



Course Outline

Text discussions in middle school, across subject areas, can help students become more independent readers of the complex texts called for in both the English Language Arts and Literacy Common Core Standards. This course provides an introduction to teaching with text discussions that support the close reading of text, as well as speaking and listening skills in small groups.

In this course, teachers will learn about how text discussions, as a form of close reading, can improve reading comprehension for adolescents. Teachers will learn how metacognition supports reading and how to incorporate metacognitive reading practices into instruction. Teachers will explore different ways to structure text discussions and ways to create a classroom climate where students feel comfortable sharing and participating.

Teachers will view expert and classroom videos of text discussion, learn from research, complete activities to check their learning, and apply this learning to their classroom practice. A course portfolio provides an opportunity to revisit key ideas, strategies, and reflections during and after the course.

Goals & Purpose

Session 1 – Introduction to Text Discussion

- Learn about text discussion and understand how to improve reading for adolescents
- Find out what the research says about text discussion and reading comprehension
- Discover how text discussion is a close reading strategy, supporting Common Core instructional goals
- Reflect on your own knowledge and comfort level about text discussions

Session 2 – Metacognition: “Thinking about Your Thinking”

- Understand how metacognition supports reading comprehension
- Explore metacognitive practices and observe metacognitive practices in action
- Reflect on your understanding of metacognition

Session 3 – Student-Led Small Group Discussions

- Examine structures for student-led text discussions
- Analyze the teacher’s role in facilitating text discussions
- Observe text discussion groups in action
- Reflect on observations about student engagement, teacher role, and scaffolds
- Practice annotating a text in preparation for a text discussion group
- Plan for text discussion in your classroom

Session 4 – Setting the Stage for Successful Text Discussions in Your Classroom

- Learn about norm setting for productive text discussions
- Consider how classroom climate impacts student participation and understand how to group students for collaboration
- Analyze what the research says about configuring effective groups
- Reflect about how a safe climate supports risk-taking and learning
- Read about different types of collaborative groups and essentials for effective group work

Session 5 – Pulling it All Together

- Review and reflect on the information and/or activities you completed in this session
- Track your progress in learning about text discussions as a reading comprehension strategy and your comfort level in implementing them
- Complete the post-self-assessment
- Take stock of what you have learned about text discussions for improving reading comprehension of adolescents