



## LIVING STATISTIC

### Purpose

By positioning themselves in the classroom according to certain aspects of a given dimension (e.g. major/department, home university), students are asked to visually display different opinions, feelings, or experiences and thus to make them visible for everyone.

The goal of this technique is to visually portray the positions of individual group members to their peers and thus to make explicit an account of the whole group according to individuals' physical distribution along a specifically chosen dimension. This externalization and representation of the group's individual opinions or features presents an excellent opportunity for structuring the beginning of a seminar or workshop since it facilitates students getting to know each other and helps the instructor get a better sense of the group. Depending on the questions selected for spatially representing the group, students can already express attitudes and experiences relevant to the day's topic. At the same time, they also get to know their classroom or learning space and, by placing themselves in different parts of the room, can begin to feel more comfortable in their new surroundings.

### Directions

First, the instructor designs one or more relevant questions that suit the format of the statistic technique and make it possible for participants to position themselves in the room according to an imagined agreed-upon spatial arrangement. For example, participants can arrange themselves according to their geographical origin with the help of the four cardinal directions. Likewise, an arrangement according to age or years of professional experience could be displayed in a straight line. But more complex situations are possible as well, e.g. the relevance of thematic or professional background(s) or a question's connection to the topic under discussion.

The instructor should visually mark the imagined spatial arrangement with clear props that are easy to see while standing (e.g. a line made with sticky tape, a cross for the cardinal directions, a central map for the topic, or a matrix on the floor).

Participants are asked to position themselves in relation to the dimension thus represented. After the participants have placed themselves around the room, they can survey the structural representation of opinions along a specific dimension that they themselves have created for the group.

The instructor is responsible for the following tasks:

- designing and selecting questions
- marking the respective dimension(s) in the room
- inviting the participants to position themselves in relation to the given dimension
- asking participants to consider the whole structure they created in response to each question

### Parameters

Group size: 12-20 people  
Time required: 10-15 minutes



Setup:	moveable chairs so that the whole room (or at least the middle of the room) can be used
Material:	notecards, sticky tape, etc., if desired

#### Helpful Tips

##### Examples:

- Question 1: Where did you go to college? → arrangement according to cartographical position or in clusters
- Question 2: When did your professional interest in or engagement with learning begin?
- Questions in our course:
  - Which university are you affiliated with?
  - What is your department?
  - How long have you been teaching?

##### Variants:

Questions about closeness or distance to specific topics or issues can also be presented visually/spatially. To achieve that, no dimension needs to be formulated; instead, participants form clusters in the given space.

#### Online Implemen- tation

Digital versions are dependent on the type(s) of question asked:

- For questions asking about scales or increments, participants can mark their position with a sign (e.g. cross, dot, etc.) on a slide provided by the instructor that divides the space into different areas (via [heiCONF](#) Whiteboard function).
- For categorical questions, participants can use [answergarden.ch](#) oder [heiCONF](#) (Chat or Shared Notes function).

Adapted from:

Dürschmidt, P., Brenner, S., Koblitz, J., Mencke, M., Rolofs, A., Rump, K., & Strasmann, J. (2017). *Methodensammlung für Trainerinnen und Trainer* (11th ed.). Bonn: ManagerSeminare Verlags GmbH.



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