

Discursive Strategies and Thinking Routines to Support Citizenship Education Inquiries

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INTRODUCTION Citizenship Inquiry Instructional Strategies Resource: Introduction

Concentus citizenship inquiries invite teachers and students to meet K-12 Social Studies, History, and Native Studies outcomes in the context of rich units of inquiry. The inquiries themselves are means of cultivating the Essential Citizenship Competencies (ECCs) integral to justice-oriented citizenship.

Planning a unit involves a myriad of decisions. Key among them are decisions about how students will engage with knowledge and one another at each stage in the inquiry process. ***We know that students learn best when they are actively and deeply involved in constructing compelling knowledge together.***

Consistently pairing thinking routines and discursive strategies can create a learning culture akin to a well-functioning democracy.

Wellman and Lipton's (*Groups at Work*) description of discursive strategies clarifies their central importance in developing ECCS:

"Strategies that structure dialogue and discussion uncover assumptions, making them available for exploration and analysis. They become vehicles for investigating multiple perspectives, ideas, and orientations. These protocols provide external guidelines that allow groups to engage with tough-to-talk-about topics in safe and productive ways." (39)

A **THINKING ROUTINE** consists of a simple sequence of steps which support students to do the thinking specified by an outcome.

A **DISCURSIVE STRATEGY** governs how students interact with one another as they progress through a thinking routine: this can include the (sequence of) groupings they form and the structure of the dialogue they have in these groupings.

This video, from [Project Zero](#), provides an introduction to thinking routines.

This video, from [School 21](#), provides a picture of how discursive strategies in combination with thinking routines animate and propel student learning.

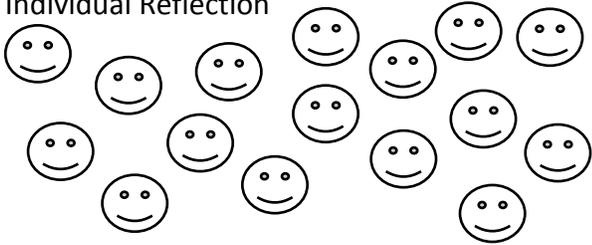
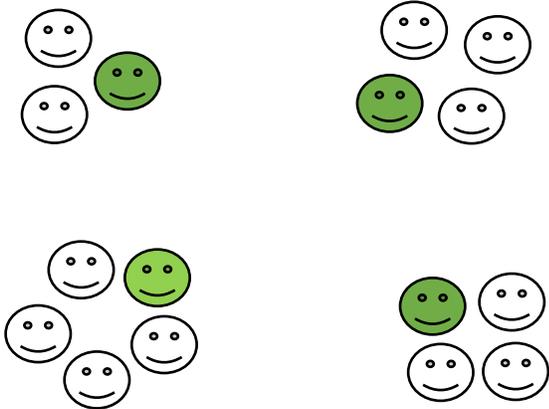
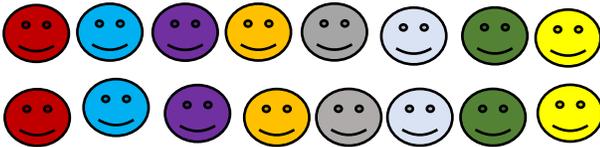
In this resource, you'll find an introductory reservoir of thinking routines and discursive strategies to choose from as you plan your citizenship inquiries. In addition to structuring student thinking and interaction in purposeful ways, these strategies are means by which students generate visible and audible evidence of their development of each ECC – rich formative assessment data that allows both teacher and peers to provide just-right, just-in-time responsive instruction to move learning and personal growth forward.

Strategies can be used in different ways for different purposes and in different combinations. They are not "set in stone": combine and customize and invent them as you will. The key is to

- keep them as simple as possible
- use them often, as regular go-to's in your classroom learning culture

Thinking Routines & Discursive Strategies can be combined to optimize conditions for learning.

Here’s an example, using the thinking routine, 4 Corners:

Step in Thinking Routine	Step in Discursive Strategy
<p>Students reflect on a prompt and choose the option that most closely matches their conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly Agree, • Agree, • Disagree, • Strongly Disagree 	<p>Individual Reflection</p> 
<p>Students move to the corner with the option they’ve chosen.</p> <p>Students Use “First Word, Last Word” to share and synthesize thinking: the first person shares their thinking. Moving clockwise, the others follow. When it’s the first person’s turn again, they share a statement that captures the thinking of the group.</p> <p>The first speaker from each group then shares the group’s thinking with the whole class (indicated in green in visual)</p>	<p>small group huddle; spokesperson shares with whole group</p> 
<p>This process is repeated for each of the prompts. Students then return to their tables or desks, and individually complete an “I used to think . . . Now I think . . .” reflection which they then share with a peer.</p>	<p>individual journaling and pair sharing</p> 

Combination Provides Opportunity to Develop Each ECC

ENLIGHTENED: peers’ knowledge increases one’s own

EMPOWERED: power and voice are shared equitably among group members (who may be divided or stratified at other times)

EMPATHETIC: students listen and respond to diverse thinkers & assumptions

ETHICAL: learners’ rights are respected and responsibilities are met

ENGAGED: the exercise itself mimics discourse in public squares in democratic societies, building student capacity to engage as citizens.

All students have voice (in multiple ways and at multiple times), **connect to and build knowledge with multiple peers,** and **deepen and broaden thinking.**

DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES SUMMARIES

APPOINTMENT CARDS

This strategy supports students to interact equitably with diverse peers, rather than being isolated or limited to the few peers they are most comfortable with. Appointment cards can be customized for use within a single class or over the course of a unit.

DISCURSIVE SENTENCE STARTERS

These are sentence-starters for the kinds of “thinking moves” students are learning to make. They can be provided or co-generated with students. In addition to cueing different types of thinking, they make it safe to both connect to and challenge others and their reasoning.

PITSTOP PROTOCOLS

“Pitstops” are strategically-timed conversations in which students share, evaluate, and shift their thinking. Appointment cards can organize groupings; sentence stems can provide dialogue prompts.

DISCUSSION PASSPORT

This is a baseline discursive strategy for small and large group discussions. The “passport” into a learning conversation is active listening, accurate paraphrasing, and thoughtful questioning.

QUESTION CHAIN

This strategy can be used at any stage of an inquiry. It provides students with the opportunity to ask whatever they need to ask and to rapidly broaden their thinking about a question or topic.

SILENT CONVERSATION

Whether students are surfacing their thinking for the first time, consolidating research findings, or reflecting on an Essential question at an inquiry’s end, this strategy provides a safe space to find new points of connection, tension, and curiosity, and support, extend, and challenge knowledge claims.

TROIKA

This strategy invites students to support one another in addressing their more / most challenging questions or dilemmas. It makes unique demands on listening skills, collaborative problem-solving, and generosity.

ENTER THE CENTER

A community of peers gathers around a question. Using a variety of thinking moves, they explore and evaluate possibilities.

COMPASS POINTS

This routine provides anonymity and deep collaboration as students express, analyze, and respond to their hopes, worries, needs, and stances in relation to a topic, issue, or proposal.

CIRCLE OF VIEWPOINTS

This routine invites students to consider an issue from the perspectives of diverse stakeholders.

WINDOWS & MIRRORS

This routine asks students to consider whether their new learning provides a window into others' realities and/or a mirror of their own. In this way, students reflect on their own rights and responsibilities in relation to an issue.

