



Using Round Table Discussions to Engage and Inform Students

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AG 400-Senior Seminar

Course Description:

- Techniques involved in presenting scientific and technical oral reports.
- Oral presentations required.

Rationale for Strategy

- Seniors do not understand research methods well enough to effectively present.
- Except for their own presentation, previous students were not interested or engaged.

Farm Bureau Collegiate Discussion

- Agriculture's strength depends on producers' ability to analyze problems and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The Discussion Meet is an activity designed to build these crucial skills in young people.
- By participating, individuals build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach a consensus and solve problems.

Contest Objectives

- Stimulate logical thinking and a desire for accurate information.
- Develop a concise and direct manner of speaking.
- Improve the ability to listen.
- Aid the participant in overcoming stage fright.
- Assist the individual in the practice of giving and receiving criticism in a helpful manner.
- Teach the value of compromise.
- Develop leaders for effective problem solving through group discussion.

How It Works in AG 400

- Students are assigned to watch final round video from national meet in a prior year.
- Students are provided with contest rules.
- Students randomly assigned to groups (5-6)
- Groups draw for topics to discuss
- Topic announced one week in advance
- Group engages in discussion
- Audience serves as judges/asks questions

Room Layout

 D D
 D D
D D

X X X X X X X X X X T X X X X X X X X X X
X
P X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X G

D = Discussant X = Audience T = Timer
P = Professor G = Grad Assistant

Rules of Engagement

- Introduction (30 seconds per discussant)
- Roundtable discussion (15 minutes)
- Summary (60 seconds per discussant)
- Questions/Follow-up from students
- Audience Scoring/Submission of Rubrics
- Professor/GA comments
- Announcement of next week's topic

Discussion Flow

- State problem, issue or need
- Explore, define, understand problem or need
- Identify causes of problem or need
- Elaborate all possible alternative solutions
- Evaluate and compare alternatives
- Test and project what appears to be the best solution
- Arrive at ways to implement the solution

2016 Topics/Issues Discussed

- American agriculture depends on a foreign-born labor force. How would you draft a national immigration policy?
- How can we ensure that farmers and ranchers, not government agencies, are driving the management of natural resources?
- How can farmers and ranchers maintain “ownership” of our intellectual/proprietary information? (Big data, unmanned aerial vehicles, unauthorized videos)

More 2016 Topics

- The nation's tax policy has become increasingly complicated and cumbersome. What should a balanced and beneficial tax policy look like for agriculture?
- Today's food companies employ many tactics to gain a marketing edge. What is the purpose of food labels? How can we work to ensure that consumers understand the labels and have confidence in the safety and quality of their food?



Discussion Meet Rating Sheet

Participants' Names
(Left of Moderator)

Participants' Name
(Right of Moderator)

Total of 700 Points possible			Superior - 100% Excellent 80% Good - 60% Fair - 40% Poor - 20%			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(2) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (200 points) Ability and judgment in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding, and the inclusion of Farm Bureau in implementing action programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(4) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (150 points) Does a contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE (100 points) Listening, asking pertinent questions, airing all points of view, securing major agreement, minimizing major differences. Courtesy to other participants, encourage discussion from other participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			(3) DELIVERY: (100 points) Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communication skills, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words.			
			(5) OPENING STATEMENT (50 points) Definition of problems, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problems.			
			(6) CLOSING STATEMENT (100 points) Ability to summarize discussion and formulate direction for the future.			
			Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by Judge. ↔ TOTAL Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge TOTAL ↔			
			↔ RANK Rank contestants: 1 (highest) -6 (lowest) RANK ↔			

Results/Outcomes

- Improved weekly attendance
- Carryover discussions beyond classroom
- Increased professionalism among discussants
- Collegial/cordial class atmosphere/RESPECT
- Increased interest in course and contest
- Appeared to be more confidence of students in their major and job outlook



Questions?

Thanks to Texas Farm Bureau and the
American Farm Bureau Foundation
for this teaching activity/resource.