

Stance Warm-Up: This Is Not an X

Description:

Participants take a common object and give it different interpretations. For example a person might take a cup, put it on their head and say “this is not a cup, it is a hat”, while the next participant might tap it and say “this is not a hat, it is an instrument”, etc.

Goals and Purpose:

Creates opportunity for student voice, helps students connect to each other in a fun way, builds creativity, and calls upon students to come up with alternative perspectives. It is an enactment of the PoP move of, “Is there another way of understanding that?” Students will use their PoP listening skills to repeat what another student has said and then use their imagination and pantomime skills to transform a common object into something else.

Stances:

- “The text may have multiple meanings and may need my peers and me to bring them to light.”
- It’s okay to take a risk and share a thought that is not well-formed.
- It’s okay to take time to think things through before sharing, even if it feels a bit awkward.

Introduction:

- 1 Hold up a pen. Ask: “What am I holding?” Students say: “A pen.” Dramatically say, “What? A pen? This is not a pen! This is my favorite drumstick!” Teacher will move the pen up and down as if it is a drumstick hitting a drum and make facial expressions to indicate enjoyment. “In this game we will pass this drumstick around and you will use your imagine to tell us what it “really” is.”
- 2 Confirm that students understand the object of the game by asking a volunteer to explain what you did with the pen. Highlight descriptive language, imagination, voice (can be silly with an accent), facial expressions.
- 3 Add one additional rule: “When you start your turn, make sure to repeat what the previous person said. For example, ‘This is not my favorite drumstick. It is an awesome, shiny new surfboard going over waves.’”
- 4 Take clarifying questions.

Activity:

- 1 Students stand in a circle
- 2 The first person holds up an object and reinterprets it, saying, “This is not an x, it’s a y.” They pass the object to the next person.
- 3 Person 2 repeats what person 1 said, saying “This is not a y, it’s a z”

- 4 Optional: If a student is struggling to come up with an idea, they can ask the group for help. This further reinforces the stance “The text may have multiple meanings and may need my peers and me (as well as my teachers) to bring them to light.”

Reflection:

- What did you learn about the object by doing this activity?
- What did you learn about yourself by doing this activity? (eg. Did you find it challenging? Were you surprised that you came up with an idea? That you were able to ask for help?)

Wrap-up:

Teacher can close with the following: “This pen was made into several different objects depending on the interpretation and perspective of each individual person. This helps remind us that when we work with others, we benefit from their different ways of seeing and understanding things. Every text is like this pen. It needs us and our havruta to draw out the multiple interpretations contained inside it.”

Online Variation

Before gathering with students, be in touch with them to let them know what household object they should have on hand. For example, tell students to make sure they have a pen with them.

Teacher will call on students one at a time to unmute and share the sentence, “This is not a pen, it is a _____.”