

Establishing Seven Routines for Literature Study: Guiding Readers and Writers...p. 267-268

In order for literature study to be valuable and productive, students must understand that the routines are not simply your rules but agreements that enable them to work together in the classroom. You will need to explicitly teach the routines related to effective participation.

Routine 1: Be prepared.	Students need to read the section of the text to be discussed and complete any assigned task. They need to understand that being prepared is essential if they are going to be able to contribute to the group.
Routine 2: Sit where they can see everyone.	A circular arrangement works best, because every member of the group can see every other member. Students can sit on the floor or on a rug, but sitting in a circle of chairs, preferably in a quiet spot in the classroom, works best.
Routine 3: Share leadership roles.	You will demonstrate how to facilitate a group before students take over the role. There are several ways to lead a literature study group. One student may be responsible for calling on others for the entire group meeting, with the role of group leader rotated during subsequent meetings. Alternately, the student who is sharing his question or comment calls on others while that point is being discussed. The next student to bring up a question or comment leads the discussion on that point. Finally, in some groups, there is no leader. Students simply have a conversation without a facilitator.
Routine 4: Only one person can speak at a time and that there are established procedures for getting a turn.	<p>In some groups, students raise hands and are called on by the leader.</p> <p>In other classrooms, students wait until someone has finished talking to say something; the discussion follows the general rules for polite conversation.</p> <p>A third alternative is to teach students to signal that they have something to say. For example, they could make a fist and extend two fingers if they want to contribute to the idea being discussed at the moment or extend the thumb if they have a new idea to raise. The leader calls first on the students with two fingers extended and then on the students with thumbs extended (see Jewell and Pratt 1999)</p>
Routine 5: Take responsibility for ensuring that every person has a chance to talk.	If one member notices that another has not had an opportunity to talk, it is his responsibility to call it to the attention of the group.
Routine 6: Keep the conversation focused and move it forward when appropriate.	<p>Group members are encouraged to monitor the discussion to make sure they don't stray from the topic.</p> <p>Group members use language such as "I think we are getting off the topic"</p> <p>For novice groups, teachers will monitor comments and intervene to help them stay focused. Students will gradually take over the role.</p>
Routine 7: Evaluate the discussion and agree on any next steps.	At the end of the discussion, the group participates in a very brief evaluation of how well the members engaged in the process. They also decide how and when to meet again if there is more to discuss. Then they agree on a focus for the next discussion or when to work on a group project to share with the class.