STUDENT-LED DISCUSSIONS:
Cultivating Deep Thinking Through Text-Based Discussions

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Agenda

• The importance of student-led discussions
• Framework to enhance discussions
• Examples of discussions
Definition and Importance

Turn and Talk:
What are student-led discussions and why are they important?
Definition

Discussions about important topics that students have on their own with minimal assistance from teachers

- Students develop their own questions
- Students integrate skills they learned from focus lesson
- Teachers explicitly teach skills & strategies
- Teachers provide group and individual feedback
Whole Group Learning

Ninety-one percent of instructional minutes were devoted to whole-class teaching or individual work, with “few opportunities for students to learn in small groups…”

Student Talk

The amount of talk that students do is correlated with their achievement.

Benefits

What benefits exist for student-led discussions that are supported in research?

A. Students offered more complex responses
B. Students value reading more
C. Students were more accepting of others
D. All of the above

Almasi et al, 2004
Skills Desired by Employers

Which of these skills are desired by employers?

A. Communicate effectively
B. Collaborate well with others
C. Solve problems logically, systematically and creatively
D. Analyze, synthesize, prioritize & organize ideas
E. All of the above

Wagner 2008
Framework

1. Explicit instruction
2. Apply new techniques in student-led discussions
3. Observe and record data about students’ contributions and group behavior
4. Provide feedback to students
5. Reflect on day’s lesson, contributions, group work
Explicit Instruction

Teach the process

– Teach rituals and routines of effective group discussions
  • Listen to others
  • Speak without interrupting others
  • Come prepared
  • Be active member
  • Treat others with respect

– Communication skills
  • Elaborate and clarify
  • Support ideas with examples
  • Paraphrasing
  • Building on ideas
  • Synthesize key points
### Example of Framework

#### Student-Led Discussion Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to look for</th>
<th>Evidence from video</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Explicit instruction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learning target</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Model learning target</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Apply learning target in student-led discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Example of students applying the learning target</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Observe and record data about: Did the teacher collect data about:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students’ application of LT</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Group behavior</td>
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<td>4. Provide feedback to students</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What does the teacher say/do to provide feedback to students?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Watch video
  - Grade 5 example
- Record specific examples from video
- Discuss
Particular focus

- Model learning target in focus lesson
- Other areas that have been taught and practiced
- Cluster focus lessons to build on skills
- One content learning target and one communication learning target

Example of citing evidence:

1. I can capture evidence *while* reading by referencing the author or text, paraphrasing about ideas, or quoting from the text

2. I can identify and use the steps of citing evidence by stating an idea, paraphrasing the text that led to that idea and explaining the evidence to my partner

3. I can locate and cite new textual evidence during discussion to support a claim presented by others
1. Select the area of focus that students are working on:
   A. Questioning
   B. Citing evidence
   C. Synthesizing
   D. Comparing

2. What skills must be taught prior to this discussion?

Grade 5/6:

Grade 1:
Observation & Recording Data

- Purpose: to provide feedback to guide student growth
- Record data on:
  - Application of LT
    - content LT
    - Speaking/listening or communication LT
  - Whole group patterns
  - Group behavior
  - Individual goals
1. Share evidence for each category
2. Determine the feedback you might provide the group
3. Select one student and determine the feedback you might provide to enhance personal growth
Closing Thought

The amount of talk that students do is correlated with their achievement.

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