

## Structured Academic Discussion Strategy

### Instructional Steps:

1. Distribute a Structured Academic Discussion Note-taking Sheet or write the task and sentence starter(s) on the board. Pose a concrete task to the class, one that will encourage them to reflect upon their knowledge and experiences related to the reading (e.g., *List 3 challenges faced by early immigrants still faced by recent U.S. immigrants*). Model an appropriate answer. Provide students with a few (3-5) minutes of quiet time to jot down a few brief responses in preparation for the subsequent structured discussion.
2. After students have jotted down a few ideas, provide the structured sentence starters to frame their academic responses. Direct them to select two ideas and rewrite them using the academic sentence starters. Share with them your modeled response first.
3. As students write, walk around to offer support where needed and monitor responses. Nominate one or two students to "jump-start" the discussion at your signal.
4. Direct students to share their favorite idea with their partner as a means of receiving feedback and preparing for the subsequent unified class discussion.
5. "Jump-start" the discussion with one or two "nominated volunteer" responses, then randomly call on a few more students before opening the discussion up to authentic volunteers. Let students know that at the end of the formal structured debriefing of ideas, you will invite voluntary contributions from individuals who had not already shared.
6. Require that students respond using a *public voice* more suitable to sharing ideas in a public forum, rather than a *private voice* more appropriate for a personal conversation. Assign an active listening and note-taking task: e.g., jotting down 2 interesting examples.
7. Don't interject your own ideas or steal students' thunder by repeatedly elaborating upon their ideas. Save your instructional synthesis and commentary for the discussion closure.
8. After several contributions, there tends to be some repetition. Require that students acknowledge similarities and differences in their responses using appropriate language strategies for classroom discussion and collaboration (e.g., *My idea builds upon \_\_\_'s idea*). This fosters active listening and validation of ideas.
9. Record these ideas on the board for subsequent review, and/or have students jot down two of the more interesting contributions they heard during the discussion.
10. Complete the structured academic discussion process by validating their participation and synthesizing what you have all learned from this collective idea generation.

