



Collaboration

Materials:

- Worksheet

Brainstorm: Have you ever found yourself working in a group and being derailed by a disagreement? How have you been able to navigate the situation? What has worked?

Discuss: Apart from the concern that not everyone does their fair share of the work and that the quality of the work will be acceptable to everyone, one of the biggest challenges in collaboration is navigating disagreements and getting the job done. Jeff Bezos and his team at Amazon uses a strategy called “Disagree and Commit”. Mr. Bezos says “Leaders are obligated to respectfully challenge decisions when they disagree, even when doing so is uncomfortable or exhausting. Leaders have conviction and are tenacious. They do not compromise for the sake of social cohesion. Once a decision is determined, they commit wholly.” Let’s look at what he means.

Dive in! The first part of disagree and commit, is disagree. So, what does he mean by this? It means that as part of the group, you have the obligation to disagree if you think there is something wrong with the process or plan. It is not acceptable to just sit on the sidelines and grumble about the work. It encourages everyone to speak their mind, push for better discussions and improved ideas.

The second half of the idea is the commit part. What does it mean to commit? Well, it means that once the decision has been made, everyone gives their support to the success of the project or idea. The time for respectful debate has passed, the decision has been made and now we are all going to do our very best to ensure success. We are not going to sit on the sidelines and grumble about the decision, especially if the decision wasn’t our idea. The disagree part ensures that everyone has been heard, but the commitment part also ensures that once the decision is made, we work together.



High School

Disagree and Commit helps to ensure that morale stays high within the group. People are not talking behind the group's back. There is no infighting or hanging back. Those who disagree and don't commit undermine the goals of the group and the sense of teamwork in general. If the strategy of Disagree and Commit is agreed to as part of the rules of the working group, then everyone has to remain true to that strategy. You can't take one part without the other. The benefit of Disagree and Commit is that it allows everyone to commit to action without needing consensus.

Activity Hand out worksheet 16. Students will work in groups of 4 on a project. Remind the class about the assertive strategy of using I statements rather than accusatory statements to keep the disagreement phase respectful. Provide time for the activity to be completed and then hold a discussion on how the disagreement phase went and then the commit phase felt to everyone. Provide time for the reflection at the end.

Reflect: How did you feel during the disagreement phase of the project? Did you feel confident to share your thoughts? During the commitment phase, did you feel that everyone was going to work together despite their differences? How could you use Disagree and Commit in other areas of your life? How might it benefit you?

Extend and Enrich

The Leadership Principal Explained <https://youtu.be/9ZRKAC65Ua4>

Professional Development

Do I feel confident to disagree with my team? How might I begin to use the Disagree and Commit strategy in my classroom? What might the benefit be to me? The students?