

Leading a Group Discussion: In a group discussion, the teacher and all 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. The teacher and a wide range of students contribute, listen actively, and respond to and learn from others' contributions.

Ethical Obligations and Considerations: The free and fair exchange of ideas is a bedrock of a healthy democracy. Being an engaged world citizen requires the ability to share, justify and defend one's ideas and – even more important – to listen attentively and thoughtfully to the ideas and perspectives of diverse others. Classrooms are an opportunity to practice the skills of reasoned argument, debate, and collective knowledge-building toward common goals. Teachers can frame group discussions as opportunities for young people to make sense of something difficult together, and to support one another to both speak and listen in ways that advance the classroom community and common good.

The Features of a Discussion

Discussion Enabling	Discussion Leading		
Select a discussion-worthy task, text, and/or prompt Identify the general instructional goal for the discussion Anticipate students' ideas, responses and misconceptions Draft questions for the discussion Plan structures to be used during discussion (e.g., protocols, graphic organizers, etc.) Plan formal formative assessment for end of discussion -- format and achievement criteria (exit ticket, etc.)	Starting the discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present the prompt Allow students time to think about and/or write, on their own and/or with partners, before beginning the discussion Give a general goal of the discussion (don't take away students' 'aha' moment) Remind students of discussion norms and discussion protocols (language supports) 	Orchestrating Elicit and probe student thinking (talk moves) Orient students to each other's ideas (talk moves) Make strategic contributions Connect to prior learning or funds of knowledge	Ending the discussion Conclude and summarize the main takeaways (either teacher or student-elicited, or both, as appropriate) If the discussion will continue in the next lesson, summarize points, indicating where the discussion will go next Conduct formal formative assessment, as appropriate
Record student contributions			
Discussion Processing			
Teacher planning prep after the discussion: Analyze formative assessments -- what progress did the students make towards the discussion goals and the learning objectives? Identify misconceptions, partial understandings, and understandings at the individual or group level. Plan for next steps based on evidence.			