

# STUDENT-DRIVEN LOGIC AND RHETORIC IN MIDDLE SCHOOL



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**WHO ARE WE?**

**WHY ARE WE HERE?**

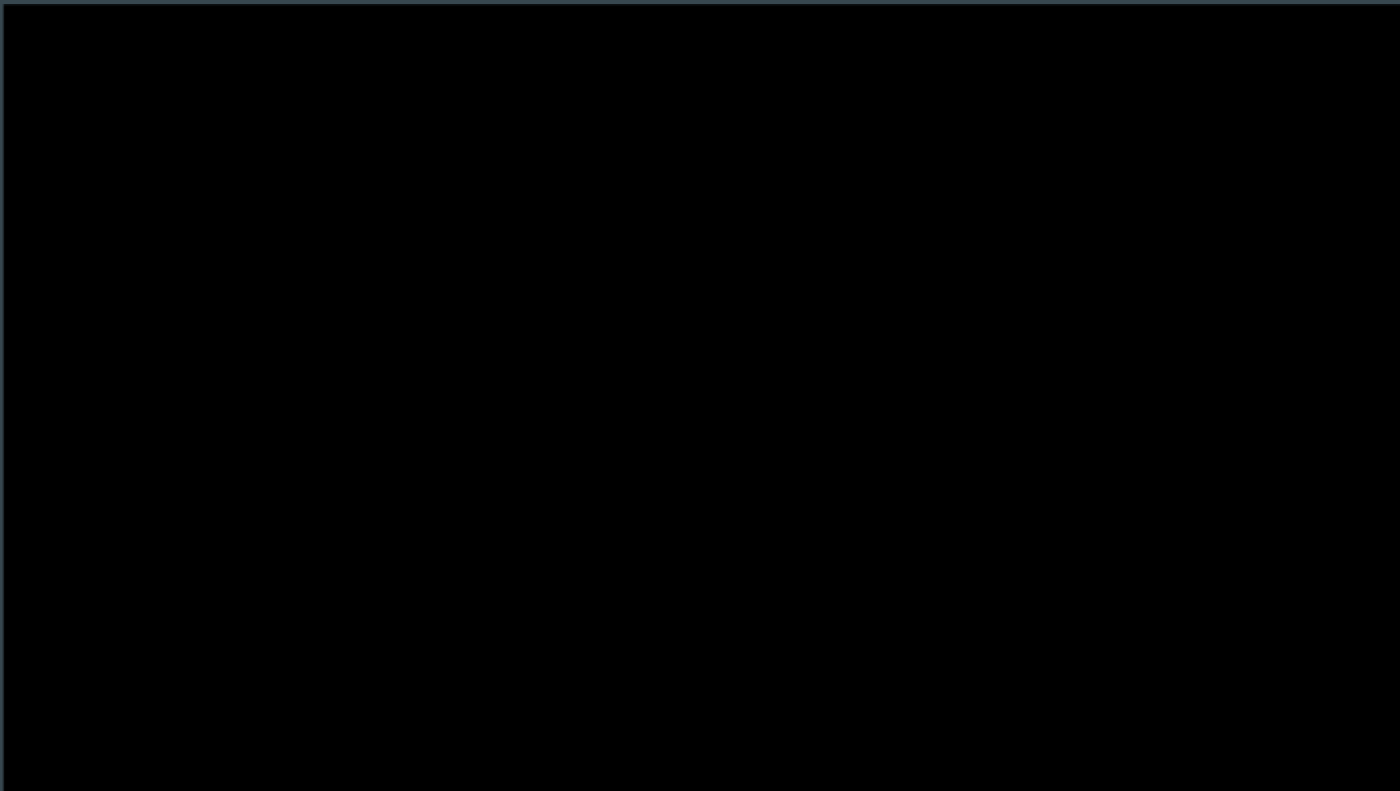
# WHAT IS STUDENT-DRIVEN DISCUSSION?

Classroom practice that allows students to construct meaning from both the experience and content of discussion

Harkness approach



**WHY HARKNESS?**

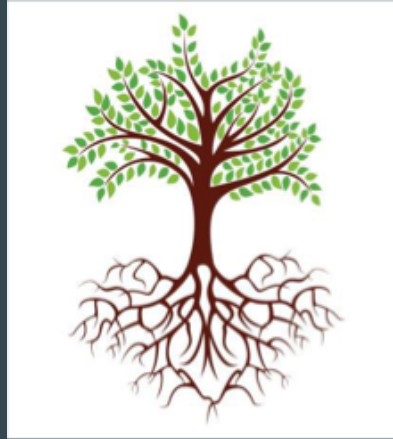


# HARKNESS: INSPIRING LOGIC AND RHETORIC

Classical education models use the terms logic and rhetoric to describe phases of learning based on developmental consideration.

