Teach Each Other Discussion
Multicultural Strategy

Sense and Sensibility
By Jane Austen

Context: This strategy should be used during the novel as an assessment of student thought and perspective on ideas within the novel. Not only will it allow students to show their knowledge, but it will expand and develop their opinions.

Purpose: This strategy is a form of discussion group in which the teacher becomes a shadow while the students teach one another. The discussion is based on a common reading of set of statements. Unlike traditional discussion groups in which the students look to the teacher for answers and guidance, in this discussion the students have complete ownership. It allows students to express their views in light of their own personal cultural background. This is a way to increase student involvement in talking and participation and allows the teacher to observe and take notes on who participates and how often. This type of discussion is also advantageous as it informs the teacher of the students’ interests, thoughts, and confusions and so may help in future lesson planning that will be more student-defined and culturally responsive.

Rationale: Students have many and varied opinions about the several themes in Sense and Sensibility that are influenced by everything around them—background, culture, experience, etc. Because of this, it is valuable to give students time to express and therefore more fully develop their thoughts and opinions. This strategy allows students to comment on their beliefs and listen to others’ in order to help them reevaluate and possibly redefine their own. It is a meaningful way for students to make opinions and draw conclusions about certain concepts.

Directions:
1. Introduction
   Introduce the strategy by asking how a class discussion usually works. Ask students to comment on aspects of usual class discussion (not everyone talks, looking to the teacher, etc.). Talk about the reading selection that they will discuss today. Explain that today the object of the discussion will be to teach each other. Place the following rules on an overhead or write them on the white board.
   a.Courtesy: in order for each student to feel comfortable, courtesy is essential.
   b. Do not look at the teacher: this discussion is for your benefit, not the teacher’s.
   c. Tolerate silence: it takes time to think of what or how to say something.

2. Reading
   Pass out the cue sheets. These will help each student decide how to personally contribute to the discussion. Read over the examples with the students and discuss appropriate comments.
Post the statements that will be discussed (these relate to the topics below). Have each student read the posting and decide which points on the cue sheet they would like to emphasize. They can check or highlight these. Encourage them to write ideas that they may want to discuss.

Ask students to write their initial ideas and opinions about the topic in their journal or on their handout.

3. Ideas for Discussion

Some of these topics may require more scaffolding beforehand than others. These are simply topics that may be expanded into statements or questions. They may be considered from the perspective of how students see these topics comparing and contrasting today and Austen’s time, their opinion of how it was in the 1800s, how these things work today in our/their own society, etc.

a. Sense and Sensibility
b. Classicism and Romanticism
c. Money/Inheritance
d. Marriage
e. Expectations and Reality
f. The Individual and Society
g. Appearance and Reality

4. Discussion Procedures

Place all the desks in a circle where each student can see everyone else in the classroom. When a student wishes to comment, have them raise their hand. Holding up a fist indicated that this is their first comment; one finger indicates that they have spoken one time; two fingers, two times; and so on.

The person who has finished speaking will choose who is to speak next. They should choose those who have spoken the least amount of times. As the object is to get everyone to participate, extra credit (or some reward) can be given for involving the entire class.

The comments need to center on ideas, not “that was interesting” or I agree.” If the student makes a comment of that nature, they are to back it up with why they agree or disagree, or think of something that is interesting in order to receive participation points. Only one person may talk at a time.

The teacher asks who would like to begin the conversation and then retires to the back of the classroom to observe and mark down who participates.

5. Writing

At the end of the discussion time, bring the lesson to a conclusion and ask the students to complete the self evaluation and on the back or another sheet of paper summarize the main idea of what they learned from the discussion or how their thoughts or opinions changed as a result of hearing and considering others ideas. They should turn this portion of their worksheet in.

As an option for further writing assignments, ask the students to write a journal response or paper regarding their thoughts about the reading now that they have had a chance to think about and discuss it in detail.

Alarie Gifford (Adapted from Grierson), BYU, 2009
**Assessment:** This is a multilayered assessment. Who participated in the discussion, how was their understanding of the topic, were responses general or insightful, how comfortable were individuals as they worked in the group? Finally, what types of responses were turned in for the written portion of this activity? Were students able to articulate ideas with greater force and clarity as a result of the discussion?

**Materials Needed:** Overhead, vis-à-vis markers, and transparency sheet, or white erase board and markers to display rules and questions, handouts

**Time:** 50 minutes (5 minutes to set up, 40 to discuss, and 5 minutes to process at the end)
Sense and Sensibility
By Jane Austen

Teach Each Other Discussion

Discussion Cue Sheet:

1. Can you say something similar using other words?
2. What did you like about the previous contribution?
3. What new ideas did a previous contribution give you?
4. What puzzled you about a previous statement?
5. What in the previous statement had not occurred to you before?
6. How did the person who made a previous comment arrive at that conclusion?
7. Can you elaborate, explain, or give another example of the last statement?
8. What about your own background influences your opinion?

Self-Evaluation:

1. Did I contribute to the discussion?
2. Did I encourage others to contribute or clarify ideas?
3. What would I like to do in the next discussion? How can I do that?
4. Who was the person who contributed the most interesting or valuable comments?
5. Who was the Most Valuable Player in keeping the discussion going? How could I do that?
6. Who encouraged me the most in the discussion?

Sum it Up:

Summarize the main idea of what you learned from the discussion or how hearing and considering others’ thoughts or opinions changed your own.