THINKING ROUTINES SUMMARIES

LOOKING OUT, LOOKING IN

This routine invites students to reflect on what they see, think, feel, and wonder as they apprehend a visual or multimedia text. It then invites them to reflect on what their own responses reveal about themselves as knowers.

When to Use: Responding to a new visual or multimedia text;

Thinking Skills: Close “reading”, activating prior knowledge, surfacing assumptions, generating new questions

4 CORNERS

This routine invites students to collaborate with peers to support a position on a question or issue. Elements of the routine encourage students to shift their thinking in response to new learning.

When to Use: Responding to a question or statement on an issue at any stage in inquiry process

Thinking Skills: Collaboration, supporting claims with evidence and reasoning, exploring assumptions, listening and reasoning fair-mindedly

STARS & CONSTELLATIONS

This routine invites students to identify and connect key concepts as they arise in the course of an inquiry.

When to Use: from beginning to end

Thinking Skills: concept identification and development

QUESTION GENERATOR & SORTER

The question generator invites students to develop a matrix of questions at different levels of thinking and complexity. The question sorter challenges them to identify the questions with the greatest significance and urgency.

When to Use: In the first stages of inquiry

Thinking Skills: Generating factual, procedural, conceptual, and metacognitive questions; evaluating questions to identify inquiry foci

SELFIES, THINKING SNAPSHOTS

This routine is a variation of Know, Want to Know, Learned. At the outset of inquiry, students answer 8 Elements of Thought questions which provide a snapshot of their thinking in relation to their Inquiry Question. (Questions from the [Foundation for Critical Thinking](#)). They then answer the same set of questions midway through the inquiry process, and at the end. Finally, they identify the Elements which shifted most significantly in the process, and the differences these shifts made.

When to Use: multiple stages in inquiry process / learning plan

Thinking Skills: analysis of Elements of Thought; evaluation of shifts and their implications

WIDENING THE APERTURE

This routine invites small groups to respond to a question or issue first from their own point of view, and then from an alternate point of view. As they do so, they identify key concepts and emergent inquiry questions. This routine supports students to reason empathically from alternate perspectives and to recognize and transcend their own implicit biases.

When to Use: Developing Understanding, Evidence of Learning, Apply and Extend

Thinking Skills: multiple perspective-taking, concept identification and development, comparison and contrast, synthesizing

DEBATE CAROUSEL

This routine is a silent one, with students gathered in groups of four. A series of paper-swapping moves invites them to stake a claim, build on another's claim, introduce a counterargument, consider a novel perspective, and evolve their original claim, all within 20 minutes, within the safety of a small group.

When to Use: Developing Understanding

Thinking Skills: See description above!

FANTASTIC FOUR

This routine supports close critical reading of texts students encounter along the road of inquiry. They start by individually identifying 4 points of connection, which they then share with peers in small groups. They synthesize their shared understandings by collaborating to create a visual of their thinking and interpretations.

When to Use: with any source of knowledge, provided by teacher or chosen by student(s)

Thinking Skills: activating prior knowledge, identifying key concepts, assumptions, and implications, active listening, synthesizing, representing

TRAFFIC LIGHT

This routine supports students to evaluate sources and select best evidence as they research.

When to Use: developing Understanding, Applying and Extending Knowledge

Thinking Skills: applying criteria to evaluate quality and relevance of sources and of the information and ideas contained in various sources of knowledge

HERE'S WHAT, SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?

This routine supports students to identify their most significant findings, make inferences about their meaning, and consider their implications for next steps in thinking and action.

When to Use: in mid and later stages of an inquiry; once students have a clear understanding of a text, question, or idea

Thinking Skills: evaluating significance, forming accurate, reliable inferences, determining implications for knowledge and action

TUG OF WAR

This routine supports students to fully develop their understanding of two predominant points of view in a text or inquiry. By placing the two precious things at stake at either end of a rope and assembling the best arguments and evidence to support both, they prepare themselves to engage as citizens in ways that respect the complexity of interests and perspectives in the issue at hand.

When to Use: late in Developing Understanding, Evidence of Learning, Applying and Extending Knowledge

Thinking Skills: applying evidence to generate arguments, empathetic reasoning, evaluating relative significance of ideas and impacts

ECC WRAP

This thinking routine supports individuals, small groups, and large groups to use questions derived from Essential Citizenship Competencies to deeply understand a question, issue, or phenomenon.

When to Use: late in Developing Understanding

Thinking Skills: variety of critical, creative, and contextual thinking skills

READY, SET, GO!

This thinking routine supports students to create their own authentic assessment tasks, making decisions about: goals, roles, audiences, situations, products, and standards.

When to Use: Evidence of Learning, Applying and Extending Knowledge

Thinking Skills: generating and evaluating options, predicting impacts, empathetic reasoning; critical, creative, and contextual thinking skills

DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES

APPOINTMENT CARDS

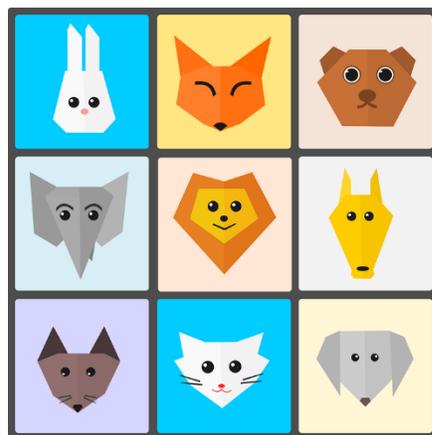
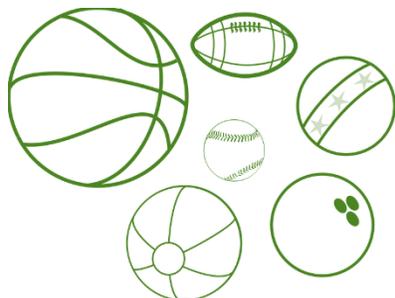
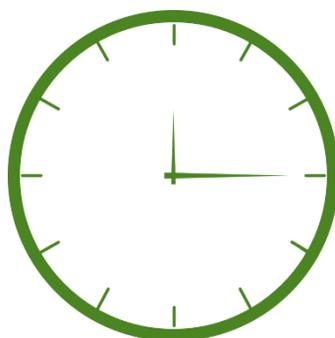
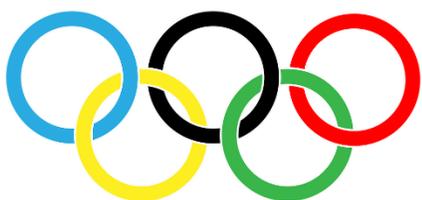
Appointment cards can ensure that students interact more equitably with peers than they might if left to simply choose their own partner each time. At the beginning of a unit, week, or lesson, prepare students for upcoming pit stops by giving them time to create appointment cards.

My Name: Sherry

Season	Peer
Spring	Amber
Summer	Paul
Fall	Shaun
Winter	Morgan

Here is an example.

Seasons can be replaced with anything you and your students like, such as: animals, places, times of day, famous people, planets, sports, Harry Potter characters ... you name it! You can include as many appointments as you wish and use for a lesson or a unit.



Process

To complete the appointment card, invite students to stand and circulate, finding peers who have room in their cards for each meeting. For example, two students who both have “winter” free on their cards would write one another’s name in this space.

Later, when their teacher says, “Time for a  pit stop  with your Winter partner,” the students would consult their cards, see one another’s names, and find one another for their pit stop dialogue.



DISCURSIVE SENTENCE STARTERS

Discursive Sentence Starters



Hand gestures can signal the kind of thinking move a student intends to make when it's their turn. Some possibilities are suggested here. Students can create their own hand gestures for the key moves they plan to make!

First Moves (put palm of hand up)

- ✿ I think ...
- ✿ My view is ...
- ✿ What I think this means is ...

Agree/Support (thumbs up)

- ✿ I agree with X because ...
- ✿ What X is saying here is ...
- ✿ I really like X's point ... ; I'd add ...
- ✿ Although I disagree with much that X says, I fully support their final conclusion ...

Build Upon (layer hands)

- ✿ To build on X's idea ...
- ✿ X's argument ... is also supported by ...
- ✿ This issue/idea is important because ...
- ✿ An example that helps to prove ... is ...
- ✿ Another point of view that supports this idea is ...

Exploring an Idea Further (pull hands apart)

- ✿ This idea is important because ...
- ✿ What is the effect of ... on ...?
- ✿ One of the implications of X / X's idea is ...
- ✿ If X is right ... then we need to ...
- ✿ The assumption we are making when we say ... is ...
- ✿ While some believe ..., others believe ... (still others believe ...)
- ✿ X's idea is very useful because it helps us to understand the difficult problem of ...
- ✿ The finding ... should be of interest to ... because ...
- ✿ An alternative explanation is ...

Mixed Feelings (thumb to middle / side)

- ✿ I agree ... but I disagree ...
- ✿ My feelings are mixed. On the one hand, I support the idea ... ; on the other hand, I'm not sure if ...
- ✿ At first I thought ... ; now I think ...

Challenging an Idea (palm forward)

- ✿ I challenge the idea ... because ...
- ✿ Although I agree with X up to a point, I have trouble accepting their main assumption/conclusion ... because ...
- ✿ X is mistaken because they overlook ...
As a result ...
- ✿ X's statement assumes ...
- ✿ By focusing on ..., X overlooks the deeper problem ...

Anticipating Counter-Arguments

- ✿ Although some might object ..., I would reply ...
- ✿ A limit or weakness in my idea is ...

Clarifying One's Own Idea

- ✿ My point is not ... but ...
- ✿ An example to show what I mean is ...

Clarifying the Group's Ideas (cup hands)

- ✿ We can summarize the ideas so far by saying ...
- ✿ Though X and Y seem to be at odds about ..., they may actually not be that far apart. Here's why: ...
- ✿ The big ideas we are all concerned about are ...

Shifting the Conversation

- ✿ The question/problem we can turn to next is ...
- ✿ Now that we've agreed ..., let's consider this question: ...
- ✿ We all seem to agree... ; we are still wondering ...
- ✿ This explanation accounts for ... but does not explain ...

Adapted from: *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, 2014.



PIT STOPS

A pit stop is a brief stop for fuel, repairs, and recalibrations in a car race. Students engaged in inquiry, in a single lesson and over several lessons, are on a thinking journey. Thinking pit stops can help to make sure that they are on track and getting the most out of their time and investment.

Appointment Cards

Appointment cards can ensure that students interact more equitably with peers than they might if left to simply choose their own partner each time. At the beginning of a unit, week, or lesson, prepare students for upcoming pit stops by giving them time to create appointment cards.

To the right is an example. Seasons can be replaced with anything you and your students like, such as: animals, places, times of day, famous people, planets, sports, Harry Potter characters ... you name it! You can include as many appointments as you wish and use for a lesson or a unit.

To complete the appointment card, invite students to move about, finding peers who have room in their cards for each meeting. For example, two students who both have “winter” free on their cards would write one another’s name in this space.

Later, when their teacher says, “Time for a pit stop with your Winter partner,” the students would consult their cards, see one another’s names, and find one another for their pit stop dialogue.

My Name: Sherry

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Pit stops bring pairs of students together; pit stop protocols ensure that they have a high-impact exchange of ideas. **Here are 3 examples:**

PIT STOP PROTOCOL:

Share, Question, Respond

- Person A: Share the most significant finding or discovery you’ve made so far.
 - Person B: Pose question to learn more and to extend peer’s thinking.
 - Person A: Respond to question, exploring possibilities.
- Reverse**
- Return to workspace.
 - Record a sentence which describes the shift in thinking the pit stop supports or encourages.

PIT STOP PROTOCOL:

3 as +1

Assumptions, Agree, Argue, Aha!
(Adapted from *Making Thinking Visible*)

- Person A: Share thinking in response to prompt.
 - Persons A/B: Together, identify an **assumption** in Person A’s thinking.
 - Person B:
 - *Explain what they **agree** with in Person A’s thinking.
 - *Explain what they would question or **argue** against in Person A’s thinking.
 - Person A: Express an **Aha!** – How has this conversation shifted their thinking. What is their response to the prompt now?
- Reverse**
- Thank partner.
 - Move to small or large group sharing, or return to work!

Using the Elements of Thought & the Standards of Thought for Pitstops (Foundation for Critical Thinking)

Element of Thought	Sample Question
Purpose	What purpose or goal are you working toward right now?
Question, Problem, Issue	What is the question, problem, or issue you're investigating?
Information, Data, Experiences	What is the most significant information or evidence you've found? What kind of evidence do you need to support your conclusions?
Concepts	What is a key concept or big idea that you are using or learning more about?
Assumptions	What beliefs do you have about this?
Conclusions	What do you think is happening? What does this all add up to?
Implications	Who or what is affected by this? How?
Point of View	Is there another way to look at this, another point of view or vantage point?

Standard of Thought	Sample Question
Clarity	Can you give me an example?
Accuracy	What makes you sure that this is true? Tell me about your sources.
Precision	Can you describe / explain that in greater detail?
Relevance	How does this relate to your purpose / question?
Significance	What makes this especially important?
Logic	What logical connections are you making?
Breadth	How wide or narrow is your focus at this point?
Depth	What makes this complex or challenging?
Fairmindedness	Do you notice any bias in your thoughts or feelings about this?



Element, Standard, Follow-up

- Person A:** Pose an Elements of Thought question:
Example: PURPOSE: What goal are you working on right now?
 - Person B:** Responds
 - Person A:** Pose a Standards of Thought Question:
Example: SIGNIFICANCE: What makes this especially important?
 - Person B:** Responds
 - Person A:** Ask follow-up question to clarify and extend thinking.
 - Person B:** Responds
- Reverse**
- Return to workspace.
 - Record a sentence which describes the shift in thinking the pit stop supports or encourages.

DISCUSSION PASSPORT

When you're travelling, you need a valid passport to gain admission to others lands. Another person's ideas are a bit like another land, and it's important to travel there respectfully. Here is a simple strategy to ensure that students are listening closely and actively respecting peers' perspectives.



The 3 Stamp Discussion Passport—Listen, Paraphrase, Question

1. **LISTEN** closely, making eye contact and putting mental, physical, and social distractions aside.
2. **PARAPHRASE** your peer to make sure that your understanding is clear and accurate, free of additions, distortions, or omissions.

You could start with something like . . .

🌿 "If I've heard you correctly, you think / claim / feel that ... "

Thumbs Up or Down

If the peer is satisfied with the paraphrase, they put their thumb up.

If the peer is not yet satisfied with the paraphrase, they put their thumb down.



Lifeline, Anyone?

The speaker can then try to improve the paraphrase on their own, or call upon classmates for a lifeline—

a peer can suggest a significant change that would make the paraphrase clear and accurate.



3. **QUESTION**
Before you respond to the idea, pose a question to learn a little more about your peer's thinking.