## LOGIC

- The “why” behind something, the logic of it
- Reasoning skills
- Discussion requires effective logic



## RHETORIC

- How we communicate “why”
- Persuasive speaking and effective communication
- Effective writing
- Fosters independent thinking
- Personal connection to learning

**Humility . . . opens you up to the ability to deal more realistically with the world. It's no longer about who's right, it's about what is accurate.**

Edward Hess, author of *Humility is the New Smart, Rethinking Human Excellence in the Smart Machine Age* (2017)

**HOW DO I BEGIN?**

# EDUCATOR MINDSET

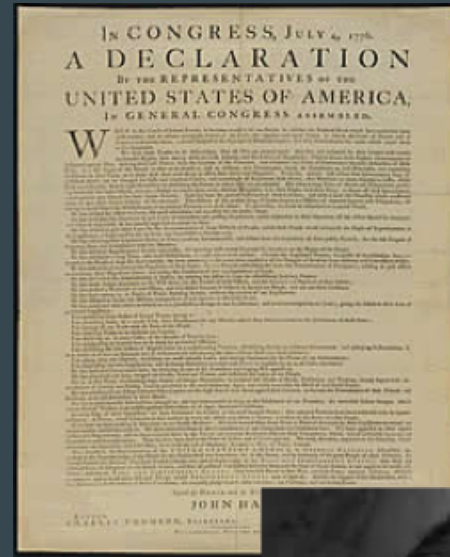
- Flexible
- Adaptable
- Goal Oriented
  - Skills
  - Content
- Communicative
- Reflective





# EDUCATOR PLANNING

- Intended goal/outcome
- Text selection
- Structure class time/discussion
- Group Reflection and Evaluation
- Self-Reflection
- Synthesize learning through writing



# A DAY IN THE LIFE

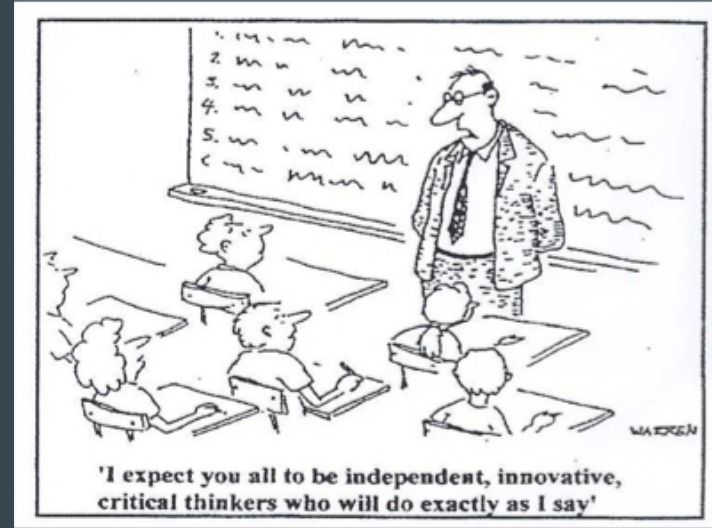
Focusing event: Review text/annotations and prepare to engage

Discussion: Structured or organic

Group Reflection and Evaluation: "How did we do today?"

Self-Reflection: "How did I contribute and how did discussion impact my learning?"

Synthesis: Personal reflection/writing prompt related to discussion topic

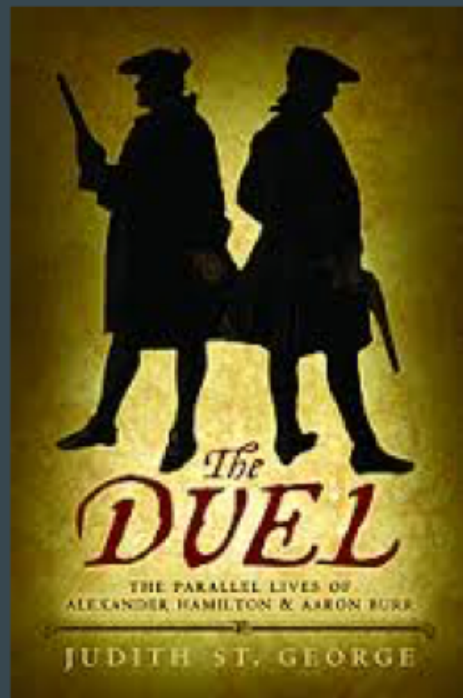


# REAL LIFE EXAMPLE - *THE DUEL* UNIT PLAN

## Goal:

Using multiple points of view, understand and evaluate the historical context surrounding the duel between Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton. (Logic)

An opportunity to synthesize in writing the summer reading assignment (Rhetoric)



# PBL AND HARKNESS

Project-based learning (PBL) is a fantastic platform for incorporating relevant student-driven discussion effectively.

Student-driven discussion from the beginning of project launch provides continual analysis and feedback.

Problem Analysis (Logic)

Research, knowledge building (Logic)

Critique and Revision (Logic)

Public Product (Rhetoric)

Project Reflection



# EXAMPLE 1: PBL AND HARKNESS

## Driving Question:

How can you persuade a company to make changes to its globalization practices and policies?

