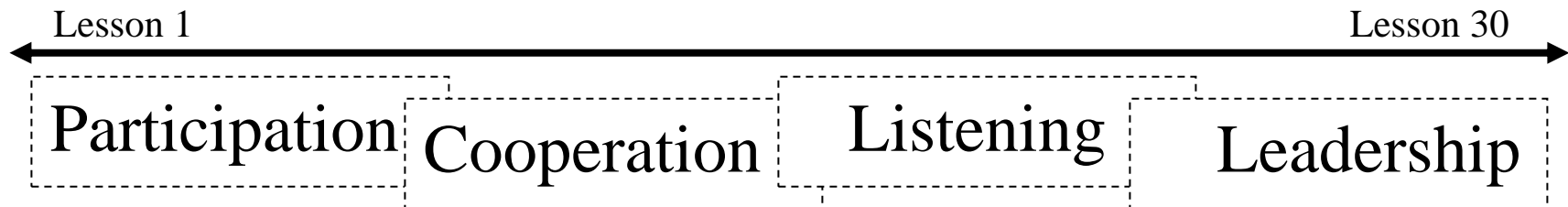


TOUCHSTONES STAGES, SKILLS, and INDICATORS

The Four Stages



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The Touchstones Discussion Project builds basic learning skills through unique discussion groups which enable all members of the class to communicate with each other. Over the course of a year, the Touchstones process leads students through four stages that develop them into active learners, who share leadership of the discussion group with the teacher and one another. Each unique group will move through these stages at varying rates. The discussion leader's role is to gauge in an ongoing manner the group's development. The Teacher's Guides provide benchmarks and guidance that teachers can use to help determine the specific skills that their group should focus on as they move through the four stages. Below are brief explanations of the key goals for each stage. The following two pages provide the skills and indicators associated with each stage.

Stage 1- Learning to participate (Lessons 1-8)

The Touchstones process begins with transforming a class of varied students into a cooperative discussion group in which *students speak to one another with minimal mediation by the teacher*. In this stage each student finds his/her own voice. The leader concentrates on building an environment in which each student feels safe to speak.

Stage 2 - Cooperating with *all* group members/Awareness of group dynamics (Lessons 9-16)

Students become aware that others also have voices and are worth listening to. They become aware of how they speak and listen to some students and not others. Students pay attention to problems like factions and dominance, and work together to enable *every member of the group to speak*. Students begin to recognize

Stage 3 - Listening to and understanding others (Lessons 17-24)

Students learn to identify the obstacles to hearing what others actually say, and all work together to *listen to each member of the group and to the ideas in the text*. Students examine their assumptions and perspectives and how they differ from those of the other group members.

Stage 4 - Student leadership: taking responsibility for the group's success (Lessons 25-30)

Students increasingly *take responsibility* for the activity, for the success of the group's collaborative exploration and for their own individual learning.

In each stage, students will learn the following skills:

Cooperative learning and group dynamics, active listening and speaking, personal evaluation, critical thinking, and reading comprehension

TOUCHSTONES STAGES, SKILLS, and INDICATORS

Discussion Skills		STAGES			
		Stage 1-Learning to participate (Lessons 1-8)	Stage 2-Cooperating with all group members (Lessons 9-16)	Stage 3-Listening to and understanding each other (Lessons 17-24)	Stage 4-Taking responsibility for the group's success (Lessons 25-30)
		Students will	Students will	Students will	Students will
SKILLS & INDICATORS	Cooperative Learning and Group Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Speak directly to peers, rather than just to or through the discussion leader ▪ Participate verbally in small and large groups ▪ Stay on task ▪ Learn and perform assigned group roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperate with all students, not just friends ▪ Relate directly to peers to promote discussion ▪ Value others' contributions to discussion ▪ Remind one another of the ground rules rather than relying on the discussion leader to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build on what others say ▪ Follow lines of discussion and thought ▪ Recognize interdependence of others' roles/opinions ▪ Engage in longer one-to-one exchanges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek to improve discussion ▪ Ask questions to clarify discussion and improve understanding ▪ Evaluate discussion ▪ Analyze group effectiveness
	Active Listening and Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus attention on speaker ▪ Listen respectfully to all members ▪ Use appropriate language ▪ Relate personal experience to text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respond to speaker using appropriate language ▪ Ask one another questions ▪ Speak clearly and audibly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acknowledge opinions of others ▪ Understand and accept different opinions ▪ Ask questions to help the speaker make their point clearer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify preconceptions that inhibit listening/discussion ▪ Devise solutions to dynamics issues ▪ Ask questions that promote deeper exploration of topic
	Personal Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand and participate in discussion process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State ideas clearly ▪ Become aware of own discussion behavior and begin to modify behavior to support the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflect on viewpoint of self and others and adjust opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approach new and difficult situations with confidence ▪ Self-evaluate effectiveness within group

TOUCHSTONES STAGES, SKILLS, and INDICATORS

Critical Reading and Thinking Skills

		STAGES			
		Stage 1-Learning to participate (Lessons 1-8)	Stage 2-Cooperating with all group members (Lessons 9-16)	Stage 3-Listening to and understanding each other (Lessons 17-24)	Stage 4-Taking responsibility for the group's success (Lessons 25-30)
		Students will	Students will	Students will	Students will
SKILLS & INDICATORS	Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generate ideas through reading and discussion ▪ Express ideas relevant to topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore various perspectives ▪ Support opinions with textual or experiential evidence or reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make inferences through questioning and discussion ▪ Problem solve using team approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop perspective of open-ended questions ▪ Relate discussions to real world issues ▪ Use discussion methods to solve real world issues ▪ Recognize and question assumptions ▪ Formulate complex ideas and articulate how ideas were formed
	Reading Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relate text to personal experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand vocabulary using context ▪ Support opinions with textual references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use questioning strategies to understand text ▪ Clarify understanding of text through discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze perspective of author ▪ Explore various interpretations of text

