

Discussion Questions

Lesson Blueprints: Focus Fives

Grade Level: Middle and High School

Essential Question

How do we use others' ideas to help us organize our own thoughts about a subject?

Materials

- Arrange the room to allow for distinct groups of three, such as table groups, small several circles, etc.
- Paper and writing implements OR writing capabilities on personal device
- Portion of text/sample of data related to session topic — this sample should be of significant length, approximately 2 pages

Procedure

1. Post or distribute the information (e.g., a portion of text or sample of data) related to the session topic. Inform the group that they will review the information silently, without any discussion.
2. When the group has finished reviewing, ask each participant to write the focus five ideas that respond to or that they draw from the information. Focus all individuals on the same category for their focus fives to support the discussion. Focus five ideas/suggestions:
 - Five main ideas
 - Five most important facts/points
 - Five conclusions
 - Five predictions
 - Five impacts (clarify the area of impact)
 - Five reasons
 - Five interpretations
 - Five connections
3. In their groups of three, participants are to share their focus fives and then work together to pare the combined 15 ideas down to five.
4. Once this task is complete, have the groups of three join another group, thus forming a group of six. The six group members will discuss their focus fives, and pare down the new 10 focus ideas to the top five.
5. Gather all groups together, share out, and have the group determine the top focus five ideas from all lists.

Conclusion

Ask the participants to identify the most important thing they learned about the topic after participating in the exercise.