- Use "I" statements to express personal experiences and perspectives.
- Encourage active listening by all participants.

****Listening Guidelines****

- Pay attention without interrupting.
- Ask clarifying questions if needed.
- Avoid making judgments or criticisms.

****Reflecting Guidelines****

- Summarize what you have heard from others.
- Share any new insights or connections you have made.

****Decision-Making Process****

- Discuss potential solutions or next steps.
- Aim to reach a consensus or decide on the best course of action through effective communication that is assertive, accessible to all in its meaning and goal and 7Cs oriented.

– Step 1: Collecting all viewpoints. Naming and Framing

In this step, we strive to collect as many viewpoints as possible, even the I don't know, and the unsure answers, anything that comes to mind is welcomed.

Optional: Neutral Framing [Provide a neutral description of the issue or topic]

– Step 2: Searching for the "Nos"

Encouraging participants in an organized order to state their objections and formulate them with specific set of words, 7Cs to be applied.

– **Step 3: Investigate the alternatives**

Who's recognizing at least some elements of minority or the others' ideas? Who disagrees or has an alternative proposal?

Take a vote to get a sense of majority-minority thinking.

In this step, participants actively listen to each other without judgment and seek to understand the perspectives shared in order to see which grains of truth are shared among them.

– **Step 4: Adding viewpoints together: the minority perspective to the majority viewpoint.**

Include the wisdom of the minority: add the minority perspective to the majority viewpoint. Ask the minority: what would it take for you to go along with the majority?

Vote again and make a decision.

After listening, participants reflect on the key points they have heard from others and share their insights.

– **Step 5: Fishing OR Deciding.**

In this step, participants work together to make a decision, find common ground, or identify areas for further exploration.

****Decision-Making Process:****

- Discuss potential solutions or next steps.
- Aim to reach a consensus or decide on the best course of action through effective communication that is assertive, accessible to all in its meaning and goal and 7Cs oriented.

Ideas for fishing in the classroom:

1. **Anonymous Feedback Cards:** Distribute index cards to each student and ask them to write down their thoughts or concerns about the issue at hand. Collect the cards, read them aloud, and discuss the feedback as a group.
2. **Think-Pair-Share:** Have students think individually about the issue, pair up with a partner to discuss their thoughts, and then share the most significant points with the larger group.
3. **Round Brainstorming:** In a paper sheet, write the main issue at hand, and ask students to brainstorm ideas about it, advantages, disadvantages or anything that comes to mind.

4. **Markers Talk:** Provide students with markers to write their thoughts on a board or large sheet of paper without speaking. This silent brainstorming exercise can help uncover unspoken viewpoints.
5. **Role Reversal:** Ask students to switch roles and argue for a viewpoint opposite to their own. This exercise can help uncover underlying objections and encourage empathy.
6. **Small Group Discussions:** Divide the class into smaller groups and assign each group a specific aspect of the issue to discuss. Afterward, have a spokesperson from each group share the group's findings with the whole class.
7. **Socratic Questioning:** Encourage students to ask open-ended questions related to the issue. This can stimulate critical thinking and reveal deeper concerns.
8. **Force Field Analysis:** Draw a T-chart on the board with "Driving Forces" on one side and "Restraining Forces" on the other. Have students list factors that are pushing for a decision and factors that are holding it back.
9. **Fishbowl Discussion:** Select a few students to sit in the center and engage in a discussion while the rest of the class observes. This allows for in-depth exploration of viewpoints without interruption.
10. **Silent Gallery Walk:** Place posters around the room, each representing a different perspective on the issue. Students silently walk around, read the posters, and add their thoughts in writing. This can help uncover hidden concerns and gather diverse viewpoints.