

BITE RECIPE – “ON THE LINE”

For large groups, energising people after lunch at conferences, or after a sitting-down-and-listening session. Works well for all ages down to surprisingly young children, and for groups with a wide range of knowledge or experience. Make people stick to the rules of the game, or it won't work. The beauty of the method is that everyone has to give an opinion, but no-one is forced to speak. Strong characters cannot easily dominate. Opinions can be modified by discussion.



Ingredients:

- At least a dozen people, 30 is better, up to 50 will still be manageable.
- A “line” - GLADE uses a piece of red scrap store material 5m long and 30cm wide. You can use an imaginary line, but a real one gives more impact.
- Four A4 cards, with “I agree strongly”, “I agree”, “I disagree”, “I disagree strongly” written large on them. Add smiley faces with differing smiles if you want to.
- A strip of space at least two metres wide along which to lay the line.
- Prepared statements to get you going – essential for an effective session.

Method: 10 mins - 20mins

Age range: aged 6 upwards

- Lay out the line as shown, with as big a space behind it as the room allows.

I STRONGLY -----I AGREE-----I DISAGREE-----I STRONGLY
AGREE AGREE DISAGREE DISAGREE

(NEVER introduce a “don't know” card in the middle – everyone will crowd to it)

- As you lay the line out get everyone up and ask them to stand anywhere behind it, facing you. The cards should face them. Read each card out as you lay it.
- Explain the ground rules. You will make a statement. They, as individuals, *without discussion*, will place themselves along the line to show their view. Tell them that the line is a continuum, and that they will be able to change their mind and reposition as the discussion develops.
- Go to each card once more telling them what it says.
- Make your first very general statement. Give people time to settle, then ask individuals to explain why they are there (don't press them if they are too shy to speak – move to someone else). Encourage others to move along the line if they feel their view has altered. Ask more people for their reasons, until you feel things need to move on.
- Make a modified statement, arising out of discussion or using your next prepared one. Continue allowing the discussion to develop.

Example of a set of statements:

- “All children should go to school”
- “It should be compulsory for all children in [Zambia] to go to school”
- “Primary school education in [Zambia] should be free”
- “If resources are limited, it's more important for all children to go to primary school than for the clever ones to go on to free secondary school”

Global issues raised: Any. Useful for discussing all issues, not just global ones.

Watch points: One or two people might find it difficult to stand for long. Let them sit near the line, and from time to time ask their view. Controlling discussion can be difficult – do it by framing a new statement.