

Activity 5 (2 points). Teaching Discussion Sessions at UMn

The purpose of this activity is to introduce you to your role as instructors in the discussion section.

Part A: Demonstration of a Discussion Session (~ 50 minutes)

A Mentor TA will demonstrate how to teach a typical discussion session, with you as the students! To make your experience similar to what undergraduate students experience, your group will solve an old problem from the Graduate Written Exam (GWE). Focus on the *process* of collaborative problem solving.

Group Task:

Follow the directions of the Mentor TA.

Group Product:

Your group's problem solution.

Grading Rubric

The solution will **not** be graded for a correct answer. Instead, the solution will be graded for organization and logical progression.

Part B: Class Discussion About Teaching Discussion Sessions

- (1) On the following pages is the revised *Outline for Teaching a Discussion Session*. Read through this outline and think about the experience you had solving the GWE problem in a group. Write down questions and comments

- (2) The Mentor TA will lead a class discussion about your questions. Write important answers/notes in the space provided.

Preparation Checklist

- New Group/Role assignments (if necessary, on overhead or written on board)
- Photocopies of Problem & Useful Information (*one per person*)
OR of useful information to put on board
- Photocopies of Answer Sheet (optional) or blank sheets of paper (*one per group*)
- Photocopies of problem solution (*one per person*)
- Group Evaluation forms (optional one per group) and extra photocopies of Group Roles Sheet

	Instructor Actions	What the Students Do
<p>Opening Moves ~3-5 min.</p>	<p>ⓐ Be at the classroom early</p> <p>ⓑ Introduce the problem by telling students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) what they should learn from solving problem; b) the part of the solution you want groups to put on board <p>ⓒ Prepare students for group work by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) showing group/role assignments and classroom seating map; b) passing out Problem & Useful Information and Answer Sheet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students sitting and listening • Students move into their groups, and begin to read problem. • Checker/Recorder puts names on answer sheet.

QUESTIONS/NOTES:

	Instructor Actions	What the Students Do
Middle Game ~35 min.	③ Coach groups in problem solving by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) monitoring (diagnosing) progress of all groups b) helping groups with the most need. ④ Prepare students for class discussion by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) giving students a “five-minute warning” b) selecting one person from each group to put specified part of solution on the board. c) passing out Group Evaluation Sheet (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve the problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participate in group discussion, - work cooperatively, - check each other’s ideas. • Finish work on problem • Write part of solution on board • Discuss their group effectiveness
End Game ~10 min.	⑤ Lead a class discussion focusing on what you wanted students to learn from solving the problem ⑥ Discuss group functioning (optional) ⑦ Pass out the problem solution as students walk out the door.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in class discussion

QUESTIONS/NOTES:

