Video 3: Take a Stand

Based on their understanding of the science of genetically modified organisms and some uses of this technology, these students are presented with a scenario, and asked to take a stand. Students must clarify their thinking before they take a position, explain it verbally, and then present arguments to back it up. The teacher wants to hear every voice and get a diverse set of ideas on the table. One of her strategies is to give everyone three cards: green for I agree, red for I disagree, and yellow for I'm not sure.

INT: So now I'm going to put you on the spot. Are you ready?

AUDIENCE: (Group talking over each other - inaudible)From your cards.

INT: Imagine -- imagine, there are some food products available to you. One of them is a potato, and the potato has been modified to resist herbicides, so that you can grow it, spray it with herbicides, it will grow very well, other things will not compete. Or it has increased nutritional value. So a benefit, for you. Here's the statement. We should be offering genetically modified or transgenic potatoes at the cafeteria here on campus. We should be offering foods made

from genetically modified potatoes here.

INT: All right. So we have quite a diversity of opinion. All right. Sam, tell me a little bit about your thinking right now?

FEMALE: Well I was thinking -- I mean I was just thinking along the lines of the more nutritional potatoes. Like obviously you can get a more nutritional food into a school system I think, like that would be awesome. So if you have that choice, then why not?

MALE: I held up a green card, even in the face of like some of these problems, just because a farmer usually -- I don't think a farmer would implement something like -- like genetically modified like plants without like researching exactly what effect it would have on his other crops or his like total -- his total output of food or plants, so -- or produce. So I was thinking, as long as you have the right research, then there's really no problem-- there's really -- right research and like right control like mechanisms, there's really no reason why we shouldn't like buy these better potatoes and have -- sell them at -- sell them at in the market and have them at our school.

INT: So I hear that evidence. But you hold up a green card. So is there a difference between the evidence of environmental effect and what your feelings are about eating those things in the cafeteria?

FEMALE: I held up a green card because I think that like the nutrient -- like what Sam said about the nutritional value, like especially in a school system. It's helpful to be able to feed people with as healthy and as nutritionally like beneficial as possible.

FEMALE: I don't want to be eating toxins, whether or not they're good or bad for me, I don't honestly -- like I feel like the research we've done we don't necessarily know what genetically modified organisms are going to be like in the future, we're just making them. And the idea of eradicating biodiversity, once something's gone, we may not be able to ever get it back, so.

INT: Natalie, you were on the fence. What are you weighing as you try to make up your mind?

FEMALE: Like I don't know. Like I grew up with my mom like only saying eat organic food and like I don't -- like I know we read this article about genetically -- like GMOs and organic foods, but I don't really know enough about it to make a decision…