

# Active Discussion/Reflection Protocols

## Whole Group

<b>Circle of Expression</b>	All participants stand or sit in a circle. They respond to a prompt verbally, with feeling. They may all respond simultaneously, through an echo of one or more participants, or rapidly around the circle as with a whip (domino style).
<b>Concentric Circles</b>	Two circles discuss with partner, rotate circles to find new partner
<b>Cross the Room</b>	Students divided into two roughly equal groups around the room. The teacher gives a prompt: "Cross the room if you " -- and students who determine it is true for them simply walk across the room.
<b>Double Jigsaw</b>	If you have a class of 20 participants, divide them into four groups of five participants each. Each participant is assigned a brief reading (for in-class or out-of-class) upon which they will be the expert. Each group is assigned a general concept category. When the class discusses, the groups discuss the concept via the knowledge of each expert. When they are done, the instructor then sends one person in each group to a new group, thus forming five new groups made up of "experts" on a different concept. Again, the class discusses in their groups. This is a good way to get the class to examine an issue from many perspectives. The double jigsaw works best with 3 groups of 3, 4 groups of 4, 5 groups of 5, etc. A variant of this is "Three Stay, One Stray," in which one member of each team rotates to the next team after the first round of conversation in their group. The straying member shares the original group's thoughts on the issue with his/her new group.
<b>Fishbowl</b>	<p>The fishbowl is a peer-learning strategy in which some participants are in an outer circle and one or more are in the center. In all fishbowl activities, both those in the inner and those in the outer circles have roles to fulfill. Those in the center, model a particular practice or strategy. The outer circle acts as observers and may assess the interaction of the center group. Fishbowls can be used to assess comprehension, to assess group work, to encourage constructive peer assessment, to discuss issues in the classroom, or to model specific techniques such as literature circles or Socratic Seminars.</p> <p>Procedure: Arrange chairs in the classroom in two concentric circles. The inner circle may be only a small group or even partners. Explain the activity to the students and ensure that they understand the roles they will play. You may either inform those that will be on the inside ahead of time, so they can be prepared or just tell them as the activity begins. This way everyone will come better prepared. The group in the inner circle interacts using a discussion protocol. Those in the outer circle are silent, but given a list of specific actions to observe and note.</p> <p>One idea is to have each student in the outer circle observing one student in the inner circle (you may have to double, triple, or quadruple up.) For example, tallying how many times the student participates or asks a question. Another way is to give each student in the outer circle a list of aspects of group interaction they should observe and comment on.</p> <p>For example, whether the group members use names to address each other, take turns, or let everyone's voice be heard. Make sure all students have turns being in the inside and the outside circles at some point, though they don't all have to be in both every time you do a fishbowl activity.</p> <p>Debrief: Have inner circle members share how it felt to be inside. Outer circle members should respectfully share observations and insights. Discuss how the fishbowl could improve all group interactions and discussions.</p> <p>Variation: Each person in the outside circle can have one opportunity during the fishbowl to freeze or stop the inside participants. This person can then ask a question or share an insight.</p>
<b>Graffiti</b>	Write problems/ideas/questions/sentences/pictures on paper around the room — students rotate and put their thoughts on each.
<b>Jigsaw</b>	Groups of 4–5 students are established. Each group member is assigned some unique material to learn and then teach to his group members. To help in the learning, students across the

	class focusing on the same material get together to decide what is important and how to teach it. After practice in these “expert” groups, the original groups reform and students teach each other.
<b>Numbered Heads</b>	Starting with “Buzz Groups” each member of the team is assigned a number. After discussing a prompt, the facilitator randomly calls out a team number and that person from each group stands. The standing member is accountable to report or respond to a new prompt based on their group’s discussion.
<b>Object based inquiry</b>	Teacher presents objects related to topic and elicits students’ questions to answer though the study
<b>Questions only</b>	Students ask questions about upcoming topic
<b>Value Line (aka. Line-up)</b>	This discussion method gets the participants up and moving around. It also makes a good icebreaker. The instructor either asks students to identify themselves by a number (most years of experience, number of pets, etc.) or places two oppositional stances (ex. Democrat vs. Republican) and asks students to talk to each other and sort themselves into the correct positions. Once they are agreed as to their order, divide the total number of students by 6 (or however many students you want in each group). That will give you the number of small groups you will have. Then have the students (still lined up) count off by that number (ex. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.). Then assign spots in the room to each group and have them join their group. With the proper question for students to organize themselves by, this method gives a heterogeneous mix in the groups.
<b>Whip Response</b>	In the whole group, every participant expresses a word or a phrase in order, domino-style.
<b>World Café Discussion</b>	To discuss a topic or various topics, rotating the role of leadership and mixing up a group of people. 1. Form three groups of 3 or 4 and sit together at a table. 2. Each group selects a “leader.” 3. The leader’s role is to record the major points of the conversation that takes place at the table and to then summarize the conversation using the recorded notes...a bit later. 4. The group discusses the topic at hand until time is called. Groups can be discussing the same topic or related topics. 5. The leader stays put; the rest of the group rotates to the next table. 6. The leader (the one who didn’t move) presents a summary of the conversation recorded from the former group to the new group. 7. Each table selects a new leader. 8. Again, the new leader’s role is to record the major points of the conversation that takes place at the table and to then summarize the conversation using the recorded notes...a bit later. 9. The group discusses the topic at hand until time is called. _10. Repeat the process, ideally until all participants have had a chance to lead. 11. After the final round, the last group of leaders present to the whole group rather than reporting out to a “next rotation.

