

The Traveling Discussion

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An activity to encourage group participation in a fast-paced, collaborative discussion, and enable all students to engage with several discussion questions in a minimal amount of time.

Time:

- Approx. 35 mins (depending on the number of traveling envelopes)

Preparation Required:

- Prepare 5 broad statements or questions which could encourage 10+ different comments, examples, or responses. Print each question on a lined sheet of paper and place each in a numbered envelope.
 - Ex. Statement - *“Lessons are essential for the child protagonist. Discuss in relation to texts we have studied this term.”*

Learning Outcomes:

- Interpret exam-type essay questions
- Discuss course material in a group setting
- Incorporate multiple learning styles into a discussion format

The Activity:

- Divide the class into 5 groups of 3-4 students. (If the class is larger in size, the class may be first divided in half, and then each half further divided into 5 groups.)
- Have each member of the group assume a specific activity role:
 - recorder - records the group's main points
 - facilitator - ensures that all members contribute to the discussion
 - speaker - presents the group's findings to the class (if needed)
 - convener - collects supplies and circulates the traveling envelopes
- Distribute one traveling envelope (each containing a sheet with a different question or statement) to each group's convener.
- Allow the groups 7 minutes to discuss the statement/question, come up with what they feel to be their two strongest points or responses, and have the recorder write the responses on the top two lines of the sheet.
- At the end of 7 minutes, announce that it is time for the discussion to travel, and have conveners rotate the envelopes clockwise between the groups. Once all groups have received a new envelope and question, have them repeat the same steps, reading the question, discussing it, deciding on their top two points, and recording them on the sheet, below the first group's points. *Note that no group may duplicate a response recorded by a previous group.
- In each round, reduce the rotation time, requiring the groups to work together more effectively and generate responses more quickly.
[Round 1, 7 mins; round 2, 6 mins; round 3, 5 mins; round 4, 4 mins; round 5, 3-4 mins.]
- After each group has worked with each envelope's question, rotate the envelopes once more and allow the groups approximately 5 minutes to read and discuss the responses that were added to their original discussion.
- If desired, encourage the reporters to briefly (1-2 mins) share the most creative or striking responses with the rest of the class.