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# STRUCTURED ACADEMIC CONTROVERSY

Model for Deliberating Issues in History and the Social Science



Jeremy Stoddard, College of William & Mary

# Structured Academic Controversy

- \* Teachers should share their personal opinions on controversial issue with their students.
- \* Yes / No
- \* Prepare your position
- \* Present your position and listen for understanding
- \* Present the opposing viewpoint
- \* Discuss issue in group and attempt to reach consensus

# Structured Academic Controversy

- \* Developed by Roger and David Johnson of the University of Minnesota
- \* Cooperative learning activity
- \* Goals of developing skills to use evidence to be persuasive, critical listening skills, and consensus seeking
- \* Helps students understand both sides of an issue as well as skills in presenting, listening and analysis of evidence

# SAC Model

- \* **Introduce Issue or Problem with Context**

- \* What makes a good issue for a SAC?

- \* Perennial Issue:

  - Weapons of Mass Destruction / Nuclear Proliferation

- \* Case Issue:

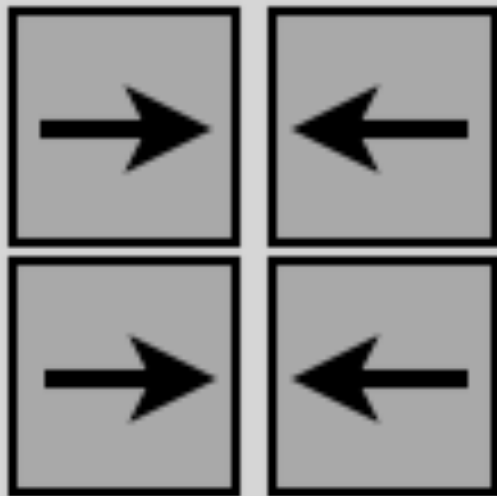
  - Should the US use atomic weapons against Japan?

# Perennial Issues and Case Issues

- \* Perennial Issue: International Trade
- \* Does NAFTA help the US economy?
- \* Perennial Issue: Race in American politics
- \* Was Abraham Lincoln a racist?
- \* Perennial Issue: American Isolationism
- \* Should the US help the British (World War II)?

# SAC Model

## \*Assign & Research Positions



“Knees to Knees”

“Eyeballs to Eyeballs”

Do not forget the rules of a successful academic controversy!

1. Practice active listening
2. Challenge ideas, not persons
3. Try your best to understand the other position
4. Share the floor: each person in a pair **MUST** have an opportunity to speak
5. No disagreeing until consensus-building as a

# **SAC Model**

## **Deliberation & Consensus Building**

- \* Round 1 - Presentations & Clarifying Questions
- \* Switch Positions
- \* Round 2 - Presentations & Clarifying Questions
- \* Consensus Building