

## A Moving Debate

This is a wonderful and 'active' method to debate in your classroom that allows the students to be completely free and flexible in their thinking. During this Moving Debate students can argue, for, against, be neutral - moving according to their thinking in that particular moment and in response to their classmates thinking. In addition to this principle, this activity supports Learning Through Dialogue and Interaction, Learning Through Thinking, and Learning Through Reflection and Evaluation.

### Goals

#### Students will

- *Be able to explore other perspectives.*
- *Be able to articulate opposing views on an issue*
- *Be able to demonstrate and explain how their thinking evolved and changed at different moments*
- *Be able to demonstrate active listening*
- *Be able to share their reflections on what they hear and evaluate statements*
- *Be able to express their own thinking and opinions*

### Duur

The timing of this activity is dependent on many factors: experience, classroom culture, and how engaging and rich the statement is being debated. The minimum amount of time you should plan for this method is 30 minutes.

### Materiaal

- *Chairs for every participant*
- *A statement written clearly on the board*

### Prepare yourself

Find a statement that is clear and strong and that takes a (possibly controversial) position (ideally connected to something you are learning, or a new unit of study). Examples:

- Everyone should be vegan.
- Climate change has always happened throughout history, this is just how the world works.
- Only electric cars should be legal.
- Everyone should be given a minimum salary by their country.
- People are homeless because of bad decisions they made.
- All children should participate in after school activities.

### Step-by-step or course

#### 1 Input

Set up all the chairs in the shape of a 'U'.

Don't know

Disagree

|

|

Agree



Explain to the student that they will be participating in a debate, a debate in which they can constantly change sides, change their minds, first know and then not know, etc.

Show your students the set-up of the chairs and explain that sitting in each place reflects whether they agree with the statement, disagree with it, or don't know yet.

Explain that only the students who sit in agree or disagree speak. You facilitate the back and forth between agree and disagree – one statement per side, back and forth.

***\*\*Any student can move at any time during the entire Moving Debate\*\****

## 2 Begin

Share the statement by reading it out loud. Ask the students to sit in the place that represents how they think at that moment.

The students go into their initial places. The teacher asks one person in 'agree' to say why, then a student in 'disagree'. This goes back and forth for as long as the conversation is engaging.

Students move at any time:

- They may have heard a good argument.
- They may feel like they were sure and now they aren't sure.
- They may feel that they have a thought for the side they don't agree with and want to share it (so they have to change sides in order to do that).

## 3 Reflection

Once the conversation seems to have run its course, come to an end and pull the students together to reflect on the exercise by discussing/writing about these suggested questions.

1. What was it like to take part in a Moving Debate?
2. What did you notice/observe in yourself and classmates throughout the Moving Debate?
3. What did you hear that impacted your thinking...made you change space, or feel more strongly about your position?