

Discussion Strategies for ELA

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Essential Question(s)

- What does discussion look like in the classroom?
- What does active engagement in discussion look like?

Summary

Teachers know the importance of discussion in the ELA and social studies classrooms, but engaging students in discussion can feel especially difficult. To help teachers increase student engagement, this session will introduce the following strategies: Chat Stations, Agreement Circles, Elevator Speech, and Tea Party. These four discussion strategies can be used to promote student participation and encourage conversation in the classroom.

Learning Goals

- Learn ways to implement a variety of discussion strategies to improve/enhance substantive student conversations.

Attachments

- 30-Second Expert—Discussion Strategies for ELA.docx
- 30-Second Expert—Discussion Strategies for ELA.pdf
- Chat Stations—Discussion Strategies for ELA.docx
- Chat Stations—Discussion Strategies for ELA.pdf
- Discussion Strategies on LEARN—Discussion Strategies for ELA.docx
- Discussion Strategies on LEARN—Discussion Strategies for ELA.pdf
- English Mingle—Discussion Strategies for ELA.docx
- English Mingle—Discussion Strategies for ELA.pdf
- Note Catcher—Discussion Strategies for ELA.docx
- Note Catcher—Discussion Strategies for ELA.pdf
- Session Slides—Discussion Strategies for ELA.pptx
- Tea Party Sentences—Discussion Strategies for ELA.docx
- Tea Party Sentences—Discussion Strategies for ELA.pdf

Materials

- Session Slides (attached)
- Discussion Strategies on LEARN handout (attached, print 2-sided, 1 per participant)
- 30-Second Expert handout (attached, one per participant)
- Chat Station handout (attached, cut in half, one half per participant)
- Note Catcher (attached, one per participant)
- English Mingle (attached, cut apart, one per presentation)
- Tea Party Sentences (attached, cut apart, one per presentation)
- Five Chat Station Posters with prompts (see Facilitator's Note in Engage)
- Roaring Twenties Passage (linked, one per participant/group)
- Sticky notes
- Chart paper

Engage

Facilitator's Note: Session Preparation

Cut out the characters for the English Mingle and the sentence strips for the Tea Party.

Create five Chat Station posters numbered 1-5 and with the following questions/statements.

- Is the American Dream still alive? Why or why not?
- Explain how the 1920s was a decade of contradictions. How might we reconcile the decade as the period of both the flapper and prohibition?
- Discuss what the concept of modernization meant in the 1920s. How did art and innovation in the decade reflect the new mood of the postwar era?
- How did "*prosperity*" become a hallmark of national pride? How was the word adapted for political and psychological aspirations of the nation?
- Compare the Twenties' Boom-and-Bust with similar economic cycles before and after the decade.

Create a Muddiest Point poster. Title the poster *Muddiest Point* and hang it up prior to the session's starting.

Hang the Chat Station posters in the room prior to starting the session.

Display the title on **slide 2** as participants enter the room. Have each participant pick up a **Note Catcher** handout as they enter the room.

Greet participants and introduce the presenters.

Display **slide 3** and share the learning objective for the session. Display **slide 4** and go over the Norms for Discussion Groups.

Transition to **slide 5** to review the directions for the modified English Mingle strategy. Pass out one piece of paper from the **English Mingle** handout to each participant. Give participants time to read over their characters and share the prompt. Inform them that they are to take some time to discuss the prompt in character based on their assigned Mingle.

Display **slide 6** and go over the directions for using the Historical Mingle instructional strategy in the classroom and how it can be modified into an English Mingle. Ask participants the following questions:

- How did you feel?
- Was this engaging?
- How would you use this?
- When would you use this?
- What barriers to success do you anticipate?
- How would you have to adapt this?

Point out to participants the QR code on their Note Catcher and encourage them to fill it in under Historical Mingle.

Display **slide 7** and share the session's essential questions.

Explore

Display **slide 8** and introduce the directions for the Tea Party instructional strategy. Pass out the sentence strips from the **Tea Party Sentence** handout, one to each participant. Instruct participants to read over the sentence on their strip of paper and to think about what the larger reading could be about. Have participants walk around the room and share their sentences with each other. When time is up, all participants return to their seats. Ask: "Who thinks they know what the larger passage is about?" Call on a few participants to share their thoughts.

Display **slide 9** and go over the directions for using the Tea Party instructional strategy in the classroom. Ask participants the following questions:

- How to you feel?
- Was this engaging?
- How would you use this?
- When would you use this?
- What barriers to success do you anticipate?
- How would you have to adapt this?

Point out to participants the QR code on their Note Catcher and encourage them to fill it in under Tea Party.

