

THE LEADERLESS DISCUSSION

Purpose: To facilitate the discussion of a text through a shared leadership.

Pre-discussion Process: Each member of the group needs to come having read the text in advance.

1. In preparation for the discussion, each group member identifies 2 questions he or she is interested in discussing. These questions are not about comprehension of the text, but are questions that will be useful in developing deeper understanding of the text through the group discussion. In getting used to formulating such questions, the Question Starts sheet attached may be useful.
2. Each individual briefly reflects on his or her question before the discussion and how he or she might begin to respond. Each individual should also identify why they find their questions interesting.

Discussion Process

1. The group appoints a timekeeper for the group. The timekeeper will check to make sure the group does not spend longer than 5 minutes on any one question.
2. Begin by having one person read their question and explaining why they found their question interesting. NOTE: Others may ask to add their questions on to the discussion if they think their question is related and the person asking the original question agrees to the addition.
3. Members of the group respond to the question and share their thinking about the question.
4. When time is up or the discussion of the question is over, the person who originally asked the question (and anyone who added their question to the original question) summarizes the discussion in a sentence or two.
5. Subsequent Rounds: Another member of the group read his or her question and items 2-4 are repeated until everyone in the group has shared his or her questions.
6. The group reflects on the discussion and how it has developed their understanding of the text and/or individuals write about how their ideas and thoughts have changed or developed. What new questions do individuals have now?

QUESTION STARTS

Directions: 1) Use the Question Starts below to generate at least 2 questions that will help both you and the group better understand the issue/topic/material being addressed. 2) Write down your questions exactly as you plan to ask them to the group. 3) Write down your initial thoughts for the question that most interests you before you begin the discussion.

- What do you think the speakers/authors/you mean by ...?
- What's another example of ...?
- What do you think the authors/speakers/you are assuming when they/you say?
- What evidence and reasons are there for ...?
- What's an alternative point of view on ...?
- What's the consequence or effect of ... likely to be?
- What's the take away lesson from ... ?
- What's the core idea being expressed by ...?
- How would things change or be different if ... were to happen?
- Where else might the idea/concept of ... be used?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of ...?
- What is ... analogous to?
- How does ... affect ... ?
- How does ... relate to what we learned before about ... ?
- To whom is the idea of ... most important?
- Why does ... matter?
- What's the difference betweenand ...?
- Who might see ... differently?
- What's the cause of ... ?
- How does ... relate to ... ?
- What's another way of saying... ?
- How do you think the idea of ... can be applied to... ?
- What's the most surprising thing about ...?
- What's the most familiar thing about ...?
- How does the idea of ... challenge what you already know or think about?