Congratulations!

You may then enter the territory of your peer's idea, choosing the thinking move that best suits you:

- 🌿 **Build** upon their idea using new insights and evidence
- 🌿 **Challenge** their idea by posing a question or providing counter-evidence
- 🌿 **Introduce** a new idea or point of view to broaden or deepen the discussion.

QUESTION CHAIN



I engage with fellow citizens to pose and answer questions which increase our individual and shared knowledge.

What is it?

A highly interactive way for students to ask and answer diverse questions related to a topic.

Why use it?

At different stages of an inquiry, students may have questions at each level of *Bloom's Taxonomy*, questions which issue from a student's desire to:

- 🍃 remember a key detail
- 🍃 to understand a concept
- 🍃 to apply a new understanding in a particular context
- 🍃 analyze how parts interrelate
- 🍃 evaluate significance or responsibility
- 🍃 create a thesis or solution

This discursive strategy provides safety and opportunity for students to ask whatever they want and need.

It also surprises their mental muscles with new questions and insights that will inform their next thinking moves and inquiry choices.

How does it work?

On a slip of paper or sticky note, each student writes down a question they genuinely seek an answer to.

Students stand and prepare to move about the room.

- A. Students find their first partner.
 - 🍃 Person A poses their question to Person B
 - 🍃 Person B does their best to answer the question—if they can't, they explain what makes the question important or significant
 - 🍃 Switch—Person B poses question to Person A; Person A answers or explores significance of question
- B. Partners trade questions, shake hands, and move on, finding a new partner.
- C. Repeat several times so that all students ask and answer many questions.

Next Step / Closing Options

Individual:

Students engage in "I used to think / Now I think" reflection, in writing or in dialogue, privately or followed by sharing with a peer.

Group:

Have students stick their questions to a whiteboard or wall, and sort and categorize them.

Then, choose 3 questions to discuss together.

SILENT CONVERSATION

(adapted from “Chalk Talk” in *Making Thinking Visible*, Ritchhart, 2011)



Materials:

several whiteboard surfaces or chart paper

To prepare, generate reflection questions and record one on each whiteboard or chart paper. These should be higher order questions, open to a diversity of responses.

Share the questions with students. Ask if there are additional / other questions they think it would be meaningful to include. Add or replace questions until all are satisfied that the list is compelling!

Divide students into groups of equal number, one for each question.

Explain the following to students: This is a **silent** activity! No talking.

PROCESS

1. Students will first have time to answer the question at their home station. They will record their ideas on the whiteboard or chart paper.
(You can also use sticky notes if you want students to be able to rearrange the ideas during or after).
2. After 5-7 minutes, groups will rotate clockwise to the next station, where they will read and consider peers’ responses, and add to what they find by making a connection (self, text, world) or posing a question.
3. After students have visited each station, they return to their own and see the knowledge their peers have built!
4. Students prepare a summary of what they find, and generate a question that peers’ ideas have raised for them.
5. Small groups share summaries and questions, which the larger group considers together.



[A video of students engaged in Silent Conversation](#)





What Is It?

Students engaged in inquiry are in continuous decision-making mode – determining what to do and think next!

There's no need for them to do this alone!

Troika provides a way for teams of 3 to share, shoulder, and address one another's challenges.

Adapted from SPDU

The discursive moves TROIKA allows and inhibits develop 2 essential yet rare citizenship skills:

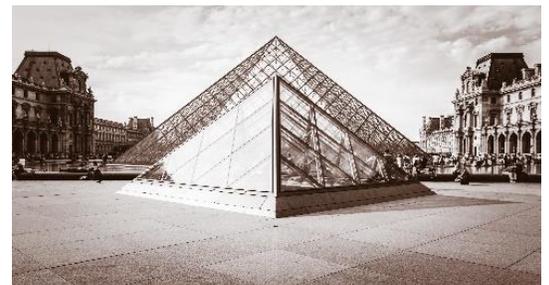
- Listening – carefully, thoughtfully, humbly – for a sustained period of time
- Lending one's best wisdom, skills, and energies to another – to the community – to help decision-makers advance the common good

How It Works

(approximate time: 30 minutes)

1. Students have 3-5 minutes to identify the most pressing challenging in their work at the moment. This can include things they are struggling *to do* and things they are struggling *to understand*.
2. Students form groups of 3 and sit knee-to-knee.
3. Students number themselves 1, 2, and 3.
4. Person 1 starts by sharing their dilemma; 2 & 3 ask questions to clarify if needed.
5. Person 1 turns their back to 2 & 3, who shift their positions to face one another directly.
6. For 3-5 minutes, (choose the duration within yet at the outer limit of students' current capacity), 2 & 3 "dig in" to 1's problem, considering as many relevant details and possible solutions as they can. As they do, 1 records ideas that stand out as significant and promising. They may not speak or turn around during this time!
7. 1 turns to face 2 & 3 and:
 - a. Expresses thanks
 - b. Shares how they think they can / will proceed, integrating key suggestions and contributions of peers
 - c. 2 & 3 listen, encourage, and pose clarifying questions.
8. Switch—2 now shares their problem; 1 & 3 shoulder it.
9. Switch—3 now shares their problem; 2 & 3 shoulder it.

Image from Upsplash



ENTER THE CENTER: A CIRCLE ACTIVITY (adapted from *Community at Work*, 2017. Kaner & Noakes)



Like *Fishbowl* and *Socratic Circles*, **Enter the Center** is a circle discursive strategy which supports groups to engage in inclusive, meaningful dialogue. It can be used at any stage in the inquiry process.

Setup:

Arrange two concentric circles, with 4 chairs facing one another in the inner circle, and the rest of the chairs or desks in the outer circle. (If there are more than 25 students in the class, divide into two groups, keeping the inner circle at 4, yet reducing the size of the outer circle.) Encourage all students to enter the circle at least once.

Process (approximate time: 30 minutes)

1. Decide as a large group upon 1-3 critical questions to explore together. These questions should be both compelling and urgent in the group's learning at the time of the circle.
2. Ensure that students have their "Discursive Moves" cards in hand as a visible menu of participation options to choose from.
3. The inner circle begins, striving to include all voices and thoughtfully respond to all contributions.
4. Members of the outer circle listen actively and choose their moment to "Enter the Center."
5. To do so, a member of the outer circle stands behind a member of the inner circle and taps them on their shoulder. The inner circle member may rise immediately and change seats with the outer circle member, or may do so after speaking one more time.
6. Members of the inner circle participate until they feel a tap on their own shoulders.

Closing Engage students in individual reflection. Here are some sentence stems you can use or adapt:

1. The greatest strength in our dialogue was As a result of this strength,
2. The greatest weakness in our dialogue was As a result of this weakness
3. I used to think; now I think
4. A new question on my mind as a result of this dialogue is: "?"



COMPASS POINTS

adapted from *Making Thinking Visible*, Rhitchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011, p. 93.

COMPASS



COMPASS POINTS develops the following democratic skills and dispositions:

I can:

- Express my excitements, worries, needs, and stance about an issue or idea
- Collaborate to categorize and summarize peers' thinking
- Propose specific ways to move forward with change while respecting people's needs

COMPASS Points can be very effective at with a class or at staff meetings when it's important for everyone present to have input in the decision-making process about a new initiative.

Considering the idea, question, or proposition before you:

E = EXCITEMENTS

What excites you about this idea or proposition? What's the upside?

W = WORRIES

What do you find worrisome about this idea or proposition? What's the downside?

