



thinking space

ACTIVITY-BASED DISCUSSION

WHAT IS IT?

Deep learning for practical, hands-on learners can be facilitated within sessions that combine words and action.

For some students, the stillness and concentration required for a rich discussion can be a turn-off. A discussion embedded in an absorbing activity can occupy learners, freeing them to have less pressured, more natural conversations.

This tool discusses two ways you might bring this about: By discussing an issue whilst absorbed in an activity or by immersing students in an activity which is followed by a period of reflection.

RECIPE

- **No. of participants:** 2 +
- **Age of participants:** Suitable for any age
- **Preparation time:** 10 - 30 minutes
- **Delivery time:** 10 minutes – 2 hours
- **Materials:** Will depend on the activity

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Discuss While Doing

Set the students an open question as the theme of the lesson before the activity. Next spend some time familiarizing them with the activity you'd like them to do. Then you can then initiate discussion with individual learners in an informal way or you can structure a session so that learners work in groups and are prepared to feedback on their discussion at the end.

Example Sessions

In History

Around the question: 'Should we preserve skills for posterity?' students could knit.

In Citizenship

Around the question: 'What does home mean to you?' students could build shelters or dens.

In Religious Studies

Around the question: 'Why do humans have rituals' students could dip candles.

HOW DOES IT WORK? (cont.)

Action – Reflection

The session begins with a themed activity which is followed by an opportunity for students have a structured discussion around an open question you introduce after the activity.

Example Sessions

In Art

After a school trip to a gallery students could have a structured discussion around the question: 'What make something beautiful?'

In Biology

After intensive activity the class could have a discussion around the question: 'What is fitness?'

In Languages

Students could meet a teacher-in-role or a character speaking a new language they've never heard before. Afterwards, a reflective discussion might begin with the question: "To what extent is communication non-verbal?"

TIPS

- The activity you choose can be something new or unexpected like gardening, beat boxing or origami.
- School trips can be followed up with structured reflective discussion on the bus home.

YOUR NOTES...

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FIND OUT MORE

- See 'Enquiry in Role' Tool
- See 'Taking Enquiry Further' Tool
- See 'Provocation' Tool



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