**DWW Adolescent Literacy**

**Text Discussion**

**Practice Description**

**Provide opportunities for extended text discussion and student engagement.**

One important way to improve students' reading comprehension is to engage them in high-quality text discussions in pairs or groups. Discussions in English and content area classes that encourage students to unpack the information in the text, make inferences, or consider different points of view are particularly effective in promoting their understanding of complex material.

**Key Concepts**

**Carefully prepare for discussion by selecting engaging materials and developing stimulating questions.**

Preparing for text discussion begins with locating texts that are open to multiple points of view and can stimulate multiple interpretations or controversies. Another form of preparation involves selecting and developing questions that can prompt students to reflect about the text and make high-level connections or inferences.

**Provide a task or discussion format that students can follow when they discuss text in small groups.**

In small groups, students might take turns playing various roles, such as leading the discussion, identifying confusing words, or summarizing the main idea. While students work the teacher should actively circulate to redirect when necessary, model thinking strategies, or ask additional probing questions.

**Ask follow-up questions that help extend the discussion or use a specific "discussion protocol" for responding to students.**

In a sustained discussion teachers can respond to students' comments and help them further their thinking by asking follow-up questions. A teacher might also try using a "discussion protocol," which would limit her response to a specific set of responses so that students interact more with their peers. For example, a teacher might limit her own comments to the following types: ask students to explain their thinking, model reasoning processes, propose counterarguments, recognize good reasoning, and summarize the main ideas of the discussion.

**Create classroom conditions that support students to talk about text and engage them in reading.**

Teachers can support their students in learning to talk about text by starting with pair work and working towards small group and whole class discussions. Setting goals together for in-class discussions can help students to reflect on their own participation and also grow as speakers and listeners.