N = NEEDS

What else do you need to know or find out about this idea or proposition?

S = STANCE, STEPS, or SUGGESTIONS

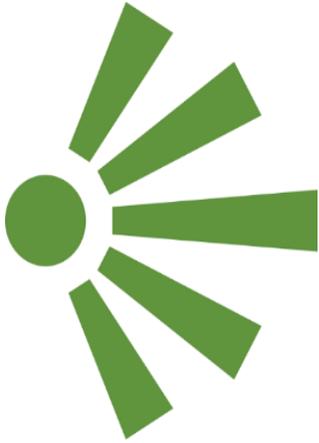
What is your current stance or opinion on the issue or proposition? What should your next step be in your evaluation of this idea or proposition? What suggestions would you have at this point?

Set Up: Frame the issue, event, or proposition and present it to the learners. If the proposition is new, allow for questions of clarification to ensure that learners have some sense of the topic. Place four baskets in the middle of the group, or 4 large sheets of paper, one for each compass point, on the walls. Label each basket or sheet with letters denoting the compass points. Distribute sticky notes for participants to write ideas on.

1. Individual Reflection & Writing: Participants have time to write answers to the compass point questions. They then place these in baskets or on posters.
2. Small groups claim one of the four directions baskets or posters. They then sort ideas into themes.
3. Small groups share their themed summaries with the large group while the facilitator records ideas in a chart (it works well to display on a digital projector while you type).
4. Facilitator invites participants to share additional insights and questions based on the summaries.



Pictured above: Principals and Consultants using Compass Points to explore a question, December, 2017



CIRCLE OF VIEWPOINTS

This discursive strategy invites participants to identify multiple perspectives for a question, problem, issue, or event, and to reason from and reflect on diverse points of view. Participants can speak from a point of view close to the one they actually hold at the time, or from one which they struggle to understand. Whatever they choose, their fellow participants will not know what they actually think unless they choose to reveal this.

Note: It is important that students choose a point of view that they know enough about to represent in a fair-minded way. Thus, using the strategy in the middle to late stages of an inquiry is recommended. (Adapted from *Making Thinking Visible*)

How It Works

1. Ask students/participants/colleagues to identify the different viewpoints that could be involved in or affected by the issue, question, or problem. Each person writes 3 possible viewpoints on a sticky note.
2. Next, participants to put their sticky notes on a wall, spread out so many people can look at them at once.
3. Now, each participant chooses a viewpoint / sticky note to speak from / represent. (Note: The word on the sticky note may be quite general. Invite participants to make viewpoints more specific. For example, if a person chooses “politician,” they could then choose an actual political party or politician and speak from this more precise point of view.)
4. Participants then form circles, ideally of 6-10. In each circle, one at a time, each person expresses the following from their chosen point of view. There is no discussion during the circle.

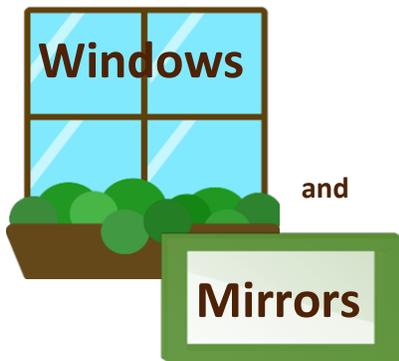
1. *I am thinking of the question / issue / event from the point of view of ...*
2. *I think because ... (share your thoughts and feelings)*
3. *A question / concern I have from this viewpoint is ...*

Some questions to help with 2 (from “Step Inside” thinking routine, *Making Thinking Visible*, p. 178)

-  What can this person see, observe, notice, and understand about the issue?
-  What might the person know, understand, hold true, or believe?
-  What might the person or thing care deeply about? Why?

When everyone in the circle is done, the facilitator poses these questions to the large group:

1. What new observations, thoughts, and insights do you have about the issue, now that you have heard these points of view? What new questions do you have about the issue?



The Premise

When we encounter a new source of knowledge—whether it’s a book, article, video, speech, historical or current event—it’s useful to think about whether what is shared:

*Gives us a **WINDOW** into other people, times, places, and phenomenon.

*Holds up a **MIRROR** to our own selves, time, places, and current realities. (adapted from “Window or Mirror”, *Teaching Tolerance*)

WINDOWS & MIRRORS: Here’s How It Works

1. SENTENCE, PHRASE, WORD

To clarify and deepen their knowledge of the text or topic, use *Making Thinking Visible’s* “Sentence-Phrase-Word” (207)

Individually, students reflect on the text and record:

- A sentence they find meaningful, that they feel captures a key idea in the text.
- A phrase that they find particularly significant or provocative.
- A word that stands out as central or necessary to an understanding of the text/issue. In small groups, invite students to share their sentences- phrases-&words.

Still in small groups, invite students to consider:

- ✿ Whether the text/issue is a window, a mirror, or both.
- ✿ Which parts of the text are windows, and which are mirrors.

Now, ask the group to develop its conclusion using:

- ✿ **Claim:** Prepare their claim: (*X is a window or a mirror because ...*)
- ✿ **Support:** Identify the evidence in the text and the world needed to clarify, support, and prove their claim.
- ✿ **Question:** Raise a question that explores an uncertainty the group has about the text, claim, or world.

3. Going Public: Invite each group to share its claim, support, and question.

Invite other groups to engage in the Discussion Passport Routine.

4. TO MOVE to ENGAGEMENT, ask each group to do a *Here’s What, So What, Now What Huddle!*

THINKING ROUTINES

LOOKING OUT, LOOKING IN



Surfacing Prior Knowledge
and Assumptions

Concentus inquiries begin with a provocation designed to surface students' prior knowledge and assumptions about an essential question. Provocations can take many forms. Often, the resources suggest sharing essential questions and discussing them with students. The following routine can be used when you present students with a current event, image, song, scenario, or simulation that exemplifies essential question and inquiry focus.

(adapted from "See, Think, Wonder", *Making Thinking Visible*, p. 55)

<h3>Looking Out the Window . . .</h3>	
<p>What do you SEE? <i>What do you see or notice? What details strike you as significant? Why? What could they mean?</i></p>	<p>What do you THINK? <i>What conclusions are you making about this?</i></p>
<p>What do you FEEL? <i>Does this stir any positive or negative emotions in you? Which ones? How? Why?</i></p>	<p>What do you WONDER? <i>What do you wonder or want to find out to better understand this?</i></p>
<h3>Looking In the Mirror . . .</h3>	
<p>Reflect on what you've recorded above. What does it make you notice or wonder about yourself? What does it reveal to you about your own point of view, assumptions, and sources of knowledge?</p>	



4 FOUR Corners

FOUR CORNERS: In this thinking routine, students individually and collectively surface their prior knowledge, assumptions, and conclusions about an essential question. Hearing 4 distinct positions on the same question or statement exposes students to multiple, divergent viewpoints, rapidly increasing the breadth of knowledge available to each student. Inviting students to shift corners in response to others' reasoning encourages the open-mindedness, curiosity, and humility characteristic of an inquiry disposition.

Set Up

1. Reflect on the outcomes, enduring understandings, and essential questions for the inquiry you are initiating. Then ...
2. Generate a series of provocative statements.
3. Create 4 signs, one for each corner of the room: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree. Affix these to the corners.
4. Prepare to display statements and process on a digital projector.

