Philosophical Chairs

Rules of Engagement

• Maintain your understanding of the prompt or central statement throughout the activity.
• Actively listen to the person who is speaking.
• Wait for the teacher/facilitator to recognize you before you speak; only one person speaks at a time.
• Seek to understand the opposing speaker’s point of view even if you do not agree with them.
• Summarize briefly the previous speaker’s argument before you make your response.
• Contribute your own thoughts, offering your reasons as succinctly as possible.
• Respond to statements and ideas only, not to the person giving them.
• Change your mind about the central statement as new information or reasoning is presented.
• Refrain from having side conversations during the debate portion of the activity.
• Move to the opposite side or to the undecided position as your thinking grows and changes as a result of convincing arguments from the opposing side.
• Support the discussion by maintaining order and contributing constructive comments.