**Discussing a Text**

Discussing a text or story is bigger than just talking about what we saw or read—it’s about sharing your ideas, hearing what others saw, questioning—it’s about “significant” learning:

* **Learning How to Learn**—engage in self-regulated learning, inquiry, intentional learning
* **Caring**—wanting to do well & be a good student, developing a commitment, developing interests
* **Human Dimension**—leadership, ethics, character, responsibility, cultural sensitivity, teamwork, service, citizenship
* **Integration**—interdisciplinary learning, learning communities, connecting work-home-school.
* **Application**—critical thinking, analysis, practical thinking, creativity, managing complex problems, performance skills (learning a craft or developing a capability)
* **Foundational Knowledge**—developing a full understanding of the concepts associated with a subject to a degree that allows explanations, predictions, etc.

**Discussion Groups**

**Group A:** Write a short summary of the reading. **During discussion:** summarize the discussion as it proceeds (in writing). It is also your job to keep the class on track. Do not read your summary to the group, but use it as necessary to provide clarification. Try to talk less than the others, serving more to keep the class on track and clarify when needed. Be extremely knowledgeable about the reading so that if others are trying to locate a specific point or fact, you can direct them to it.

**Group B:** Develop three open-ended questions for the group to discuss. Think about using words such as How? Why? If? When? Or What if? **During discussion:** use your questions to spark and direct the conversation. Use your questions and make sure that groups C, D, & E bring up their ideas for discussion. Don’t use all of your questions at once, but strategically.

**Group C:** choose three sections you think are particularly interesting, unusual, or difficult to understand. Jot down the page & paragraph numbers. Explain why you chose each. **During discussion:** Show the class your choices to spark conversation. Don’t use all of your sections at once, but strategically.

**Group D:** Come up with three or four connections between this reading and your experiences, previous material this course has discussed, material from other courses/disciplines, or social or historic events/issues. **During discussion:** bring up those connections and ask others to share connections they see or clarify or amplify what you pointed out. Don’t use all of your sections at once, but strategically.

**Group E:** Choose five words from the text that you find especially central to understanding the text but that may difficult to define. Find definitions or come up with a “working” definition for those terms. **During discussion:** bring up those words and let others know what they mean and how they are important to the discussion. Don’t bring them up all at once, but strategically.

(Discussion groups based on Cynthia Alby’s work; significant learning info condensed from L. Dee Fink’s research.)