Steps

1. Explain the process to students:
 - a. A statement will appear.
 - b. Decide which corner you would like to / can speak from in relation to the question.
 - c. Go to the corner and form a circle with peers.
If there are more than 4 peers in a corner, divide into smaller groups of roughly equal size.
 - d. In small groups, one person starts, stating why they've chosen this position.
Moving clockwise, the next students share their own thinking. When it's the first person's turn again, the student creates a statement that incorporates the ideas peers have just shared.
 - e. The first speaker from each small group in each corner then shares thinking with the large group.
 - f. Students may shift corners if moved by others' reasoning.
 - g. Sharing concludes by identifying a question(s) that the group's thinking raises.
 - h. Teacher record this question(s) on an anchor chart for future reference.
2. Present Statement 1
3. Facilitate process described above
4. Repeat for next statements

Suggested Next Strategy

Stars & Constellations

STARS & CONSTELLATIONS: A Concept Mapping Activity

Concepts are the stars in the sky of student thinking. At the outset of an inquiry, students focus on the brightest stars – the most essential and powerful concepts. As their learning progresses, they add additional concepts to their understanding, forming constellations of related concepts. These constellations reveal the depth and complexity of issues citizens face. In Centurus citizenship education materials, these concepts are often the key words in the Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions themselves.

Process

1. As you engage in lesson or unit opening activities, and/or share essential questions and learning targets, **record power words in a space visible to all.**
2. **Then, ask small groups of students to create concept maps** which connect the concepts in ways that make sense to them.
3. Add to this list continuously throughout the lesson or inquiry.

For example, here are the words in the key vocabulary list in a Grade 1 inquiry: rule, common good, rights, responsibilities, engaged citizen, fair.

Students' consideration of what the word **RULE** means might bring them to the concept of the **COMMON GOOD**, with **CITIZEN** surfacing moments later. Then, **FAIR** might come into play, and the problem of ensuring fairness. With some gentle guidance by the teacher, students might bring the concepts of **RIGHTS** and **RESPONSIBILITIES** into play, which requires citizens who are **ENGAGED**, rather than passive. A star becomes a constellation, and related concepts lend meaning to one another.

This activity encourages students to think of key concepts or “power words” as stars – sources of light, clarity, and power. The concepts are connected, in **constellations**, which they can combine and represent visually to express their thinking and emerging understandings.



As new concepts surface, students can move them about to explore their possible connections. Imagine the different meanings small groups of students would make if asked to connect 3 or more of the *stars* above. Forming constellations and articulating their meaning supports students to understand key concepts deeply.

Each of these concepts can be defined, elaborated, and exemplified to bring additional key concepts into sight and use.

QUESTION GENERATOR & SORTER

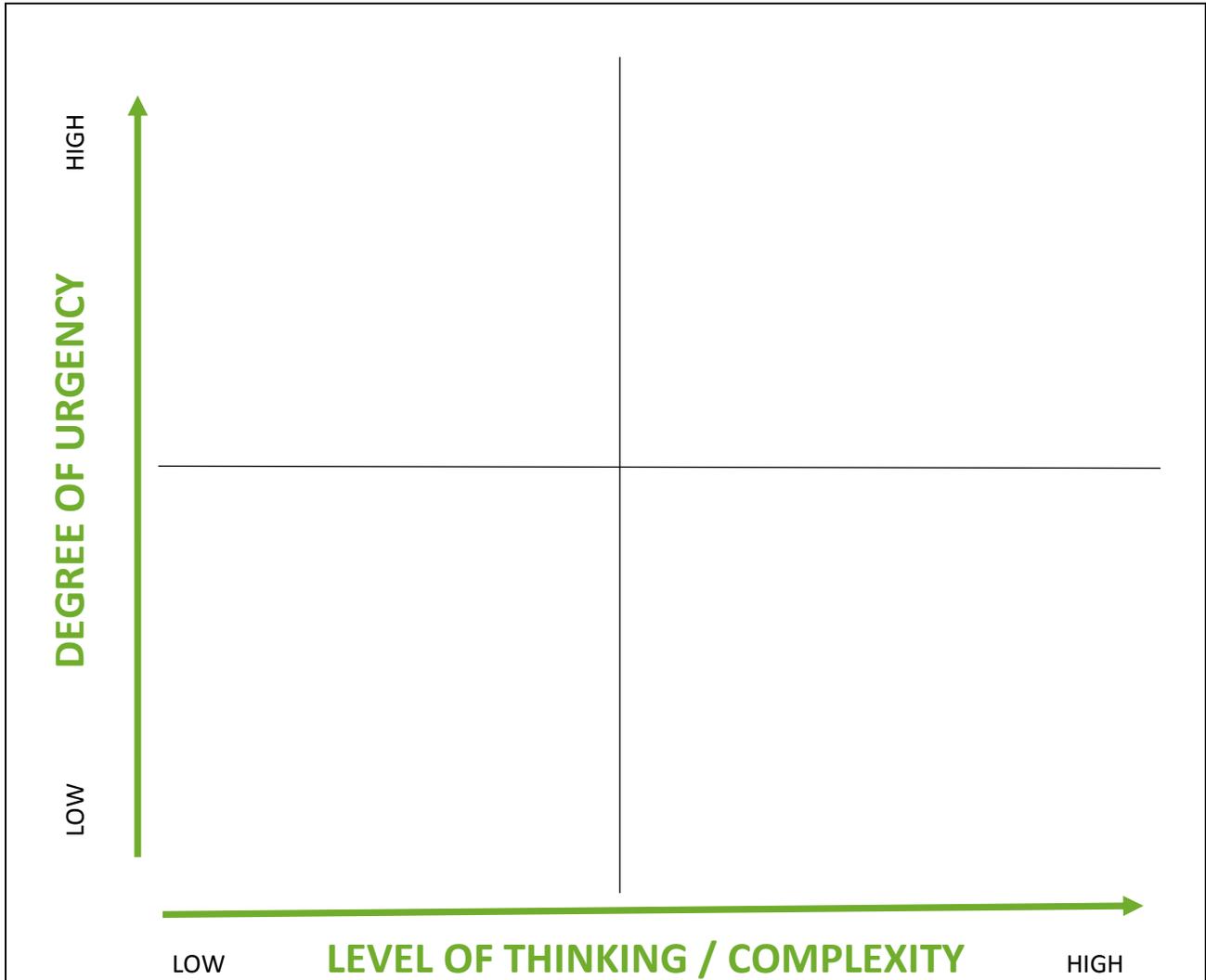
Try creating precise questions related to your topic using squares in all of the quadrants of the grid below.

Challenge: Which quadrant creates factual questions? Analytical? Predictive? Application & Synthesis?

	is/does	has/did/was	can	Should/would	will	Might/could
What						
Where						
When						
Which						
Who						
Why						
How						

Question Sorter

Gather with a small group. Write your questions on sticky notes, then share them, one at a time. As you do, decide together where to place them in this matrix. When you are done, choose the most compelling questions for your inquiry.





Before, During, and After Research

SELFIES: This thinking routine allows students to see the elements of their thinking in relation to their inquiry question at key points in the inquiry process: **before** they undertake research, **midway** through the inquiry process, and at the **synthesis stage**. Making this thinking visible supports metacognitive reasoning and encourages intellectual humility.

