

Activity: Reading Discussion



TIME ESTIMATE
45 minutes



OPTIONAL MATERIALS
Whiteboard, whiteboard markers, markers, paper

PURPOSE

To encourage participants to comprehend the reading material, engage in peer discussions and build oral communication and critical thinking skills.

DESCRIPTION

In groups of 3-6 depending on class size, participants will debrief the reading and background material.

FACILITATOR NOTE

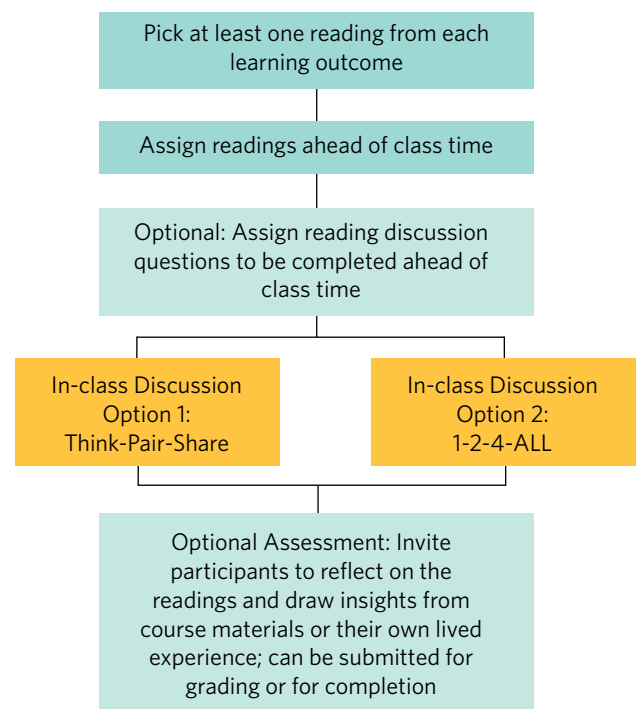
Readings are linked to the module's Learning Outcomes (LOs) with a minimum three readings listed per learning outcome. Pick and choose readings based on what LOs work best in your classroom and which readings are most relevant to your discipline. Feel free to modify the questions to suit your own contexts. These questions can be distributed beforehand or during the activity.

HOW-TO GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS/ EDUCATORS

Each learning module has three learning outcomes. Each learning outcome is accompanied with a set of readings and discussion questions for each reading. The readings are meant to complement the Background material. This guide provides instructions on how these discussion questions can be incorporated into the classroom. These serve as sample guidelines, so feel free to adapt this activity to your classroom and teaching style! Facilitators are encouraged to review the Facilitator Guide before class time.

STEPS

- 1** From the reading list, pick at least one reading from each learning outcome that would fit best with your learning goals. Some areas of consideration include discussion questions you hope to engage in, length of reading and author(s).
- 2** Assign readings ahead of class time so learners come prepared to engage in discussion.
- 3** Break the class up into groups, group size depends on which option is selected below. Groups can be broken up by the reading (ie have one group discuss the reading connected to Learning Outcome #1) and then each group would share their discussion so that the entire group would hear about each reading even if they only discuss one reading.
- 4** Present discussion questions during class either on a whiteboard, presentation or printed on a piece of paper.



- 4 Provide participants with the following options to conduct the discussions:

Option 1: Think-Pair-Share

1. Break the participants into smaller groups of ideally 5-6 people depending on how many learners are in your class. Assign each group to discuss a reading by reviewing the discussion questions together.
2. Participants will individually reflect on the discussion questions and share their responses within the small groups.
3. Once participants have finished their discussion in the small group (~20-25 mins), have them report back the key points of their discussion to the larger group.

Option 2 for smaller class sizes of ~12-15 participants or less: : 1-2-4-ALL¹

1. (1, individually) Learners will reflect on the discussion questions individually in silence for 1 minute.
2. (2, pairs) Learners will pair up with another student and generate ideas for the 2 minutes.
3. (4, small group) Learners will form groups of 4 to share and develop ideas for 4 minutes.
4. (ALL) Learners will return to the larger group to report insights and takeaways for 5 minutes before proceeding onto the next question.
5. During 'ALL', limit the number of shared ideas to 2 to 4, especially in large groups, and maintain the rule of one conversation at a time.
6. You are encouraged to use a visual or auditory cue (e.g. a bell) to announce transitions since this format is time-sensitive.
7. Ensure that every group and individual has an opportunity to share and be heard so that no one individual or a few groups are dominating the group sharing. We suggest reviewing community agreements with the class before the start of the activity.

