

# FISHY DISCOURSE

Fish Bowl Discussion  
Temoca Dixon



# Essential Question

- ▣ Why should we teach students civil discourse?



# Because...

- ▣ Core Action 1A: Text based instruction engages students in reading, speaking, or writing about text(s).
- ▣ Core Action 3C: The teacher creates the conditions for student conversations and plans tasks where students are encouraged to talk about each other's thinking.
- ▣ Teaches students to become informed, civically engaged citizens.
- ▣ Teaches students to articulate their thinking and communicate with others.

# Setting Up for Success

## ▣ Establish discourse expectations

I believe \_\_\_\_\_ because...

I will think before I speak.

I agree with \_(name)\_ because...

I will use civil discourse

I want to add to what \_(name)\_ said...

I will positively contribute to the discussion at least two times.

I disagree with what \_(name)\_ said because...

I will refer directly to the text.

I can connect \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ ...

I will ask at least one thoughtful question.

Can you give me an example?

## ▣ Model and practice

# Discussion Focus Questions

1. Indian Removal: Is it justified?

2. Who has the right to sign legal agreements?

3. Were the treaties binding therefore Native Americans obligated to honor the treaties?

- ▣ Letter from Chief John Ross, “To the Senate and House Representatives” Sept. 28, 1836
- ▣ Andrew Jackson’s Speech to Congress on Indian Removal December 6, 1830
- ▣ Documents 1-3: Various Sources
- ▣ Letter by Elias Boudinot to Chief John Ross, 1837

\* The Removal of the Indians; “As Long as Grass Grows or Water Runs” texts as additional reading.

### **Inner Fishbowl**

- Listen while others are talking.
- Do not speak when someone else is talking.
- Raise your hand when you have an idea to share.
- Answer questions in complete sentences.

### **Outer Fishbowl**

- Listen quietly while students in the Inner Fishbowl are talking.
- Keep your eyes on both the teacher and the student who is talking.
- Take written notes on what you hear or observe.
- Be prepared to share your observations with the class



Feeder fish: Students in the inner circle can ask for help from a feeder fish.



# Debrief and Final Thoughts



- ❑ Students need to come to the discussion prepared, listen when they are in the outside circle to follow the discussion and not repeat.
- ❑ Outside person is listening to the discussion, annotating documents or sticky notes while inner circle is contributing to the discussion.
- ❑ You set a time frame to switch circles and begin next discussion.
- ❑ Establish norms
- ❑ Controversial issues great for this discussion technique
- ❑ Open ended questions to generate the discussion
  
- ❑ **Variations:**
  - One empty seat – student jumps into discussion and then one person must leave the discussion
  - Feeder fish annotates text and takes notes to help assist the discussion if they are called on.

# Have a fantastic year!

