

From Rows to Tables: The Process of Scaffolding the Introduction to Harkness

(inspired by Aida Conroy, Harkness Mentor, Noble Academy)

Before School

1) Teachers create Non- Negotiables

2) Teachers create Systems and Routines for their classrooms

3) Teachers identify the 3-5 Soft Skills that they want to teach and develop plan for introducing and teaching these skills

4) Teachers plan “ Team work” discussions: these can be ethical dilemmas or other conversations. The content of the conversation is not important- the important point is to practice Harkness skills

5) Teachers consider “Bright spots” in their teaching practice and plan to build upon them

School Begins

1) Each Class brainstorms ground rules for the entire class-

- Everyone participates
- Class votes on these ground rules and these are posted in the classroom

2) Teacher begins to introduce lessons on 3-5 Soft skills:

- Students practice these skills and reflect on their progress using these skills in Team discussions.

• Short lessons are introduced each day so students can learn and practice these skills in discussion

3) Teacher introduces the concept of “**Teamwork**”

- What is the difference between a group and a team?
- What are the characteristics of a successful team?
- What does good teamwork look like and what does bad teamwork look like?
- Teacher organizes class into groups of four as a “learning teams” and students identify with and name their teams. Students remain in these teams until they “graduate” to the Harkness table
- Teacher facilitates class creation of Team work norms: What they WANT to see happening in Teamwork!!

What is the Team’s Body Language?

What is the team saying?

What is the team doing?

What is the team making?

4) Teamwork *begins - with practice regularly - as long as it takes....* ☺

- Students discuss ethical dilemmas or scenarios to practice discussion and soft skills.
- The goal is to PRACTICE interactions with one another- the content of the discussion is not as important
- Students reflect after each Teamwork session and evaluate their progress

5) *Students come to the Big Harkness Table WHEN TEACHER DETERMINES THEY ARE READY*

Feedback is given by assessing and reflecting on *each discussion*