

**TRANSACTIVE DISCUSSION**

**LESSON PLAN  
(45-90 MINUTES)**

**Objectives**

- Students practice how to engage in transactive discussions
- Students practice engaging multiple perspectives and creating an informed opinion on a topic after discussions

**Standards**

- **Common Core:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.c; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.d; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3

**Materials**

- Handout 1: Transactive Discussion Practice Activity

| <b>Background<br/>Transactive Discussions</b>  |
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| <p>Research has shown the most effective discussions are ones where students are actively working to transform the arguments they have heard others making. The statements students make when doing this are referred to as transacts and do one of three things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Extend the logic of the argument</i></li><li>• <i>Refute the assumptions and/or logic of the argument</i></li><li>• <i>Find a place of commonality between two conflicting positions</i></li></ul> <p>This is much different from <i>debate</i>, in which two people argue positions and one group or person wins based on their ability to present a case for one position. With Transactive discussions, students consider both perspectives as a group and work to understand which perspective is the best solution based on fairness, and justice. This process helps develop students' understanding of fairness and justice.</p> |

**Whole Class Activity  
(10-15 minutes)**

Explain the three key components of the student discussion techniques:

- *Extend the logic of the argument*
- *Refute the assumptions in the argument*
- *Find a place of commonality between two conflicting positions*

Explain that this is done most effectively through active listening to group members. There are 9 tips students should keep in mind when engaging in this process (**if possible, have these displayed on the room somewhere**):

1. *Think before you speak*
2. *Listen carefully to what others have to say*
3. *Do not interrupt*
4. *Make use of what others have said when it's your turn to speak*
5. *Only say what you truly believe*
6. *Don't stay silent; make sure to contribute to discussion*
7. *Once you have shared, let other people speak; don't overshare*
8. *Support other ideas even if they are different from your own*
9. ***Search for the best solution even if it is different from the way you thought at first.***

Explain the idea behind Elaboration and Integration through an example with 2-3 volunteers.

- Present a scenario that has two perspectives on a topic (e.g. discipline for tardiness, school uniforms, or cell phones in class)
- Using cell phones as an example, call on a student for a perspective in favor of having phones in class and provide a reason against cell phones in class
- Using your 2-3 volunteers, use elaboration to extend one perspective as being the best for a school/classroom policy
- After doing so, elaborate the second perspective in the same manner
- Then together, present the best solution for school policy that either completely agrees with one perspective or combines the two to find an integrated perspective

**Small Group  
(15-25 minutes)**

Following the modeled example you have created, break students into small groups (4-5 students) and give transactive handout of choice. 1. Instruct students to first engage in the elaboration game with the material, then if time, the rebuttal game. They should finish by trying to integrate perspectives.

**Discussion**  
**(15-25 minutes)**

Bring class back together. Have class share out their experience with the activity. First, have students discuss which perspective they took and why and then probe for additional points of understanding. Sample questions below

- What did you find difficult when listening to and paraphrasing your group members?
- What helped you integrate arguments?
- What made your group pick this perspective?
- Which argument was most convincing to you? What points from that argument made it most compelling to you?
- What did you learn about the perspective you did not immediately choose?
- Were you all able to find common ground and compromise?
- What did the perspectives have in common?
- How did they differ?
- How does this topic relate to your own lives?
- Why does this conversation matter?
- Why was it important to see each of these perspectives?
- Has this changed your understanding of the topic? Howso?
- How does this issue relate to local examples of issues related to racism and bias?
- What is the role of racism and bias in this issue?
- How has this activity changed your opinion on the topic?

Gauge their need for more practice and adjust accordingly. You can extend this lesson for as long as needed and continue to revisit and practice these techniques with other topics. Explain that this communication style is the approach you want students to bring to their discussion questions for the following activities.

## Standards

### Common Core

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.b
- Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.c
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.d
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.