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Using the Touchstones Discussion Method for Common Reader Discussions

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Using the Touchstones Discussion Method for Common Reader Discussions

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Teaching Practice & Need it Addresses

The **Touchstones Method** empowers students to find their voice within an inclusive and collaborative discussion.

Instructors can use this method to facilitate discussions of the **UNLV Common Reader Program**. This program provides incoming undergraduate students with a common intellectual experience discussing a select text.

Principles from the Touchstones Method can be used to facilitate conversation of any text that is used in this Common Reader program.

The Four Stages of Group Development

1. **Participation:** Students begin to speak to one another and not only to or through the teacher.
2. **Cooperation:** Each student has a voice and opinions that have a place in the discussion class, regardless of that student's academic performance or background
3. **Active Listening:** Students examine their own assumptions to more accurately understand other points of view – both those of the author and of their peers.
4. **Collaborative Leadership:** All students act as both participants and as leaders.

(Touchstones Discussion Project, 2023)

Touchstones Ground Rules

1. Read the text carefully
2. Listen carefully and do not interrupt.
3. Speak clearly and so everyone can hear you.
4. Give others your respect.
5. Do not raise your hands.

(Touchstones Discussion Project, 2023)



Resources

- Online Touchstones Workshops
 - <https://touchstones.org/workshops-training/register/>
- Touchstones Fellows Program
- Touchstones Community Discussions
- Consultation with Drs. Hawkinson and Slife

Building Essential Skills

Students using the Touchstones Method build the following essential skills over the course of the semester:

- Belonginess
- Active Listening
- Self-Awareness & Regulation
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Global & Multicultural Awareness
- Citizenship



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References

Touchstones Discussion Project. (2022, January 13). *Beyond the Socratic Seminar*. <https://touchstones.org>

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