TEXT-BASED DISCUSSION PROTOCOLS FOR GROUP LEARNING EXPERIENCES

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Text-based discussion protocols are simple tools that can assist learners in deriving meaning from a reading text. Protocols provide learners with a systematic approach or set of instructions to follow. This process respects numerous lived realities and differing perspectives while also providing a safe space for learners to offer differing interpretations of the problems and subject matter contained in the text under discussion. A facilitator encourages group participants to be involved in critical thinking, reflection, and discourse, creating a shared experience around learning issues. Facilitators frequently establish a set of working standards to assure that all viewpoints are being heard and members are valued.

Collaboration and discussion protocols encourage learners to recognize different points of view and insights. These protocols allow for making room for listening and contributing to the discourse. Following timekeeping, shifting, and focusing on the topic is critical for productive discussion. Many students do not naturally possess these abilities. Individuals and groups are held responsible for pushing their thirst for quality learning by performing responsible actions such as accountable conversation and making inquiries, honoring differing opinions, and synthesizing efforts into a discussion.

Furthermore, group learning involves emotionally, intellectually, and aesthetically engaging learners in problem-solving, product creation, and producing meaning—an arrangement in which each member learns independently and through the forms of learning of others. Group learning also includes the key features of further learning by

discussing the benefits of cooperative learning, describing general strategies for incorporating group work, and defining how to reassess group activities.

There are simple suggestions that can be utilized as tools to begin the class period by employing text-based discussion protocols for group learning to engage students and smoothly transition them into a learning community. The exercises can be introduced at the start of class, perhaps after a simple deep relaxation to help students let go of interruptions, self-regulate, and activate the present situation.

The following are the suggested learning practices:

1. DEMONSTRATING MODEL-PRACTICE

It is best to model this activity before introducing it to the students. Ask a student to be your partner and stand in front of you. The teacher begins by saying something they notice about the student, then something they recognize about the student, and finally something they wonder about the student while the students are facing each other. The activity about the teacher is then repeated by the student. It can be beneficial to remind students that their comments should be respectful of others and their feelings.

When considering wonder, it is imperative that learners feel comfortable being curious because curiosity leads to self-awareness. It is up to the teacher's professional judgment on how to guide the classes. The teacher can ask students to choose a partner, join the person beside them, or pair up. It is also a good idea to mix it up because it allows students to learn more about one another, get out of their heads, and become involved with someone else. The mood in the classroom changes to a more relaxed atmosphere, which encourages students to participate in learning.

2. USING INFORMATION-PRACTICE IN ACADEMICS

Learners can use the text's information to embody the lives of fictional and historical characters and enjoy a variety of reading texts, giving them practice in communicating

knowledge gained from written texts in various formats. Students can share their findings with a partner or in writing as an individual response. The concepts can be addressed as a group activity to increase knowledge and understanding. The activity is also a good place to start when evaluating historical sources like speeches, reflective journals, photos, and video recordings.

3. BENEFICIAL ACTIVITY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The strategy is beneficial for students who thrive in small group activities that are less facilitated by the teacher. Observing, perceiving, and wondering are excellent skills to build because they shift the focus away from the individual and onto their partner. This relieves the pressure of speaking in front of the entire class and may decrease self-consciousness when learners learn to speak and listen.

The structure of the statements can act as a scaffold, providing students with a sentence frame in which to add additional descriptive language to their findings while working with diverse partners. Partners can get to know each other better, see what they have in common, and discern and recognize their differences. This is an important step in creating a safe space and a sense of community. Teachers can learn more about their students and their understanding as they participate in this exercise.

The advantages of group work do not end with the students. Group work provides teachers with an excellent opportunity to supervise and support students as they collaborate. Teachers can see their students' progress in action as they practice their learning and evaluate situations and judgments. As needed, teachers can provide guidance and modifications. Teachers can identify students' academic and social strengths and weaknesses by observing them working in groups. Teachers can also designate more complex tasks when using group work because students can expand their resources.

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References:

https://www.nextgenlearning.org/equity-toolkit/discussion-protocols

https://www.edutopia.org/article/discussion-protocol-group-learning-experiences