

FACILITATION STRATEGIES FOR AN ONLINE DISCUSSION

Engaging students in dynamic discussions about topics and texts is a great way to drive higher-order thinking, but facilitation is a learned skill. Teachers may need some strategies they can lean on before they feel confident engaging students in conversations online. Below is a list of facilitation strategies teachers can use during a conversation to ensure they are equitable and substantive.

- **Identify moments of agreement or disagreement between students.**
 - *It sounds like Marco and Elizabeth agree that...What does everyone else think about...?*
 - *Rebecca and Ally have two different interpretations of... Does anyone want to offer another opinion or interpretation?*
- **Ask follow up questions to drive deeper thinking.**
 - *That's an interesting point, Eddie. Have you thought about...?*
 - *How might the point that Alyssa made relate to...?*
- **Encourage students to support their ideas with details or information from the text.**
 - *What moment in the text made you think that, Nova?*
 - *Though you're making an interesting point that..., can you support that with evidence, Sophia?*
- **Help students to make connections between the ideas shared.**
 - *Joshua and Matt are both making an interesting point about... how does this connect to...?*
 - *How is the comment that Deanna made similar to the point that Laurel brought up...?*
- **Highlight strong contributions to the conversation.**
 - *Your point that...is excellent, Max.*
 - *I appreciate your insightful comment about..., Lyla.*
- **Prompt students who have not contributed.**
 - *Marcus, what do you think about...?*
 - *I have not heard from Cynthia, yet. How do you feel about...?*
- **Be honest about unclear or off-topic contributions.**
 - *I'm not sure I understand the point you are trying to make, Ryley. Can you explain that further?*
 - *Sarah, it's not clear to me how that relates to.... Can you explain how this answers the question of...?*
- **Help students to reach conclusions or come to consensus.**
 - *Can we agree on the author's purpose? Why do we think she wrote this?*
 - *Given everything we have discussed today, are there any major "takeaways" we can agree on?*