

Human Barometer

Objective: Students will identify and practice cooperation skills.

Summary: Students use communication skills in a group activity.

Aim: *How do you respond to an opinion that you strongly disagree with?*

Standards: NYC – E2, E2c, E3, E3b, E3c, E4a, E4b
 NYS – S1, S3, S4

Materials: masking tape, newsprint, markers, **Example Spectrogram Questions** and **Human Barometer Statements**, copies of **Your P.O.V. Worksheet**

Facilitator Note: Spectrogram questions should deal with personal preference or belief. For both the Spectrogram and the Human Barometer use masking tape as a visual aide. To begin the exercise, place a piece of masking tape from one end of the room to the other. This may help the students visualize where they are on the line for each question.

Lesson Vocabulary

<p>barometer n. an instrument for determining the pressure of the atmosphere</p> <p>opinion n. a belief or judgment held with confidence but not substantiated by proof</p> <p>spectrogram n. a graphic representation of a spectrum</p> <p>persuade v. to cause somebody to adopt a certain position, belief, or course of action</p> <p>point of view n. a mental perspective or outlook; your personal way of looking at the world</p>
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Warm-Up: Spectrogram

- Have students stand in the center of the room.
- Inform the class that one side of the room represents YES, the other side of the room represents NO, and the center of the room represents MAYBE.
- Explain to the class that there is no talking or commenting during the exercise and that the students should answer each question by moving to the YES, NO, or MAYBE area in the room.
- Using the **Example Spectrogram Questions** sheet, ask ten to fifteen questions alternating between low-risk and high-risk questions. Feel free to come up with your own questions.
- After each question, ask the students to observe, without comment, where they are in relationship to their classmates.

Processing Questions:

- *What happened in the exercise for you?*
- *How did it feel to answer the questions without speaking?*

- ☞ *Was there ever a moment when you were standing alone? How did it feel?*
- ☞ *Was there any question that you had an especially strong reaction to? Why?*
- ☞ *Was there any time when you were surprised by who was near you? Why?*

Segue: *Inform the students that you are going to ask one more question and they are to answer in a similar way as they did during the Spectrogram activity.*

Main Activity: *Human Barometer*

- Explain that now the YES end of the room is AGREE, the NO end of the room is DISAGREE, and the middle of the room is MAYBE/UNSURE.
- Present the class with a statement from the **Human Barometer Statements** sheet or a statement that you have created specifically for the group.
- Ask students to respond non-verbally to the statement by moving to AGREE, DISAGREE, or MAYBE/UNSURE.
- Distribute a piece of newsprint and marker to each group.
- Instruct each group to discuss the statement and prepare a presentation of their position for the other groups.
- Have each group choose a spokesperson to present the group's position.
- Remind the class that when the spokesperson is presenting it is important that the other groups listen respectfully and not respond until it is their turn.
- After each group has presented its response to the statement, ask if anyone has been persuaded by the other group's arguments. If so, have them move to that new position.
- **Option:** Give the groups a few minutes to prepare another response to present to the other groups. Have each spokesperson present their case again, and if any of the students are persuaded, they can move to the new position.

Processing Questions:

- ☞ *How do you feel right now?*
- ☞ *Do you feel that others listened to you? If not, what got in the way?*
- ☞ *How did it feel to give your opinion by "putting yourself on the line?"*
- ☞ *How did you deal with people disagreeing with your position?*
- ☞ *Did you move from one position on the line to another position? Why?*
- ☞ *Where, in the world outside the classroom, do you have the opportunity to express your opinions?*
- ☞ *Why is it important in those situations to articulate your thoughts?*
- ☞ *Why is it important to listen to the other side of an issue and be open to changing your mind?*
- ☞ *Where else in your life can you incorporate what you've learned today?*

Closing: I Appreciate

- Have each group say one positive thing about the other groups' positions that they appreciated. Ex: "I appreciated the sincerity with which you presented your ideas."

Extension Activity

- Have students complete the **Your P.O.V.** worksheet.

Example Spectrogram Questions

- Do you like pizza?
- Do you like Chinese food?
- Is your favorite subject English?
- Is your favorite subject math?
- Do you like to exercise?
- Do you like being in a leadership position?
- Do you like public speaking?
- Do you believe that the police are basically good people doing their jobs?
- Do you watch more than ten hours of television a week?
- Do you like to work?
- Do you believe that women and men can do the same jobs equally well?
- Do you like talking about your feelings?
- Do you believe that talking about feelings helps you to feel better about them?
- Do you think that all people are created equal?
- Do you like people over the age of 70?
- Do you like babies?
- Is it easy to stand up for yourself in the face of adversity?
- Do you like the color of this room?
- Do you like turtleneck sweaters?
- Do you believe that an African American or a Latino will be president of the United States?
- Do you believe that kindness makes you weak?
- Do you like money?
- Do you believe that you should receive an allowance?
- Do you believe that teens should work for their money?
- Do you believe that doctors should be free to everyone?
- Do you like to shop?
- Do you like riding the subway during rush hours?
- Do you like Terrell Owens?
- Do you like George Steinbrenner?
- Do you like Toni Morrison?
- Do you admire Martin Luther King Jr.?
- Do you admire Franklin Delano Roosevelt?
- Do you respect the Principal?
- Do you like the Principal?
- Do you believe that the Yankees are the best baseball team ever?
- Do you believe that children should take care of their parents in their old age?
- Do you believe that babies are fun?
- Do you like Saturday morning cartoons?

Human Barometer Statements

- School uniforms should be mandatory for students.
- Teachers should have a dress code.
- Boys and girls should attend separate schools.
- Life is hard.
- School is necessary for success.
- Athletes should have to be role models.
- In general, I believe the police act fairly.
- Teachers should have to pass a state test in the subjects they teach.
- Condoms should not be distributed by the school administration.
- Students should be allowed to pray in class.
- The police should be allowed to search your locker without a search warrant.
- Rap music is too negative.
- Metal detectors should be used in schools.
- Police officers should be on duty on the school grounds.
- Violence on television and in music leads to violence in real life.