



Evidence-Based Instructional Practices *Discussion and the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing*

The [Discussion Overview](#) provides the research base associated with this evidence-based instructional practice.

What are connections between Evidenced-Based Instructional Practice #4: Discussion and the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing?

The *Kentucky Academic Standards for Reading and Writing* was written with the understanding that students need vast literacy abilities, and how students construct knowledge and acquire skills and concepts is impacted by their diverse backgrounds. Because the standards were designed with these critical factors in mind, when implemented, the standards are intended to develop students' abilities to acquire, apply and integrate knowledge, skills and understandings in real life contexts and to problem-solve, make decisions and think critically and creatively. Thus, learning experiences aligned to the KAS assist students in connecting to themselves, others and the world beyond the classroom. Since learning does not occur in isolation, students should interact with others to confirm, challenge or shape their views and ideas. Collaboration facilitates understanding and develops an appreciation of diverse experiences and perspectives. The evidenced-based instructional practice of discussion is an important mechanism for developing readers and writers who are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be successful communicators in an ever-changing and diverse world.

Seamlessly embedded in the KAS, discussion is a means to comprehending and developing analytical thinking. Students have opportunities to engage in discussion every time they are analyzing text within the Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Text strands as well as within the Composition strand. Several reading and writing standards also require students to collaborate and provide and accept support from peers. Additionally, discussion is a key aspect of the *KAS for Reading and Writing's* Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices. Specifically, discussion may be used to allow students to “[v]iew literary experiences as transactional, interdisciplinary and transformational (ILP 3), “[u]tilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world” (ILP 4), “[c]ollaborate with others to create meaning” (ILP 6) and “[a]pply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text” (ILP 9).

What are planning considerations for the successful implementation of the Evidenced-Based Instructional Practice #4: Discussion and the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing?

- To establish a safe classroom climate for discussion, facilitate relationship building. When students have healthy relationships with their classmates and teacher, they are more likely to speak up and engage in productive classroom, group and partner discussions. For more information on establishing the learning environment in the reading and writing classroom, see [EBIP #1](#).
- Practice productive discussions. Spend time teaching and modeling how to engage in a productive discussion and then practicing what the discussion should sound and look like. Utilizing discussion roles and protocol are helpful, especially when first teaching students how to engage in discussions. Do not assume students know how to initiate sharing their thoughts and ideas or how to add on to a classmates' ideas or disagree. Develop general classroom discussion guidelines, such as, but not limited to:
 - Allow everyone the chance to speak.
 - Do not interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
 - Keep confidential any personal information that comes up in the conversation.
 - Listen carefully and respectfully, without interrupting.
 - Show respectful listening by facing and looking at the speaker, making eye contact, staying quiet, nodding, etc. Be aware that tone and body language are powerful communicators.
 - Commit to learning, not debating.
 - Challenge or criticize ideas, not individuals.
 - Avoid blame, speculation and inflammatory language.
 - Be careful about putting other participants on the spot. Do not demand that others speak for a group that they are perceived to represent.
- Be intentional to create opportunities for light discussions prior to engaging in discussions that may evoke strong emotions, opinions and/or beliefs, such as in response to reading complex text(s) and crafting argument or literary analysis or in preparation for a debate, Socratic Seminar or Structured Academic Controversy.
- Utilize a variety of discussion methods to assist with comprehension and analysis of text. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Silent Discussions – Students write rather than speak. This can be done using large chart paper on walls or tables or digitally using an online format.
 - Collaborative Note Collectors – Assign a question or prompt for groups to discuss. Create a slideshow with one slide available for each group. Each group collects their discussion on their group slide. The teacher can view the slides in real time and determine where additional guidance is needed to enhance the discussion/learning.
 - Question Stems/Sentence Frames - Prepare sentence starters for students to use in order to give them effective startup language to use when they 1) want to share their ideas or ask a question, 2) add on to a peer's comment/question, 3) suggest a different idea/question, 4) validate a peer, etc.
 - Gallery/Carousel Walk – Arrange a variety of texts around the room. Invite groups of students to move around the room, stopping at each text to engage in discussion around an overarching topic, question or theme. Be sure to provide rich, complex texts, and consider using guiding questions/prompts at each

station to ensure students are setup to have worthwhile conversations and equipped to see the relationships between the texts.

- Fishbowl Discussions - Mimick a fishbowl by arranging students' seats in a circle around 2-4 chairs in the center of the space. The chairs in the middle (the fish) are for those who will be participating in the discussion. Everyone on the outside circle listens and watches the discussion. This is very helpful for modeling effective discussions and/or highlighting an interesting excerpt from a text.

What strategies and resources can support the implementation of Evidence-Based Instructional Practice #4: Discussion and the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing*?

Section 1C: Deeper Dive into the Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices, located within the [Getting to Know the KAS for Reading and Writing](#) module, takes a more in-depth look at the purpose and function of the ten practices. Participants explore how the practices fit together like a puzzle to support, equip and empower students as they build knowledge and master skills within the Reading and Writing standards. Completion of this section of the module helps participants recognize more clearly how the ILPs encourage and engage students in discussion throughout the learning process which in turn helps facilitate attainment of the standards. Refer to Section 1C of the [Facilitator's Guide: Getting to Know the KAS for Reading and Writing](#) for explicit instructions.

Section 1D: Spotlight: Unpacking Multidimensionality, also located within the [Getting to Know the KAS for Reading and Writing](#) module, takes a more in-depth look at multidimensionality. Participants build an understanding of the multidimensionality of the standards. For the purpose of utilizing the evidence-based practice of discussion, understanding the layers of the standards better – especially analysis – helps teachers facilitate productive discussions that lead to the attainment of the full depth of the reading and writing standards. Refer to Section 1D of the [Facilitator's Guide: Getting to Know the KAS for Reading and Writing](#) for explicit instructions.

[Conferencing Guides](#)

KAS Conferencing Guides provide teachers and students with a tool that can be used to discuss student compositions throughout the writing process. These guides serve as a platform for self, peer or teacher feedback, which lead to more in-depth discussions of student writing, to promote student growth.

[The Big List of Class Discussion Strategies](#), a blog post from the Cult of Pedagogy, shares a mix of low-preparation and high-preparation discussion protocols.

[Bringing All Students Into Discussions](#), an article by Jori Krulder published on eduoopia, includes “techniques for fostering meaningful class discussions by getting even reluctant students to share their insights.”

[Listen-Read-Discuss \(LRD\)](#) is a strategy used before and during reading and with small group or whole class settings. This strategy helps students make sense of text presented orally, builds prior knowledge before students experience a text independently, allows struggling readers more of an opportunity to engage in larger group discussions and can be implemented with most any text or content area.