

Discussion Prompts

Think-Pair-Share

1. Pose a question to the class, giving students a few minutes to think about it (if you haven't given it in advance) and devise individual responses.
2. Ask students to pair with another student nearby.
3. Ask student A to share his/her responses with student B, and then student B to share ideas with student A. Suggest that if the two students disagree, they clarify their positions so that they are ready to explain how and why they disagree. If useful, request that pairs create a joint response by building on each other's ideas. You can ask each pair to share and compare their "paired" ideas with those of another pair before, or instead of, the whole-class discussion.
4. Set time limits (for each student response even, if necessary). Each pair can share with the whole class their most important point. To promote active listening during the reporting phase you can randomly call on students and ask them to summarize what the reporting student just said.

Round Robin (Brainstorming technique)

1. Ask students to form groups of four to six.
2. Explain the purpose of brainstorming is to generate many ideas. Group members will take turns, moving clockwise, and respond to the question posed/issue raised. Inform students that to prevent interrupting or inhibiting the flow of ideas, they must refrain from evaluating, questioning, or discussing the ideas.
3. If it could be beneficial for students to assume a conversational role (such as recorder, rule enforcer, timekeeper, etc.), allow a few moments for role assignment.
4. Tell students whether or not they will go around the group once or multiple times, announce a time limit, and pose the prompt.
5. Ask one student to begin the activity by stating an idea or answer aloud. The next student continues the brainstorming session by stating a new idea. The activity continues, moving from member to member in sequence, until all students have participated.

Fishbowl

1. 3-4 students move their desks to the middle of the room, facing one another. The rest of the class sits in a circle around the 3-4 students.
2. Group 1 engages in discussion while Group 2 listens and observes attentively,
3. When students in the outer circle wish to participate, they walk to the middle of the room and "tap out" one student, who leaves the inner circle to be replaced by the student who tapped in.