## Small Group

<b>ABC Brainstorm</b>	Students are in small groups of 4-5. If played as a relay, each group lines up behind a chart paper with A-B-C written vertically down the side and hands off the marker as a baton. Each member completes a sentence with a word (e.g. “Westward expansion was .”) For advanced groups, members must complete with a word that starts with each letter of the alphabet in order. Younger students may fill in any order, or as a class.
<b>All hands on deck</b>	A group brainstorms together, all writing on the same paper at the same time for 60-90 sec. — compare ideas, high light unique
<b>Sticky Notes</b>	Individuals or groups write a single word or phrase on a large post-it note. They post on a chart paper for all to see, grouping like-ideas together.

## Partners

<b>Back to Back</b>	An active 'Think-Pair-Share,' students stand back to back with a partner to first listen to the question, then turn to face each other to discuss the prompt. With each new question, students stand back to back with a new partner. Between questions, students walk randomly and creatively throughout the room.
<b>Brain Bark</b>	In a short amount of time (30 -60 sec) bark out everything you know to a partner
<b>Carousel</b>	Provides scaffolding for new information to be learned or existing information to be reviewed through movement, conversation, and reflection. According to Project CRISS, Carousel Brainstorming is a cooperative learning activity that can be used both to discover and discuss background knowledge prior to studying a new topic, as well as for review of content already learned. This technique allows for small group discussion, followed by whole-class reflection. While taking part in Carousel Brainstorming, small groups of students rotate around the classroom, stopping at various "stations" for a designated period of time (usually 1-2 minutes). At each station, students activate their prior knowledge of a topic or concept and share their ideas with their small group. Each group posts their ideas at each station for all groups to read.
<b>Partner/Group reporting</b>	"We decided..."
<b>Think-Pair-Share</b>	Think: Students take a few moments just to THINK about the question/prompt. Pair: Students PAIR up to talk about the answer each came up with. They compare notes and identify the answers they think are best, most convincing, or most unique. Share: Pairs SHARE their thinking with the rest of the class.
<b>What Your Partner Said</b>	When reporting back to the whole group after a 'Think-Pair-Share,' individuals describe what their partner said.

## Individual

<b>3 Column chart</b>	What I knew, what I now know, what I don't/still wish to know
<b>3-2-1</b>	Students summarize key ideas in writing, rethinking them in order to focus on those that they are most intrigued by, and then pose a question that can reveal where their understanding is still uncertain. For example: 3 Things You Found Out; 2 Interesting Things; 1 Question You Still Have.
<b>Admit and Exit Tickets</b>	At the end of class, students write on note cards or slips of paper an important idea they learned, a question they have, a prediction about what will come next, or a thought about the lesson for the day. Alternatively, students turn-in such a response at the start of the next day—either based on the learning from the day before or the previous night's homework. These quick writes can be used to assess students' knowledge or to make decisions about next teaching steps or points that need clarifying. This reflection helps students to focus as they enter the classroom or solidifies learning before they leave.
<b>Dotmocracy</b>	A brainstorm or a list of ideas is charted on walls around the room. Students rotate among charts and place a mark or sticker next to the ideas that resonate for them. They "vote" for their favorite.
<b>Fist to five</b>	Fist — I don't understand 1 finger I still need to discuss certain parts 2 fingers I'm a bit more comfortable but still need to discuss 3 not fully comfortable but can start 4 feel like I got a good handle on the topic 5 completely understand
<b>Four Corners</b>	Four positions, attitudes, or opinions are posted in the four corners of the room. Students take a stand, discuss and defend their ideas.
<b>Hand signals</b>	Similar to think pad but hold up a hand signal for answer

<b>Human Barometer</b>	A quick way to take the pulse of the group about specific topics. Participants physically show their feeling about a prompt—such as ‘The president is doing a good job’—by raising or lower hands, standing or sitting or moving to a specific place in the room.
<b>Personal Opinion guide</b>	Get pre and post opinions on topic.
<b>Quick write/write</b>	Student writes a sentence/draws a picture of their answer
<b>Self-Assessment</b>	Provide students with a rubric or a checklist of quality criteria. Students identify their strength(s) and weakness(es). They may want to keep it private, or share through discussion or written response.
<b>Talking Stick</b>	Drawn from the practices of the indigenous Americans, the purpose of this protocol is to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak. It can also be helpful if you have students who constantly have their hands up, in that it can give them a format for group work. Form the groups and have participants take turns speaking for one minute on the subject and their thoughts about it. Designate a particular pen as “the talking stick.” The participants pass the stick around the circle, with only the person holding the stick being able to speak. Allow each participant to speak for one minute <i>without interruptions</i> and then pass the “talking stick” to the next participant. After all have spoken, allow a few minutes for them to discuss as a group.
<b>Think pad</b>	Write answer down and hold it up
<b>What Makes You Say That?</b>	When students respond to an open-ended question, this probe will support their explanation. This thinking routine allows for students to make their thinking "visible" by supporting their ideas with evidence.