¹ This method is adapted from [Liberating Structures](#).

- 5 Alternatively, discussion questions can be assigned to be completed ahead of class time.
- Have learners complete a one-page reading reflection to briefly answer the discussion questions ahead of class.
 - During class time, learners can go through their answers in small groups and reference their written reflection.
 - Depending on instructor capacity, learners can submit their written reflection as an assignment (graded or for completion). This allows instructors to provide constructive feedback and effectively address any misconceptions at the beginning of the next class.

ASSESSMENT: READING REFLECTIONS

Educators can choose to incorporate reading reflections as graded or non-graded (for completion) assignments. Educators are encouraged to share guiding questions, suggested word count and an evaluation rubric (if graded) for clarity on what is expected from the student. Educators may also choose to invite learners to draw insights from course materials (lectures, readings, other activities if applicable) or from the learners' own lived experience and academic background based on their comfort levels.

NOTES:

READINGS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Learning Outcome #1: Define gender normativity and gender performativity to explore how this impacts your relationship with food.

1. [Sex, Gender & Sexuality](#)

Adams, L. (n.d.). *Sex, Gender & Sexuality Explained*. Western Australian Aids Council.

- a. What are the differences between sex and gender?
- b. How is sexuality distinct from sex and gender?
- c. Watch the video titled "[Courtney Act Talks... Gender Terminology! | MTV Life](#)". What are some terms that you use or would like to use that respect diverse identities and the sex/gender/sexuality distinctions?

2. [Gender Performativity by Judith Butler](#)

Jones, J. (2018). Theorist Judith Butler Explains How Behavior Creates Gender: A Short Introduction to "Gender Performativity." *The Cut*.

- a. What gender expectations have you observed in your life?
- b. How has "gender performativity" shown up in your life in relation to food (production, marketing, preparation, purchasing, consumption, etc.)?
- c. Drawing from the first video in this article, Judith Butler states that "It is most important to resist the violence that is imposed by ideal gender norms, especially against those who are gender different, who are non-conforming in their gender presentation." Drawing on your experiences, what are some examples of ways people have challenged the gender binary?

Facilitator Note: For reading (b), it is highly recommended that learners watch the video featuring Judith Butler that is embedded at the top of the article. It can also be found here: <https://youtu.be/Bo7o2LYATDc>.

3. [Intersectionality and Food Studies](#)

Williams-Forsen, P., & Wilkerson, A. (2011). Intersectionality and Food Studies. *Food, Culture & Society*, 14(1), 7-28. doi:10.2752/175174411x12810842291119

- a. What identities are assumed or normalized within food discourse (hint: start with thinking about the gender binary)? What identities are outside of these norms?
- b. Do these norms vary across racial, ethnic, and cultural groups? How have these norms changed over time?
- c. Whose voices are often missing in the "real food" movement? How does this reinforce the gender binary and other norms?

4. [Toward a Queer Crip Feminist Politics of Food](#)

Hall, K.Q. (2014). Toward a Queer Crip Feminist Politics of Food. *PhiloSOPHIA*, 4(2), 177-196.

- a. Hall argues that viewing bodies as being in a constant state of transformation is more representative of "real bodies and real foods/relationships" (2014, p. 179). What do you think Hall means by this statement?
- b. Reflecting on your experiences, have you been exposed to messages that bodies are dynamic and ever-changing? Or that they're fixed?
- c. Why do you think you've been exposed to certain messages and not others?

MODULE 7: GENDER, EQUITY AND FOOD SECURITY

Learning Outcome #2: Analyze and distinguish the ways in which the gender binary and relations in food reproduce food insecurity and inequities in the corporeal, sociocultural and material domains of the food system.

Facilitator Note: The Allen and Sachs (2012) reading is mandatory as an introductory reading covering corporeal, sociocultural, and material oppression in the food system. Multiple activities are linked to this reading so it is highly recommended that learners are acquainted with it to promote deeper engagement with this module.