Element of Thought	Before	During	After
What question(s) am I trying to answer?			
What is my purpose? What do I hope to accomplish by finding an answer to this question?			
What do I know about this? What are my sources of knowledge?			
What are the key concepts/ideas related to my question?			
What is my conclusion, my answer to my inquiry question at this point?			
What assumptions am I making? <i>(that some would agree with and others would challenge?)</i>			
If everyone thought this way about the question, what would the consequences be?			
If no one shared my assumptions or conclusions, what would the consequences be?			
What are the parts of my own identity that affect the way I think about this? <i>(my age, gender, nationality, social class, social group, etc.)</i>			

Adapted from Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2011

Final Reflection

Which elements shifted the most? What caused these shifts? What difference did it make to your research? To you personally?





This activity invites students to:

- 🍃 surface their shared knowledge and assumptions
- 🍃 activate their intellectual empathy to consider the question or problem from alternate points of view
- 🍃 identify the key concepts at the heart of the issue
- 🍃 generate questions relevant to multiple viewpoints

(adapted from "In and Out of the Frame," *Groups at Work*, p. 47; title from Zaretta Hammond's book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*)

WIDENING THE APERTURE Process

1. Form small groups, each equipped with a large sheet of paper and markers.
2. Prompt students to draw a square in the middle of the page.
3. Share the topic, question, or prompt, and ask students to share and record the words, phrases, and images which come to mind when they think about it in the space called "Group's Thoughts."
4. After 8-10 minutes, ask students to consider ways of categorizing the contents of the square, generating 3-5 categories which they record along the top of the page
5. Now, as a large group, brainstorm and record additional stakeholders / points of view on the topic / prompt – those involved in or affected by it.
6. Each group then chooses the point of view of another stakeholder in the issue. First, groups will circle the ideas in "Group's Thoughts" that this new point of view would affirm. Second, in the "2nd point of view" space, students will assume the alternate perspective, and generate the ideas that would be most significant from this point of view.
7. Beneath the ideas they've recorded, challenge groups now to identify and record key concepts / big ideas that have surfaced in the thinking.
8. Finally, at the bottom of the page, ask each group to record a question that multiple stakeholders would consider compelling and important in relation to the topic, issue, prompt.

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
2 nd Point of View		Group's Thoughts	
Key Concepts			
Essential Question			

DEBATE TEAM CAROUSEL

(from *Total Participation Strategies*, Himmele & Himmele, 2nd Edition, 2017)



This discursive strategy develops the following democratic skills and dispositions:

I can:

- ✿ express my ideas clearly and support them with evidence and reasoning.
- ✿ understand others' ideas accurately
- ✿ both support and challenge the ideas of others.
- ✿ take others' reasoning seriously and allow it to influence my own thinking.

This discursive strategy cues students to:

1. State and support a claim from a particular point of view
2. Support and add to a peer's claim
3. Challenge a peer's reasoning
4. State and support a new claim, informed by the exchange of ideas which has occurred

Steps:

1. Students form groups of four.
2. Each receives a template handout.
3. Make question visible – an open question related to the inquiry at hand.

Box 1:

Students state their response and provide supporting evidence and reasoning.

Box 2:

Students pass their papers to the right, read what their peer has written, and add a claim plus evidence to further develop their peer's claim

Box 3:

Students pass their papers to the right again, and stake a counter-argument from another point of view.

Box 4:

Students pass their papers to the right again, and stake a claim distinct from the reasoning which appears on the page thus far.

Finally, students pass papers to the right, back into the hands of the original thinker.

Synthesis:

Give students time to read what peers have written. In the final box at the bottom of the template, invite students to stake a new claim, one which evolves, however slightly or dramatically, from their original claim.

Discursive Close:

Then, in pairs, have pairs share: *"At first I thought ... Now I think ..."*

Assessment:

Formative and summative possibilities

Debate Carousel Time!

Student Name: _____

Question: _____

<p>1. State an answer to the question, and provide evidence and reasoning to support this answer.</p>	<p>2. Add a supporting argument. <i>Build on or extend your peer's argument with a second argument, supported by evidence and reasoning.</i></p>
<p>3. Pitch an opposing argument to challenge the reasoning in Boxes 1 & 2. Provide evidence and reasoning!</p>	<p>4. Add a Fresh Perspective <i>Read what your peers have written, and add a new argument into the mix, supported by evidence and reasoning.</i></p>
<p>Revise your initial claim to include something from your peers' reasoning, however minor or major!</p>	





These 4 prompts, applied to a text related to the issue/inquiry focus:

- a. provide purposes for reading, viewing, or listening
- b. activate critical, creative, and contextual thinking skills

(adapted from “The 4 Cs”, *Making Thinking Visible*, Ritchhart, 2011, p. 140) 

FANTASTIC FOUR PROCESS

1. Present students with a text related to the issue (fiction, non-fiction, visual, auditory).
2. Invite them to use sticky notes or otherwise note one of each of the following in the text:

CONNECTIONS

What connections do you draw between the text and your own life or your other learning?

CHALLENGES

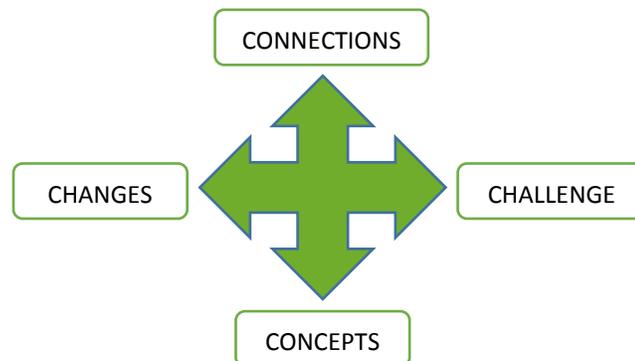
What ideas, positions, or assumptions do you want to challenge or argue with in the text?

CONCEPTS

What key concepts or ideas do you think are key or worth holding on to from the text?

CHANGES

What changes in attitude, thinking, or action are suggested by the text, for you or others?



3. Ask students to form small groups, share their responses, and create a visual to represent their 4Cs thinking.

Evaluating Evidence: PASS and TRAFFIC LIGHTS



As Students explore sources, they need to locate and sift through evidence, identifying and reasoning with the findings most relevant and significant to their inquiry question. Applying standards is key. There are many tools (each with its own acronym) for evaluating sources. Here’s a simple one called P.A.S.S. (THINKQ that students can use as a thinking tool and checklist. It’s accompanied by Traffic Lights, a space to record their sifting and sorting process and concentrate thinking on the best evidence. (Adapted from “Red Light, Yellow Light”, *Making Thinking Visible*, p. 185)

Key Questions		Answers: Evaluating the Source	✓ = Yes, a good source, a key source X = No, an inadequate source, a distraction
P	PURPOSE Why and when was it created? Is it important to my inquiry?		
A	ACCURACY Is the information correct, truthful, and unbiased? Should I use it?		
S	SOURCE Who created it? Is this a legitimate, reliable, credible source? Is this the kind of source needed to understand my topic or prove my claims?		
S	SUPPORT Is it consistent with and supported by other information and sources? What does this tell me?		

1 source
may not
PASS

2 or more
sources
PASS:
satisfactory

3 or more
sources
PASS:
excellent

RED LIGHT:
relevant, may be reliable

YELLOW LIGHT:
relevant, significant, reliable

GREEN LIGHT:
reliable, essential

HERE'S WHAT, SO WHAT, NOW WHAT HUDDLE

(adapted from *Groups at Work*, Lipton, 2011, p. 26)



This routine helps students to examine key ideas and findings deeply:

-  **In the first column**, they record key data, evidence, or ideas.
-  **In the second column**, they generate ways of interpreting this data, evidence, or idea.
-  **In the third column**, they consider the implications of the data, considering stakeholders, time periods, and contexts.

