

Leading a group discussion

In a group discussion, the teacher and all of the students work on specific content together, using one another's ideas as resources. The purposes of a discussion are to build collective knowledge and capability in relation to specific instructional goals and to allow students to practice listening, speaking, and interpreting, agreeing and disagreeing. The teacher and a wide range of students contribute orally, listen actively, and respond to and learn from others' contributions. Teachers work to ensure students are positioned as competent among their peers, that patterns of interaction are respectful, and that the collective work of the group uses the strengths of and benefits each student.

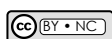
Advancing justice through leading a group discussion

The free and fair exchange of ideas is foundational for democracy. This requires the ability to share, justify and defend one's ideas and to listen attentively and thoughtfully to the ideas and perspectives of people different from oneself. In classrooms, students practice the skills of reasoned argument, debate, and collective knowledge-building toward common goals. Group discussions provide opportunities for students to make sense of complex ideas together and support one another to speak and listen in ways that advance the classroom community and common good. Group discussions also have the potential to reproduce patterns of inequity in classrooms, so teachers work to identify and disrupt these patterns in all areas of the discussion from selecting a task that will make space for a wide range of student strengths to concluding in a way that positions students as capable.

Decomposition of leading a group discussion

DISCUSSION ENABLING	DISCUSSION LEADING		
Preparing	Framing	Orchestrating	Recording and representing key content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the content point of the discussion • Selecting a discussable task or text • Anticipating student thinking • Considering whose thinking might be overrepresented in the discussion and adjusting the task to be open to multiple perspectives • Setting up independent or small group work with task or text • Monitoring student work • Identifying students to share thinking in whole group with attention to who and what is represented 	<p>Launching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling students the goal • Activating prior knowledge (if necessary) • Posing an open-ended question or issue related to the content point • Reviewing norms for discussion (as necessary) • Efficiently engaging students in the discussion <p>Concluding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting students to remember or make sense of content • Taking stock of where the class is in the discussion • Acknowledging student competence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging and supporting students to participate • Eliciting multiple ideas • Probing students' thinking to clarify and expand student ideas • Orienting students to the contributions of others • Attending to whose ideas are being attributed and highlighted • Ensuring that students are attending, listening, and responding to the ideas of others • Supporting students in connecting ideas • Making strategic contributions • Using moves such as redirecting, revoicing, and highlighting to keep the discussion on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining what content to record and in how much detail • Deciding whether to attach student names to ideas • Attending to the accuracy of records and representations • Deciding when to use student informal language and when to support the use of conventional academic language • Recording in ways that are clear, organized, and visible to the class • Using language and/or representations that support student understanding and participation

Leading a group discussion decomposition – August 2019



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Visual representation of leading a group discussion

Discussion Enabling	Discussion Leading		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting a task • Anticipating student thinking • Setting up the task • Monitoring student work 	Framing -Launching	Orchestrating - Eliciting - Probing - Orienting - Making contributions	Framing - Concluding
Recording and representing content			
Maintaining a focus on the instructional point			
Seeing and disrupting patterns that reproduce inequity			