

STAGE 1: PARTICIPATION

Goal: Students begin to speak to one another and not only to or through the teacher.

In this stage, the discussion leader focuses effort to establish an environment in which each participant feels he or she can speak to and learn from peers. This is the beginning of authentic group formation.

STAGE 2: COOPERATION

Goal: Each student has a voice and opinions that should play a role in the discussion.

In stage two, each participant must feel comfortable being a speaker whose perspective is valued by the group. Participants in the first two stages need to put as much effort into understanding the process of discussion as they put into understanding the text.

STAGE 3: ACTIVE LISTENING

Goal: Students accurately understand the points of view of other speakers and the text.

Listening is a complex activity that requires much more than our sense of hearing. Active listening occurs when a person actively tries to hear and understand what a speaker or author is trying to convey.

STAGE 4: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Goal: Students are both participants and leaders.

Shared leadership is achieved when each member of the group is equally responsible for the success of the discussion. When a group achieves shared leadership, it is often difficult to distinguish the leader from the participants.

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