



Take a Stand

I-3, I-4

Take a Stand involves getting students to express a personal stance or opinion on answers that other students in the class have given. It motivates everyone to do as much mental work as the student who is actually answering the question. After a student has given a response to a question, teachers should follow up by asking the rest of the class to “take a stand,” challenging the students to further their thinking by defending their position or elaborating with a rationale. Take a Stand helps students process more content, keeps students engaged, and helps the teacher see how indicative of the rest of the class an individual student’s answer is. Teachers using this practice should aim to make the classroom a place where errors are accepted and the challenge of disagreement is praised and celebrated.

- ☐ Determine the objective of the lesson.
- ☐ Mark several places in the lesson plan where more participation could be achieved with Take a Stand, and create questions that will allow students to take a particular position. Questions can be evaluative (“How many of you think Sandra is correct?”), or analytic (“Can anyone tell me how Sandra can make sure her solution is correct?”).
- ☐ Ask the questions during the lesson.
- ☐ Invite the student or group of students to take a stand. Examples of ways to solicit student responses include:
 - “Thumbs up, thumbs down, thumbs sideways”
 - “Two snaps if you agree, two stomps if you don’t”
 - “Stand up if you agree.”
- ☐ Periodically ask students to defend their responses. Ask questions like:
 - “Why?”
 - “What made you think that way?”
 - “How did you arrive at that position?”
 - “What influenced your opinion?”
 - “What would make you change your mind?”
- ☐ Praise and acknowledge students for participating to encourage future participation.



Additional Tools

Classroom Debate

Students take opposing positions on a topic or issue. The teacher provides opportunities for students to research and learn about the topic/issue. Students then take a stand for one side or the other in a structured discussion over the topic where both sides have an equal opportunity to defend their position.

For more strategies and/or resources, visit houstonisd.org/EffectivePractices



ALERTS

Sometimes it is challenging for teachers to hold back their own opinions, so try not to give any hints or show bias towards one opinion or another as these cues can easily influence the response of students.



QUICK TIPS

When there are students who are not participating, script a brief reminder to students, "Since we're all scholars, I'll expect to see everyone's hand. Let's try it again."