Process

1. Explain columns to students.
2. Determine (sequence of) groupings: individual, pairs, small group, large group.
3. Ask students questions along the way to guide them to greater precision, significance, and depth.

Here's What! Record most significant findings.	So What? What conclusions can you draw?	Now What? Implications? Predictions? Next Steps?

Something I understand more clearly or deeply now:

Something I now find I need to know or investigate:



(adapted from *Making Thinking Visible*, p. 199) 

Once students have conducted enough research to understand some of the problem’s complexities and points of view, this strategy allows them to:

-  Apply research findings
-  Deepen understanding of key concepts
-  Test strength of arguments and evidence
-  Reason fairmindedly from multiple viewpoints
-  Develop shared understanding

TUG OF WAR Process

1. Ask students to
 -  clearly define an issue or problem,
 -  identify two opposing sides or contrasting points of view.
2. On a whiteboard or large chart paper, draw a line to represent a **tug**-of-war rope. 
Ask students to label the two ends of the rope.
3. Invite students to generate arguments or **tugs** for either side of the rope and record these on sticky notes. (They can do this individually, in pairs, small groups, or as a class).
4. Invite students to place the **tugs** on the line, placing
 -  the more powerful arguments near the ends
 -  the less powerful arguments closer to the center

Debate will ensue, and consensus is the goal!
5. Pose questions to clarify and extend reasoning throughout this process.

Note:

You can also divide the class into small groups—each group collaborates to complete a **tug**-of-war, then share and synthesize.

Possibilities to Close:

-  Record new questions which have emerged and can guide next steps in inquiry.
-  Engage students in “*I used to think, now I think*” reflection.
-  Challenge students to create 1-minute Elevator Speeches explaining the complexities of the issue to someone else.

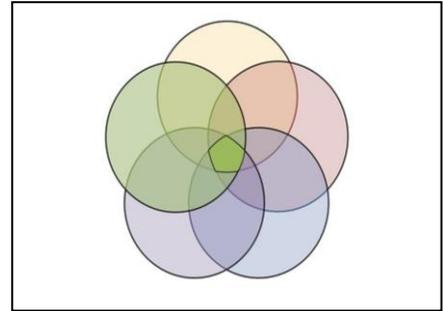


THE ECC WRAP

Many outcomes and issues require students to think contextually, critically, and creatively. This can be challenging for teachers and students. The Essential Citizenship Competencies provide a useful tool for guiding students' thinking as they inquire.

There are 5 ECCs, one for each of the critical components of an issue:

ENLIGHTENED	history, backstory, contexts
EMPOWERED	forms of power & power dynamics
EMPATHETIC	multiple points of view
ETHICAL	rights & responsibilities
ENGAGED	actions which target root causes



While interdependent, each ECC has its own set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Below, you will see the Essential Citizenship Competencies (ECCs) expressed in the form of questions. These can be applied to outcomes and issues which involve multiple points of view and potential controversy. *Used sequentially or in jigsaw* (ECC WRAP digital link), *they are a tool for culturally competent scaffolding of student inquiry.* Whether one is examining a narrative or hot current events topic, these questions can support students to cultivate deeper understanding of themselves, others, and the issue.

SPS teachers who use these questions with their students have said:

“I love seeing viewpoints changing in the classroom and students finding understanding with each other that wasn’t there before.”

“ECC questions allow learning to progress beyond technical skills and knowledge transfer to evaluating the significance and implications of knowledge.”

“Our conversations are getting deeper and more purposeful.”

ENLIGHTENED

Dispositional Goal: Students assume that issues have histories and contexts, and seek to understand both.

- What are the Who? What? When? Where? Why? of this situation / dilemma / issue?
- What led to this?
- What are the most important things we need to know to understand this situation?

EMPOWERED

Dispositional Goal: Students assume that power matters and investigate the power dynamics in a given context.

- Who has power in this situation? How do you know?
- Who doesn't have power in this situation? How do you know?
- What kind(s) of power are involved here, and how does one get or lose it?
- What are the implications of the power distribution for different stakeholders?

EMPATHETIC

Dispositional Goal: Students assume that there are multiple points of view and seek to understand what is precious to each one.

- Who are the individuals, groups, institutions, and environments involved in or affected by this?
- How does each one experience and view this situation, problem, or issue?
- What is most precious to each one? Why?

ETHICAL

Dispositional Goal: Students assume that rights and responsibilities are integral to each situation, and examine which are upheld and which are breached.

- What rights do people have? Why?
- Are these rights protected or threatened? How? With what consequences?
- What responsibilities do people have? Why?
- Are these responsibilities being met or ignored? How? With what consequences?

ENGAGED

Dispositional Goal: Students assume that they have agency and influence as citizens and discover ways of using their voice to effect positive change.

- What are the sources and causes of this problem?
- What are the different changes that could reduce or end the problem?
- What strategies can I/We/One use to make this change happen?

READY, SET, GO!



As much as possible, invite students to represent and apply their learning through authentic tasks—tasks with either simulated or actual real-world purposes, audiences, contexts, text types, and impacts. In contrast to assessment tasks like exams or reports, authentic tasks activate and hone students’ Essential Citizenship Competencies (ECCs) and have real impacts in the real world!

A Thinking Routine for Creating Authentic Tasks: GRASPS

(adapted from Wiggins and McTighe)



Sample (based on a Grade 7 Conventus Citizenship Education Inquiry)

GRASPS Element	My Decisions, Ideas, & Plans
G is for GOAL What do I want to accomplish?	Raise awareness about corporate ethics Develop commitment to be critical consumers
R is for ROLE What point of view or position will I speak and act from?	An informed and concerned peer
A is for AUDIENCE Whose thoughts and actions do I want to affect?	Grade 4-8 students
S is for SITUATION What specific situation or context am I responding to and seeking to influence?	Many students do not have access to or seek information about the corporate ethics of the companies their families purchase products from. Providing this information to them at school gives them the opportunity to ask questions and form commitments with peers and community.
P is for PRODUCT/ PERFORMANCE What will I create or do to accomplish this goal in this context with this audience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ A gallery of ads which parody ads of popular brands to reveal hidden truths and costs. ✦ Viewing guide for pairs of students to use and complete as they move from station to station analyzing ads. ✦ Survey Monkey to gather evidence of the impact of the gallery on peers’ thinking and commitments
S is for STANDARDS What will success look like? How will I know if I’ve reached my goal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Ads will use advertising techniques successfully to appeal to reason and emotion. ✦ Ads will provide accurate information about the costs and benefits of the product to laborers, companies, consumers, the economy, and the environment. ✦ In the post-viewing survey, over 80% of peers will be able to state the problem and something specific that they can do about it as consumers.

Summary of Example Above To motivate peers to be critical, ethical consumers, we will create a gallery of parody ads which reveal the hidden costs of popular products from major brands.

Your Turn!

GRASPS Element	My Decisions, Ideas, & Plans
<p>G is for GOAL What do I want to accomplish?</p>	
<p>R is for ROLE What point of view or position will I speak and act from?</p>	
<p>A is for AUDIENCE Whose thoughts and actions do I want to affect?</p>	
<p>S is for SITUATION What specific situation or context am I responding to and seeking to influence?</p>	
<p>P is for PRODUCT/ PERFORMANCE What will I create or do to accomplish this goal in this context with this audience?</p>	
<p>S is for STANDARDS What will success look like? How will I know if I've reached my goal?</p>	

Summary of GRASPS Task

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