

Common Law-Related Education Strategies

Continuums

Teacher Instructions

There are several variations to this activity that has students forming a line from one end of a continuum to the other. The continuum might be based on feelings/opinions about an issue (i.e., support or oppose gun control), on the chronological order of historical events (i.e., important dates in the development of civil rights in America), or on the order of steps in a procedure (i.e., a human flow chart of steps in a trial).

Human Continuum (Flow Chart) Procedure

1. Give each student a slip of paper stating one step in the procedure.
2. Ask students to look at the information provided and determine where in the process their step occurs.
3. Once they think they have identified their placement on the continuum, ask them to stand in the place where they think they fit.
4. Ask students to check their placement by talking with the people nearby. Should they move over a person or two? Are they too close to the end? To the beginning?
5. After everyone is placed, ask the students to describe their steps, starting with the beginning and moving to the last step. Allow for corrections based on the information shared. Identify any questions that might exist. Are there missing steps? Do people need further clarification? Use student readings to help answer the questions.

Opinion Continuum Procedure

1. Determine where the continuum will be and place one position at one end and the other, opposite position at the other end. (Oppose, Support; Agree, Disagree, etc.)
2. Ask students to think about how they feel about the topic and then stand where they think they are on the issue. For example, if they are generally opposed to the idea but might see some times where they would support it, they would stand near the Opposed end but not at the very end. The very end is reserved for those who oppose the idea 100% of the time.

3. Ask students to check their placement by talking with the people nearby. Is the person next to them less opposed or more opposed.
4. Once they are placed on the line, ask for volunteers to step forward, state their position, and provide reasons to support the position.
5. After several students have shared their opinions, including students reflecting both ends of the continuum, provide students with the opportunity to change their positions. In many cases, students will have persuaded their classmates to move on the continuum.
6. Reflect with the students on how opinions vary for many different reasons, how people feel strongly about their positions, how few people are completely at one end or the other, and how the commonalities are sometimes more prevalent than one would think.

Human Timeline Procedure

1. Give each student a slip of paper stating one historical fact.
2. Ask students to look at the information provided and determine where in the timeline their fact or event occurred.
3. Once they think they have identified their placement on the continuum, ask them to stand in the place where they think they fit.
4. Ask students to check their placement by talking with the people nearby. Should they move over a person or two? Are they too close to the end? To the beginning?
5. After everyone is placed, ask the students to describe their event, starting with the beginning and moving to the last person. Allow for corrections based on the information shared. Identify any questions that might exist. Does there seem to be information that is missing? Do people need further clarification? Use student readings to help answer the questions.