

Name of Program:

The Value of Agreeable Disagreement

Author:

Josiah Payne

Target Audience:

All classes

Strategy for Implementation:

View and Discuss

Time of Year to Implement:

Any

Relevant Learning Goal:

Goal 3: Interpersonal Intelligence

Specific Lesson Outcomes:

- Students will display effective interpersonal communication skills such as effective conflict resolution strategies, verbal and nonverbal reactions in social situations and how they differ amongst individuals.

Purpose:

The purpose of this program is help students understand the value of listening to and understanding opposing viewpoints and give them a basic framework for engaging in civil public dialogue.

Introduction:

Public discourse in America has become increasingly polarized. Politicians, media personalities, and even private citizens spend more time shouting over each other than engaging in productive conversation. Biased news reporting refuses to give airtime to opposing viewpoints and social media fosters an atmosphere where people learn to see those who disagree with them as monsters. Through two TED talks, given by author and speaker Zachary R. Wood and Julia Dhar of Boston Consulting Group, we will explore the value of listening to the ideas of people with whom we disagree and how we can productively engage with those ideas in a respectful and humanizing maner.

Body of Program:

1. Introduce the topic (see above)
2. Play video "[Why It's Worth Listening to People You Disagree With | Zachary R. Wood](#)"
3. Questions for discussion:
 - a. Have you ever entered a conversation where someone refused to listen to your opinions? How did you feel after that conversation?
 - b. In your opinion, what is the greatest benefit of being open to hearing viewpoints you don't agree with?
4. Play Video "[How to Disagree Productively and Find Common Ground](#)" | Julia Dhar"
5. Questions for discussion:
 - a. Julia Dhar gave 3 keys for productive discourse, which do you feel is most important and why?
 - i. Find common ground
 - ii. Debate ideas rather than personalities
 - iii. Be open to be proven wrong
 - b. What kind of change do you think we might see if more people applied these principles to discussing important political, social, economic, and religious issues?
6. Ask for any final comments or questions from students.

Facilitation Notes:

- Make sure to watch the videos in advance so you are familiar with their content.
- Depending on your time constraints, it may be advantageous to assign the videos as pre-work for the students as well so that everyone has seen them and you can jump right into discussion.
- You may also want to pull excerpts from the videos to play during the program instead of playing the entirety of both videos.

Suggested Reflection Questions:

1. What are Julia Dhar's 3 keys for productive discourse?
2. How is listening to people you disagree with helpful in shaping a productive and respectful conversation?
3. What is one thing you heard today that you can apply to disagreements in your own sphere of influence?

Sources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LY5hMMjiN6k>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phgjouv0BUA&t=30s>