1. Women and food chains: The gendered politics of food. **[MANDATORY READING]**

Allen, P., & Sachs, C. (2012). Women and food chains: The gendered politics of food. *Taking food public: Redefining foodways in a changing world*, 23-40. Eds. Forson, P. W., & Counihan, C. Routledge.

The framework of corporeal, sociocultural and material food domains seeks to define women's relationship with food. Focusing on one of the three food domains – corporeal, sociocultural, or material – discuss the following questions with your group:

- a. How would you define the domain that you chose? What are the domain's underlying arguments and histories?
- b. What are some examples of the gendered expectations that Allen & Sachs describe in this realm?
- c. Thinking about your lived experiences, how have you observed the ways in which gender expectations show up in this realm?
- d. How do the three food domains overlap and intersect?
- e. Does this article reinforce the gender binary? Why or why not?

2. [Food Insecurity Among Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Individuals in the Southeast United States: A Qualitative Study.](#)

Russomanno, Patterson, & Jabson. (2019). Food Insecurity Among Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Individuals in the Southeast United States: A Qualitative Study. *Transgender Health*, 4(1). doi: 10.1089/trgh.2018.0024.

- a. Gender biases and expectations are experienced across the three realms (corporeal, sociocultural, material). Pulling examples from the article, what kinds of biases and/or oppressions are experienced by transgender people?
- b. In what ways do gender normativity contribute to food security issues for transgender and gender nonconforming communities?
- c. What power (eg. decisions that they make etc.) do transgender and gender nonconforming individuals have to influence their food security outcomes?

3. Exploring Infant Feeding Practices In Food Insecure Households: What Is The Real Issue?

Frank, L. (2015). Exploring Infant Feeding Practices In Food Insecure Households: What Is The Real Issue? *Food and Foodways*, 23(3), 186-209. doi: 10.1080/07409710.2015.1066223

- a. Based on the article and other understandings, what is the relationship between gender and food security?
- b. What examples of corporeal, sociocultural, and/or material oppression can be found in this article?
- c. How does the gender binary create conditions in which womxn-led households disproportionately experience food insecurity?

MODULE 7: GENDER, EQUITY AND FOOD SECURITY

Learning Outcome #4: Examine how womxn, trans, queer, non-binary and gender nonconforming people engage with food and the food system in through resistance efforts for a deeper understanding of existing solutions and strategies to mobilize food system change.

Facilitator Notes:

- Some organizations listed may provide little information on their website but have extensive media coverage. Students can use resources found online (eg. newspaper articles) in addition to the provided links in order to supplement the initiatives' website information.
- Readings can be adjusted to reflect grassroots initiatives that are local to your area.

The following readings are organized by three separate topics that highlight real groups, communication platforms, organizations and movements that are associated with food justice and gender equity work. Students may select a topic and explore the pages of these initiatives. Provide them with the following initiatives (see bullet a) and prompts (see bullet b) to guide their exploration and discussion:

(a) Grassroots Initiatives:

- Womxn in agriculture
 - [The Female Farmer Project™](#)
 - [Soul Fire Farm](#)
- Gender-inclusive ceremonies
 - [Dancing To Egales Spirit Society](#)
- Queer food sharing
 - [Queer Soup Night](#)
 - [Queer Food Share New York City](#)
- Gender equity in the restaurant industry
 - [Restaurant Workers' Community Foundation](#)
 - [Women's Leadership Programs](#)
- Food security and HIV/AIDS
 - [Food, Nutrition, and Basic Needs Program](#)

(b) Guiding Questions:

- What kinds of goals does this individual, group, organization, or movement have? Who are the members of this initiative and what community are they serving?
- What issue are they addressing? How are they taking action towards this issue?
- What are the gender equity and food security implications of their work?
- What are their strengths in approaching this issue? What experience, resources, and knowledge assets do they have that are relevant and useful to food justice work?
- What policy solutions or strategies have they identified to mobilize food system change at the structural level?

ASSESSMENT: READING QUIZ

Administer an online or in class quiz on one or several of the readings before the activities.

- Option 1: Refer to the guiding questions listed with the readings
- Option 2: As a pre-reading assignment, have participants submit a question from the readings. Select and compile the most relevant questions to create a reading quiz.