Leading Discussions

GROUP MEMBERS AS SEEN BY THE LEADER

- The Wise Member
- The Talker
- The Against-Member
- The Quarrelsome
- The "Knower"
- The Shy
- The Sleeper
- The Tricky Member

- He wants to show his knowledge
- Against everything and everyone
6 methods

- Buzz groups
- Round Table
- Quescussion
- Think-Pair Share
- Snowball
- Lineup
1. Quescussion

How would the world be different if Chinese explorers discovered the Americas instead of Columbus?

1. Only questions can be asked.
2. If someone makes a statement, we all yell ‘statement’
3. Two other people must speak before you speak again.
In the disciplines

- **Engineering**
  - Should engineers be considered about the viability of the structures they build 100 years from now?

- **Mechanical Engineering**
  - Should we depend on oil as the main source of energy?

- **Higher education**
  - Should tenure be abolished at Canadian universities?
In the disciplines

- Computer Science
- Can computers or robots have morals?
- Health Sciences
- Should we introduce a parallel private health care system?
- Political Science
- Is there a Canadian identity?
- Anthropology
- Does culture or personality influence individual behaviour more?
2. SNOWBALL

What are the main qualities of a great question that sparks great discussion?

- Advantages to Snowball:
  Interaction and synthesis of material

- Disadvantages:
  Time, preparation and consensus, can result in simplistic explanations

- Reactions to the model?

Biology: *What are the characteristics of an animal cell?*

*Political Science: What are the key traits of a good mediator?*
3. Line up

A good class discussion will lead to deeper learning than a lecture.

Advantages to Line-up:
Focus on interaction, shows shades of grey

I completely agree

I completely disagree
Line-up in the disciplines - English

- Is poetry or prose a more powerful tool for expressing feelings and emotions...?
- Should X author reveal what happened at the end of the story or leave it open?
- Would X story be more powerful if the main character was gay/ a woman/ from another historical period?
In the disciplines

- Visual Art
- Are museums welcoming spaces?
- Economics/Political Science
- Should the government limit unions’ right to strike during a recession?
Caution...

- Do not ask students to self-disclose about sensitive, identity-involving topics
- Give an option to not line up
- Accommodate students with physical disabilities or hearing challenges
What are some reasons why students may not participate in group discussions in class?

Round Tables:
- Greater control over participation
- Question must have a variety of answers

Physics: What happens when a figure skater is spinning and brings their arms in? Why?
What are your concerns about leading a discussion in class after these examples?

Set clear time limit
Ask groups to report back or “hand in” what they created
6. Think_Pair_Share

What is the role of the facilitator in a good class discussion in your discipline?
Questions?