Display **slide 10** and introduce the Agreement Circles instructional strategy. Have participants stand up and create a circle. Read the first statement on the slide.

- Women's rights were the primary reason for Prohibition.

Give participants the opportunity to think about the statement. After a few seconds, ask participants to move to the center of the circle if they agree with the statement or to stay where they are on the outside of the circle if they disagree with the statement. Give participants time to defend their opinions. After a few volunteers have shared from each side, give participants the opportunity to change their minds. Again, if they agree they move to the middle of the circle (or stay) and if they disagree, they move to the outside of the circle (or stay).

Repeat for the following statements:

- People who sold alcohol made more money during Prohibition.
- Prohibition was a government conspiracy to increase crime, therefore controlling the population.

Display **slide 11** and go over the directions for using the Agreement Circles instructional strategy in the classroom. Ask participants the following questions:

- How did you feel?
- Was this engaging?
- How would you use this?
- When would you use this?
- What barriers to success do you anticipate?
- How would you have to adapt this?

Point out to participants the QR code on their Note Catcher and encourage participants to fill it in under Agreement Circles.

Explain

Display **slide 12** and introduce the Chat Station instructional strategy. Go over the Chat Station Norms with participants from the slide. Pass out the **Chat Station** half-sheet handout to each participant. Number participants off 1-5. Instruct participants to move to the **Chat Station Poster** that matches their number. Give participants 3-5 minutes at each station to discuss the prompt and write down the key discussion points. When time runs out, have participants move to the next station. Continue until they have completed all 5 stations.

Display **slide 13** and go over the directions for using the Chat Stations instructional strategy in the classroom. Ask participants the following questions:

- How did you feel?
- Was this engaging?
- How would you use this?
- When would you use this?
- What barriers to success do you anticipate?
- How would you have to adapt this?

Point out to participants the QR code on their Note Catcher and encourage participants to fill it in under Chat Stations.

Display **slide 14** and share the 30-Second Expert video. Inform participants when it is their turn. Pass out or provide a link to the **Roaring Twenties** passage. Give participants time to read through the passage.

Display **slide 15** and pass out the **30-Second Expert** handout to each participant. Provide participants with the time to fill in the right side of the T-chart with everything they know about the Roaring '20s. Encourage them to use what they learned from the passage. When time is up, have participants get into pairs and then choose who will be the speaker and who will be the listener for the first round. Inform the speaker they have 30 seconds to share what they know about the Roaring '20s. They will start their sentence with “I am an expert on the Roaring '20s because I know….” Give the listener time to clarify and add what they learned to their T-chart. Have participants switch roles and repeat the directions.

Display **slide 16** and go over the directions for using the 30-Second Expert instructional strategy in the classroom. Ask participants the following questions:

- How did you feel?
- Was this engaging?
- How would you use this?
- When would you use this?
- What barriers to success do you anticipate?
- How would you adapt this?

Point out to participants the QR code on their Note Catcher and encourage participants to fill it in under 30-Second Expert.

Evaluate

Display **slide 17** and introduce the Muddiest Point instructional strategy. Pass out a sticky note to each participant. Have them write down the muddiest point or most confusing point from today's strategy exploration. Give participants time to respond to the prompt and place their sticky note on the poster. Go over the notes as a group to discuss any questions participants might have before the end of the session.

Display **slide 18** and go over the directions for using the Muddiest Point instructional strategy in the classroom. Ask participants the following questions:

- How did you feel?
- Was this engaging?
- How would you use this?
- When would you use this?
- What barriers to success do you anticipate?
- How would you have to adapt this?

Point out to participants the QR code on their Note Catcher and encourage participants to fill it in under Muddiest Point.

Display **slide 19** and have participants think about which of the instructional strategies they will use in their classroom. Have a few volunteers share out about which strategies they will be using in their classroom and for which lessons.

End the session by thanking participants for participating.

Research Rationale

Student conversations, supported by cooperative learning structures, have a reputation for developing skills in learners that are relevant to success in today's society. Social skills, problem-solving skills, cultural competency, and increased self-efficacy are all supported when students work together in the classroom (Harris et al., 2012). When students discuss their learning, their learning is made visible to themselves which aids the development of metacognitive skills. Students are able to come to know what it is that they know better as they talk through it (Bingham & Conner, 2015; Tang, 2017). This visible learning is also valuable for the instructor who can see what students' prior understandings are, their misconceptions, and how their knowledge is changing over the course of a lesson. Contributing to the conversation requires reasoning, giving structure to concepts, and doing so allows the speaker to assess and correct logic gaps, resulting in deeper learning (Windschitl, Thompson, and Braaten, 2018).

Resources

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