Problematic Situation:
A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
Pocket Books (New York: 2007)

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY
For students to understand differing perspectives or problems within a text, the teacher can set up an imaginary situation that students must solve. This strategy utilizes problem solving and decision making skills, allows students to approach text from varying perspectives, creates interest in a story situation, and connects text to student priorities and values. The imaginary situations students solve can even be the ones characters in the text face. For A Christmas Carol, the students will discuss whether it would have been better if Scrooge had been good all his life or if it is better that he received these Spirits and changed later in life.

CONTEXT
This activity is to be used after reading the novel.

DIRECTIONS
It might be a good idea to use the Lost at Sea activity to get students used to discussing difficult situations in groups, however, this depends on the level of your students and how familiar and comfortable they are with discussions.

Step One:
To get students prepared for this discussion and activity, have students do a journal entry at the beginning of class. The topic could be one of several: How would Scrooge’s life have been different if he wasn’t rich?, Who is better off at the end of the novel because Scrooge has a change of heart, and why?, At what point in Scrooge’s life did he become “bad” or was it a gradual process? Explain.

Step Two:
Introduce the assignment to the students and pass out the worksheet. Ask each student to think individually about the issue. Scrooge does change for the better as a result of the experiences with the spirits on Christmas. However, would it have been better if he had just been a good man his whole life? In which situation would he do more good? Be happier? Change more lives? As the students think of these questions, remind them that they can use some of their thoughts from their journal entry to prompt their thinking. Have students think and write down their reasoning for 10 minutes. Their reasoning must include at least three evidences.

Robertson, BYU, 2009
Step Three:
Once students have completed their rationale, divide them up into small groups to discuss the issue. Tell the groups that they will need to come to a unified decision by the end of their discussion and include a rationale explaining their decision. Their rationale must include at least three reasons or evidences. The decision can be based on their own points of view or that of characters or the narrator in the novel. Allow for at least 15 minutes.

Step Four:
Come back together as a class and have a representative from each group summarize their discussion so the entire class can hear each others’ thoughts.

ASSESSMENT
The problematic situation strategy allows you to assess student participation in group activities, thinking/reasoning skills, ability to negotiate decisions, and general ability to make choices based upon priorities and values. It gives students opportunities to analyze various perspectives and clarify their moral judgment.
Directions: In *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge does change for the better as a result of the experiences with the spirits on Christmas. However, would it have been better if he had just been a good man his whole life? In which situation would he do more good? Be happier? Change more lives? Record at least 3 reasons for your individual decision and for the decision your group reaches in the sections below.

My Decision: 

Group Decision: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrooge should have changed earlier</th>
<th>The Spirits visiting Scrooge was better</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Rationale</td>
<td>Group Rationale</td>
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