teaching & learning lab

DISCUSSION PROTOCOLS

Purpose	Possible Protocols Note: Protocols can often be used or modified to suit multiple purposes
Brainstorm or generate new ideas	**Carousel Brainstorm** Also known as Rotating Review. Students are divided into different groups and walk around the room to respond to open-ended prompts or questions on poster paper. **Open Space** Open Space is a way of organizing meetings where students self-organize their conversation based on topics they choose to discuss. **Whip-Around** Students write down an individual answer to a prompt or question, then each student briefly shares his/her thoughts with the class.
Focus on or gain consensus on a few ideas	**Focusing Four** Students generate, record, and advocate for various ideas before prioritizing and voting. Unlike the Nominal Group Technique (below), the Focusing Four contains a round where students can only advocate for (not against) ideas. **Nominal Group Technique** Students generate, record, and discuss various ideas before prioritizing and voting.
Distribute participation or encourage turn-taking	**Concentric Circles** Also called Inside/Outside Circles. One group of students forms an "inside" circle, facing the second group of students in an "outside" circle. Students pair off to discuss a prompt or question, then the outside circle rotates so that students have a new pair for the next round. **Fishbowl** A smaller group of students discusses a topic while the rest of the class observes the process or takes turns entering the "fishbowl" to participate. **Think-Pair-Share** Students have time to individually reflect on their response before sharing it with one other student. Pairs report on their conversations to the larger group.
Highlight different perspectives on one issue	**Four Corners** Students must stand in a corner of the room to indicate their position about a statement (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly agree), then they engage in a discussion about their opinions. **Jigsaw** Students are assigned to review different material or readings in advance. They first meet in an "expert" group to become familiar with their specific

	resource and then meet in a "teaching" group to share their resource with the other students.
Encourage alternative means of participation (e.g., writing, drawing)	Chalk Talk Also known as Big Paper. Students silently write their responses to text excerpts posted around the room, including posing questions or responding to other students. World Café Students discuss topics in small groups at tables, writing or drawing their ideas on a paper "tablecloth," and move to a new table for each round.
Discuss a text or reading	Four A's Students discuss assumptions, what they agree with, what they argue with, and what they aspire to, based on a specific text. Final Word Also known as Save the Last Word. One student selects a quotation from the text and reads it aloud. Other students take turns responding to the text, and the original student closes the discussion with a reflection. Socratic Seminar Students discuss what the author was trying to convey by using evidence from a specific text. Students build on one another's ideas without intervention from the instructor.
Discuss data or other artifacts (e.g., student work)	Data-Driven Dialogue Students examine data or other artifacts using four phases: predict, make a visual, observe, and infer. Looking at Student Work Students examine the results of an assessment or project to reflect on learning and generate next steps or implications
Provide feedback or problem-solve a dilemma	Consultancy Protocol One or more students presents a dilemma or question to be discussed, and the other students talk to each other about the dilemma presented. Tuning Protocol One or more students shares an artifact of work to be discussed, and the other students provide warm and cool feedback.

Protocol Repositories

- National School Reform Faculty
- School Reform Initiative
- Facing History
- Data Wise
- Gonzalez, J. (2015). The big list of class discussion strategies.
- EL Education protocols via Engage NY