

Deep Democracy: How to Manage Conflicts Building a Strong Classroom Culture

Democratic Communication Toolkit

The Fine Line: The difference often lies in the intent and impact of the comments:

Freedom of Speech: This is a fundamental right in many democracies, allowing individuals to express their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs without fear of censorship or legal repercussions. Freedom of speech is essential for a healthy and open society, encouraging dialogue, debate, and the exchange of ideas. However, this freedom comes with responsibilities and is not absolute; it does not protect speech that incites violence, constitutes hate speech, or violates the law.

Disrespectful Comments: These comments are derogatory, demeaning, or dismissive and can harm the dignity and self-esteem of individuals or groups. Disrespectful comments often target someone's race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or any other personal attribute in a negative manner. Such comments may not necessarily be illegal or outside the bounds of free speech protections, but they can be harmful, creating a hostile environment for those targeted.

Freedom of Speech aims to contribute to the marketplace of ideas, promoting understanding and societal improvement, even if the ideas are controversial or challenging.

Disrespectful Comments aim to undermine, belittle, or harm others, often reflecting prejudice, hatred, or a desire to assert dominance. *often place people's dignity in jeopardy and disrespects them.

Exercise:

1) Choose one of the topics of discussion

***preferably topic that one agrees, and another disagrees.**

Impact of Social Media on Society: Social media does more harm than good by spreading misinformation and fostering unrealistic life expectations.

Digital Books vs. Printed Books: Printed books will become obsolete as digital books and readers become more prevalent.

Education Technology: The increased reliance on technology in education is detracting from the development of critical thinking and interpersonal skills.

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School Uniforms: School uniforms limit students' self-expression and should not be required in schools.

2) Elaborate, manifest your opinions related to the topic chosen, and why you believe that, what motivates this point of view. One person at the time

First round: I agree because...

Second round: I disagree because...

3) Choose two or more phrases to ask each other while debating:

"What experiences have led you to see it this way?"

"What information or sources have most influenced your opinion on this?"

"What do you think is often misunderstood about your position on this topic?"

"What would you like people who disagree with you to know about your perspective?"

"How does this issue affect you personally, or people you care about?"

"What are the core values that underpin your perspective on this issue?"

"What do you find most compelling about your viewpoint, and why should others consider it?"

"Have you ever had a change of heart regarding this issue? If so, what caused it?"

"How does your perspective address the concerns or fears that people on the other side of this issue might have?"

"In what ways do you think your perspective is beneficial for a broader community or society?"

4) From the perspective shared, reply stating your perspective choosing two of these phrases below. Intention: both agree and disagree use at least two phrases.

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"I see your point of view on [topic], and I understand why you might feel that way. From my perspective..."

"I agree with your point about [specific point], but I also think that..."

"I respect your opinion on [topic], but I view it differently. Here's why..."

"I appreciate your perspective on [topic]. However, my experience has led me to a different conclusion..."

"It's interesting to hear your thoughts on [topic]. I have considered that as well, but I also consider..."

"While I understand where you're coming from on [topic], I have to express my concern about..."

"I acknowledge the merits of your argument regarding [topic]. Still, I believe we need to consider..."

5) Although different opinions and points of view are being expressed, think about ways to answer the following question:

"What is a common ground you as a group believe exist between your viewpoint and opposing ones?"

"Is there a compromise or middle ground you could find in terms of some fragments of the shared points of views you agree with each other?"