

Student Discussion Lesson Model (Salon Protocol)

Adapted from: Coalition of Essential Schools (Producer). (2007). *EssentialVisions* ([Video](#) - this is a 200mb file, so be patient; & [Viewing Guide](#)).

Purpose: Effective teachers promote learning through discussion. A foundational skill that students learn through engaging in discussion is that of explaining and justifying their reasoning and conclusions, based on specific evidence. Teachers skilled in the use of questioning and discussion techniques challenge students to examine their premises, to build a logical argument, and to critique the arguments of others. Effective discussions are intentionally structured to ensure equity of voice, increasing depth and complexity, and engagement. The Salon Model is one of many protocols that can structure productive discussions.

Phases:

Opening: Review core concepts that will be the basis of the discussion. Access prior knowledge/prior learning, create anticipation, stimulate curiosity, or excite interest in the discussion to come. Clarify what the intention and the learning goals of the discussion.

Salon Protocol: Engage students in thinking, constructing understanding, synthesizing, and problem solving:

1. Framing & Clarifying:
 - a. Framing: Framing and clarification of protocol, remind class they will be responsible for evaluating their own performance as a participant in the discussion.
 - b. Grouping: Divide students into small discussion groups of 4 or 5. Each table will have a different question to discuss all centered on the same topic
 - c. Facilitator: One student in each group acts as the facilitator and will stay at the same table throughout the discussions or the facilitator can switch after two groups have passed.
2. Discussion Rounds:
 - a. Each group discusses topic for 5 minutes; the facilitator should be taking notes or jotting down relevant issues and/or comments that were raised in the discussion
 - b. After 5 minutes, everyone at the table, except the facilitator, moves to a new group (two students go to a table to their left, two to the right).
 - c. After students are in their new groups the facilitator initiates a new conversation introducing the question or issue and what the previous group had to say about it. Students can use the previous group's comments to start their own conversation or can branch off into unexplored ideas.
 - d. At the end of 5 minutes repeat the process.
3. Synthesis: After everyone has been to a table, have students go back to their original tables and have the facilitators share out their findings from each group. Did the same ideas resurface in each group? If so, were they expressed in slightly different ways each time? Did you learn something new in each group? Were there any great comments that were stated, who said them? Was there any contradictory information in different groups? What was the overall consensus of the questions or topic?

Close: Make thinking visible, provide feedback or reflection on both the process and the learning, consolidate learning gains.