## Challenge:

Write a formal letter to a company to persuade them to change their globalization practices and policies to be more globally responsible. The letter should suggest changes for the company to make to become more or less globalized. Include supporting evidence along with your letter.

## EXAMPLE 2: PBL AND HARKNESS

### Driving Question:

How can you convince a school committee to take a trip that you planned for interim term in 2021?

### Challenge:

Use the five themes of geography to plan a trip for interim term 2021 that has academic learning objectives and reflects your personal interests. Create a visual aid and prepare a presentation that you will present to a school committee.

# CASE STUDY: STUDENTS PLAN AND LEAD DISCUSSIONS

Students were responsible for:

- Research and topic selection: What interests you? Why is it interesting? (Logic)
- Evaluation: Why is text selection important? (Logic)
- Text selection: Why is this a valid/reliable source? Will it facilitate a successful discussion? (Logic)
- Lesson planning (Logic)
- Lead discussion (Rhetoric)
- Participant reflection and feedback
- Self-Evaluation/Group-Evaluation



# CASE STUDY: OUTCOMES

- Ability to select and explore specific topics of interest
- Increased sense of ownership
- Strengthened class community
- Higher level of engagement
- Close analysis of texts
- Content depth is required to plan and facilitate an effective discussion
- Strong ties to classroom experiences while in Washington, D.C.





# DISCUSSION ASSESSMENT - STUDENT SKILLS

## GRADES 5 AND 6

Assessment is skills focused:

- Eye contact, body language
- All contributions are valued
- Focus on equity in discussion
- Power of silence
- Voice control
- Kindness
- Text evidence



## GRADES 7 AND 8

Assessment is primarily focused on skills that relate to content:

- Original, meaningful contributions
- Making connections
- Corroboration
- Text support
- Skills assessed in earlier grades are still expected

# A NOTE ON ASSESSMENT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Some skills are immeasurable, which makes assessing discussion skills somewhat subjective.

## Writing

- Formal and informal
- See what student is “thinking”
- Process time
- Assessment of learning outcomes
- Adjust instruction

## Conferencing

- Face to face (or digital)
- Regular (1x per grading period)
- Allows student to set goals, make improvements
- Accountability, coaching
- “Safe place”

# HARKNESS AND 21ST CENTURY LEARNING SKILLS

Through authentic student-driven discussion, students have the opportunity to experience, consider, analyze, and address multiple viewpoints in a supportive and challenging environment.



# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Ellen Barrett

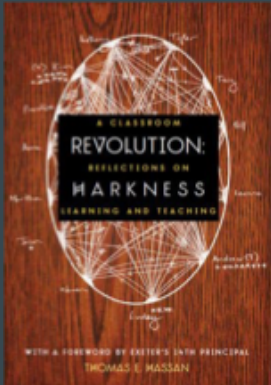
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Recommended Reading

*A Classroom Revolution: Reflections on Harkness Learning and Teaching*

# SOURCES

Harkness table image: <http://www.boardingschoolreview.com/the-masters-school-profile>

Harkness video: <http://www.secondbaptistschool.org/page/academics/middle-school/harkness>

Declaration of Independence: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Images/declaration.jpg>.

Dust Bowl: [https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRM8fuNUzQB04v8d9WJtZ6lzB7QhfBK8AB1k0dDTUqv8S0d\\_x5T](https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRM8fuNUzQB04v8d9WJtZ6lzB7QhfBK8AB1k0dDTUqv8S0d_x5T)

Lesson Plan cartoon: <https://jeffersonchae.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/lesson-plan-cartoon.jpg>.

The Duel image: <https://www.amazon.com/Duel-Parallel-Lives-Alexander-Hamilton/dp/0425288218>

PBL and Harkness: [http://img-bie-org.s3.amazonaws.com/goldstandard\\_elements-300x300.jpg](http://img-bie-org.s3.amazonaws.com/goldstandard_elements-300x300.jpg).

The Keys: <http://www.getgokey.com/>

Assessment: [https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQXxdwbaOh7q8W8INiYqhgisi46d-pU\\_lx2hg9oZfwATbaRD\\_\\_etP](https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQXxdwbaOh7q8W8INiYqhgisi46d-pU_lx2hg9oZfwATbaRD__etP)

21st Century: <http://www.onlineuniversities.com/wp-content/uploads/21st-century-skills.jpg>.

A Classroom Revolution: [http://exeter.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?catalogId=10001&langId=-1&productId=400000222365&storeId=42565&imageId=966577&graphicId=REFLECTIONS??cm\\_sp=MANUAL-\\_-083\\_book-\\_-CONTENT\\_SPOT\\_HOME\\_ROW\\_1\\_CONTENT\\_B](http://exeter.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?catalogId=10001&langId=-1&productId=400000222365&storeId=42565&imageId=966577&graphicId=REFLECTIONS??cm_sp=MANUAL-_-083_book-_-CONTENT_SPOT_HOME_ROW_1_CONTENT_B)