

***Deliberative Democracy in the Classroom Toolkit***  
**A ONE PAGE GUIDE FOR MODERATORS OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

**Before The Discussions:**

- Read briefing materials

**Beginning Small Group Discussions:**

- Start with full attendance
- Silence electronic devices
- Discussion Guidelines:
  - o No one is expected to be an expert
  - o Everyone's voice counts—respect and listen to each other's opinions
  - o No consensus is needed; not everyone needs to agree or disagree, because participants will express their opinions in a confidential questionnaire
- Start discussion with brief introductions: see sample introduction.
- Don't be afraid of silence

**During Small Group Discussions:**

- Do not express your own opinions/biases
- Do not take hand polls
- Do not add outside information
- Do not correct false statements
  - o If the correct answer is in the materials, you can refer them to the materials
- No need for consensus
  - o What if my group all agrees? If so, ask your group to consider what people who disagree would say. Use the materials, especially the table, to help guide your participants.
- Ensure balanced opinions
- Encourage everyone to talk
  - o If some talk too much, kindly ask them to let others talk
  - o If some talk too little, kindly ask them to voice their opinions
- Make sure participants are talking to *each other*, not you
- Less intervention is better, but you must maintain a good climate for deliberation

**Sample introduction to begin discussions**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be your moderator today. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me. I would like to start by making sure everyone has his or her materials. Also, please make sure your mobiles are off or on silent mode.

Before we begin, I would like to share some guidelines for discussion. This discussion is an opportunity for everyone to learn and I want to encourage everyone to speak freely. Please respect and listen to each other's opinions and try not to interrupt others. No one is expected to be an expert. Also, no consensus is necessary, not everyone needs to agree or disagree. Each of you will have the opportunity to express your opinions in a confidential questionnaire after the session.

Again, my role is to facilitate your discussion. Let's start by having everyone introduce him or herself. Please tell us your name and something that puzzles you about this topic.