# **Touchstones Discussion Project's Logic Model for High Schools**

MISSION: To implement discussions designed to give middle school students the skills, behaviors, and desire necessary to take responsibility for their education: active engagement with the content of their schoolwork; how to work with and learn from others; critical thinking and reading skills; and the self-reflection to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses.

## FOR WHOM—ASSUMPTIONS ————STRATEGIES————OUTCOMES —————EFFECTS

9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers.

Discussion draws on different skills allowing all students to participate equally. Discussion is the forum with open-ended questions, which removes a sense of right and wrong answers only and helps students think creatively and collaboratively about difficult and uncertain problems. Discussion also offers an opportunity for students to relate the subject matter of their education directly with their personal experience.

No student preparation means that all students have equal access to the discussion.

Students are looking for ways to define their images of themselves and others, socially and academically, and they need better tools of self-evaluation to judge themselves by indicators other than socio-economic levels or grades.

High school curriculums would be aided by programs that instill in students more responsibility and authority over their own education.

For most students, there is a separation between their social and their academic life. If students view themselves as important and responsible collaborators in their education and if they view their schoolwork as meaningful and related to their entire life, they will make the most of all their classes.

Teachers need multiple ways to engage and reach the variety of students they teach. In addition, a setting where they can see their students in a broader context will help them recognize strengths and weaknesses that may otherwise lay hidden.

Employ individual, small group, and large group work using noncontemporary texts from a variety of cultures and times. There is no preparation of the texts beforehand.

Texts focus on open-ended content demanding decision-making, problem solving, and creative thinking. Texts address topics familiar enough to engage students and unfamiliar enough to provide room for cooperative exploration.

Students directly interact with the subject matter and relate it to their experiences outside of school.

The teacher becomes a discussion leader rather than an authority on the text or topic, and gives increased responsibility to the students for the discussion's success.

In discussion, students are asked to explain and evaluate their thinking using texts chosen to encourage self-evaluation. Students are asked to explore and evaluate their own perspective and those of others.

Students question texts actively rather than just respond to them, and make their own decisions in order to help students feel that all texts are accessible.

Students evaluate and problem solve for the group's dynamics and for their own participation in the group.

Students develop and improve discussion skills: learning to participate in a group, to work with others, and how to take on various roles within groups. Students improve listening skills and begin to think of their classmates as people that they can learn from as well as their teacher. They appreciate various opinions and ideas.

Students improve their ability to recognize their own perspective, opinions, and assumptions and those of others. They understand and can explain how they come to their opinions and develop an increased willingness to evaluate and, if necessary, change their opinion.

Students engage texts in diverse ways: creatively as active readers, by associating the text or topic with their experiences and prior knowledge, by working collaboratively to explore issues, and critically by employing questioning strategies.

Students learn how to self-evaluate their behavior in discussions, in working with groups, and as students. They learn to evaluate the effectiveness of the entire group and take on leadership roles to improve it.

Students integrate their experience outside of school through discussion and then to their whole education, making their learning more meaningful and applicable.

Teachers expand the set of skills they employ in their classroom by learning to lead discussions, improving classroom management, and relating to students. Teachers are afforded the opportunity to see their students in a new light, learning often un-seen strengths and weaknesses that they can use to improve their teaching strategies.

Teachers and students are reoriented towards education.

Students become active collaborators in their own education with an increased confidence in their ability to learn and new skills that will help them make the most of their learning.

Teachers experience an improved classroom environment through their new teaching skills and their students improved engagement.