

# Discussion and Share-Out Strategies Guide



## Discussion and Share-Out Strategies

### TURN AND TALK / ELBOW PARTNER / SHOULDER PARTNER

**Purpose:** This strategy meets the needs of a wide range of students. For students who have difficulty sharing ideas in a large group, they have a chance to rehearse with a partner. For students who always want to share, they are guaranteed the chance to be heard by at least one partner. You can also use this strategy for spontaneous formative assessment by listening briefly to each pair as they are discussing. This will give you a quick snapshot of how your class is thinking about the prompt or question.

**How to do it:** Pose a question or prompt to the students. Give the students a few moments to share their responses with the student sitting closest to them.

### TALKING STICK

**Purpose:** Drawn from the practices of the indigenous Americans, the purpose of this protocol is to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak. It can also be helpful if you have students who constantly have their hands up; by ensuring all students will have their chance to speak, students can put down their hands and be active listeners.

**How to do it:** Designate a particular pen or other item as "the talking stick." Discussion participants pass the stick around the circle, with only the person holding the stick being able to speak. Allow each participant to speak for one minute without interruptions and then pass the "talking stick" to the next participant. After all have spoken, allow a few minutes for students to discuss as a group.

### NAME STICKS

**Purpose:** To create an inclusive share-out that encourages quiet or shy students to speak.

**How to do it:** Write the name of each student in the class on a popsicle stick and store in a cup or bag. During the discussion activity, pull random popsicle sticks out to call on students to speak.

### THINK PAIR SHARE

**Purpose:** This strategy meets the needs of a wide range of students. For students who have difficulty sharing ideas in a large group, they have a chance to rehearse with a partner. For students who always want to share, they are guaranteed the chance to be heard by at least a partner, if not the whole class. You can also use it for spontaneous formative assessment by listening briefly to each pair as they are discussing. This will give you a quick snapshot of how your class is thinking about the prompt or question.

**How to use it:** Present students with a question or discussion prompt. Give the students a few moments to silently think about the question or prompt. Then have students pair up with someone sitting close to them. Each member of the pair shares their thinking in response to the question or prompt. If they have time, they can have a brief discussion. Call the group's attention back for a group discussion. Ask the pairs to share what they discussed.

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### MINGLE PAIR SHARE

**Purpose:** This is a great way to get students moving around the classroom. Additionally, this strategy encourages students to talk to different classmates than those they may normally work with.

**How to use it:** This sharing strategy is very similar to musical chairs. The teacher will play music as the students mingle around the room. When the music ends, each child needs to find a partner near them and give that partner a high five. Then, the teacher will pose a question for the students to discuss. Partners take turns sharing their responses. After a short, timed discussion period, the music begins again and the procedure repeats. Each time, students should try to find a new partner.

### POPCORN SHARE-OUT

**Purpose:** This strategy challenges students to share ideas without talking over each other, which is great practice for real life discussion skills.

**How to use it:** Students voluntarily share their ideas without raising their hands. Tell students this is not a race to get their ideas out, but an opportunity to practice organic discussions in a large group. To make this successful:

- Students use a "3 before me" mindset, allowing 3 other students to speak before they share again.
- Guide students to assess the body language of classmates to see if others are about to share.
- Before you start, give guidance about what students can do if two students begin speaking at the same time; they can decide who will continue and who will go second. The rest of the class will wait until these students have a chance to share.

### STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION

**Purpose:** This strategy puts students in charge of the discussion and ensures diversity of voices. This works well for younger children.

**How to use it:** One student begins the conversation (teacher can choose who begins). When that student is done, they call on another student. The pattern can be established by the teacher (ex. "Call on a student on the opposite side of the room," etc.) When they are done, they call on another student. Students who want to share next hold up their hands. Consider adding the challenge that students cannot call on a student who has already spoken until everyone has had a chance to speak.

### WHIP AROUND / ONCE AROUND THE ROOM

**Purpose:** This is a very quick way to hear every student's thoughts on a topic when responses are likely to be short (2 sentences or fewer).

**How to use it:** After posing a question or a prompt, quickly call on a student to share his/her thinking, then call on the student sitting to the right or left of that student. Continue calling on students in that same direction until each student has shared. As much as possible, call on students in a predictable pattern (moving in a circle, or calling on all students at a table group before moving to the next table group) so students are not surprised by their turn to speak and you will not miss calling on a student.

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### PARKING LOT

**Purpose:** This strategy serves two purposes: first, it allows students to pose a question even when it's not an appropriate moment to share that question with the class (perhaps because the question is off topic, or the discussion is ending). Second, it provides an opportunity to ask questions to students who may be reluctant to speak in front of everyone. Questions posted to the Parking Lot are visible and easy for everyone to read, so you can strategically choose which question you'd like to address at a given moment.

**How to use it:** Designate a portion of the board or an anchor chart as the Parking Lot. When a student has a question, but it's not an appropriate moment to ask, the student may "park" their idea in this space by writing on this space or on a sticky-note and posting it within the space. Take advantage of small unused moments of class time (perhaps after a class transition, or in the last moments of a class session) to address a question from the Parking Lot. It is important that these questions are addressed at some point, rather than parked and forgotten.

### QUESTION JAR

**Purpose:** Much like the Parking Lot, the Question Jar serves two purposes: first, it allows students to pose a question even when it's not an appropriate moment (perhaps because the question is off topic, or the discussion is ending). Second, it gives you the opportunity to ask questions to students who may be reluctant to speak in a large group. Question slips can be pulled from the jar at random, which can build excitement.

**How to use it:** When a student has a question, but it's not an appropriate moment to ask, the student may write their question on a slip of paper and drop it into the Question Jar (or other designated receptacle). Take advantage of small unused moments of class time (perhaps after a class transition) to address a question from the Question Jar. It is important that these questions are addressed at some point, rather than placed in the jar and forgotten.