



Podcast on Colleagues Discussion



Shalom & Hi everyone -welcome to the UnitEd-Herzog Podcast!

We assume you have familiarity with educational ideas such as Collaborative learning, Jigsaw method, Self-directed learning, and Active learning. Sometimes these these methods and techniques seem a little bit vague

UnitEd-Herzog has prepared a series of short and focused podcasts on a number educational approaches. The podcasts are workshops for building lesson plans based on diverse, inviting, and engaging learning practices that encourage students to take an active and meaningful part in their learning. We've also prepared accompanying materials for you and your students that help improve their learning using these practices..

These practices may be adapted to any content and any age group.

So go ahead, take the material you've planned to teach, find a quiet place, put on your headphones, and join us!



I really like class and group discussions. But group discussions entail several challenges: sometimes there are participants who are more dominant and participate in the discussion while others are more reluctant to speak. Group thinking may develop within the group and the individual person may be influenced by others, and not necessarily for the better. This might detract from original thinking that is different from the group, and even we, as teachers or facilitators, may find ourselves dragged into a discussion while progressing with a small group and not necessarily allowing any process of learning during the discussion.

Peer discussion is a guided method designed to encourage the development of ideas, opinions, learning and understanding, both as individuals and as a group. By working by these steps, we allow different learners to think, express themselves, listen, discuss in the group, and think about the process one more time. This process allows the students to develop confidence in their ability to think and express their opinion on complex issues, as well as enabling them to reflect on their thinking processes.

I will present the various steps and then we will dive in together to build a lesson plan that will suit each and every one of you.

In the first step we will present the topic and ask a significant question related to it.

We will ask each student to think of an answer independently and write it down for themselves.

After everyone has written their answer, we will present a multiple choice survey to the class and let each student give an appropriate answer.



We now have a general picture of the way that the class thinks, without knowing who gave which answer. We can all discuss the answers that the students gave, and think about what they say, without reaching a conclusive decision yet.

We will divide the class into discussion groups, where they can share their personal opinions and formulate a group insight together.

Now we will ask the students to answer the survey once more in light of their new conclusions.

During the class discussion, we will open the results of both surveys and discuss the differences between the first and second, and what we learned and developed in this learning process.

We recommend using this method to open a complex topic, like at the beginning of a new study unit, when we want to open the students' minds and encourage motivation and curiosity in the learning process.

Please stay with us. I will guide you through the process of building a peer-based lesson plan and at the end of this section you will have a lesson that is ready to use in class. Let's start.



You're with us? Great. I suggest that you sit where you are comfortable to work, maybe put on headphones and prepare a device for documenting your lesson structure: it can be a notebook, a sheet of paper, or a computer. You can also use the page we prepared for you.

Building a lesson plan based on peer discussion involves six stages and I will explain each step and leave you time to work while listening to some pleasant music. If you feel you need more time just stop the recording, finish working and join us again.

First stage – think what the main topic you want to deal with is and most importantly what is the big question you want to put out on the table. I invite you to think about a question that is motivational; one that will encourage the students to learn and investigate, one that does not have a clear answer and involves a lot of discussion, research and in-depth thinking. An example of such a question that I heard in school was: Who does Jerusalem belong to? This is a major question without a straightforward answer and it raises a lot of thoughts. I suggest that you write as many questions as you can that are related to your topic. This time go for quantity and not for quality. Then you can filter down your questions.

 **Take 3 minutes to think about the big question you want to raise.**



You're back? Great. You have a long list of questions. This is the time to filter out and find the main question you will move forward with. Read your questions and first cross out, or mark an X next to the questions that are quite obviously not relevant. Circle, or mark with a dot, those questions that really excite you. Do this with your list of questions until you are left with 2-3 questions that you think could really work.

 **Take 2 minutes for this task.**





I assume that you are already a little more focused. It's okay if you haven't finalized the wording yet; you can continue finetuning this later. In class, after presenting the big question, we won't answer it in a group, but will enable the students to answer independently. Now we will prepare the survey question that we are going to ask the students. As we said before, the survey does not have to have the correct answer, sometimes there is not one correct and clear answer. For example, the question: Who does Jerusalem belong to?

You can write answers to choose from: Jews, Christians, Muslims, the whole world, others. The answers that the students will raise will be varied and likely to change between discussions. It is also significant if the answers don't change between the discussions. Think of a question that can promote the thinking and learning process and give you a picture of the entire class. Here too I suggest you make a long list of questions with possible answers and then filter them down.

 **Take 3 minutes to complete this task.**



You already know how to do the filtering yourself. We will move on to the next step after you have an idea about the question you will present in the survey. Try to prepare yourself for a class discussion based on the answers to the question. Try to imagine what the students will answer, which answer could get the most points? Which one could get the least? What questions would you like to ask them about this survey and spark a group discussion? Ideas for possible questions: What did you learn from the survey? What does it teach us about opinions in the classroom? Why did this answer get the fewest comments, and why did another question get the most? Who wants to share with us why they chose one answer or another? Is there anyone who chose a certain answer, but can explain why someone would choose a different answer?

 **Take a few minutes to think about more questions and how you imagine the discussion in class. The discussion is an important part and you will have to moderate it.**



Have you prepared your questions for the discussion? Great. After the presentation of the survey in class, we will divide the students into groups. You can think how you would like to pair the students, would you like to do this in advance or rather let them pair themselves independently? What is the best composition for your class? In addition, think about focus points that you would like to give the students for a group discussion. A group discussion can be an amazing and prolific process, and it can also be a difficult process that causes struggles within the group. Think about the focus points you want to give your students to enable a respectful and productive discussion, that allows for them to voice diverse opinions.

Obviously you will walk between the groups during the lesson and you will be able to watch them and help with challenging points.

 **Take 2 minutes to plan the pairs and focus points for discussion.**




We have two final steps left. Now we will prepare the concluding discussion which includes the results of the new survey. There is no need to create a new question; we want to examine the answers after holding a new discussion. But now we expect different answers and we want to prepare a new pool of questions for the class. Ideas for questions: What has changed since the previous survey? How many of you changed your mind? Why? What happened during the group discussion that made you change your mind? Was it difficult for you to change your mind? Did it surprise when you changed your mind?

-  **Take a few minutes to think about additional questions that will promote the concluding discussion and think about what conclusion you would like to give yourself.**



We have reached the last stage and now you have to prepare an exit card. The exit card is another personal opportunity for students to reflect on their thinking and also to mirror things back to you as the teacher. The exit card will generally include a short list of questions that can be answered in a few minutes. Ideas for questions: What did you think before the discussion? What do you think now? Include an opinion or piece of information that was significant to you during the discussion. You can add other ideas to your exit ticket.

-  **Take 3 minutes to prepare your exit ticket. (You can find an example of an exit ticket on the website) That's it. Well done! You now have a lesson plan based on peer discussion and you can continue developing more lessons.**



We hope you found this podcast to be helpful.
Don't forget to also visit the UnitEd and Herzog College websites.
There you will find additional materials about the practice and other useful resources for future lessons, inspiration, and enrichment.
Good luck!

You can also listen to the podcast here:

