

# INSTRUCTIONS for FOUR-CORNER DISCUSSION

1. Set up the room so that chairs are equally dispersed into four groups facing the center of the room. Leave the center empty except for a few chairs. Post signs behind each group—"Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree."
2. While students are still in their desks, explain the "rules" of the activity:
  - No talking until you reach your seat for the first time.
  - You may move from one section to another at any time for any reason.
  - You may move as often as you want.
  - Move to the middle of the room if you are undecided but do not stay there. Instead, move to a section, change your mind, move again, etc.
  - Be sure everyone has an opportunity to speak. No one should dominate.
3. Students move to the center of the room and stand without talking or looking at each other while the teacher explains the situation or reads the article. State the supposition in the affirmative.
4. Have students pause and think in silence after the supposition has been stated. Do not answer any questions—tell students to act based on what they think at the moment, knowing they can move later. Once they are ready, say, "Move now to the section of the room that best represents your point of view at this time."
5. Students move to their sections, pulling chairs from other sections as needed. The discussion is now ready to begin. I usually start with the largest group saying, "First, let's hear from the majority." Continue hearing from that group until the various reasons have been expressed and then move to another group.
6. Bring the discussion to a close without closing the issue. Avoid arriving at a right or even "best" position. Have students from the various groups summarize the main points they heard from an opposing point of view—do not have a group summarize its own position.

## Additional Tips:

- To include writing, read the supposition while students are still at their desks and have them respond in writing before any discussion. Collect these papers and proceed as stated above. After class, post these quick-writes in class for students to see the next day. They love this!
- Have following up questions ready to add if the discussion seems to have stalled or become repetitive.
- Try to let students monitor themselves so that raising hands is not necessary (but it often is, especially if the group is large).
- You may want to have some students become observers to watch and record the group's transactions. They will report back after the discussion has ended.