

## Activity: Reading Discussion



**TIME ESTIMATE**  
45 minutes



**OPTIONAL MATERIALS**  
Whiteboard, whiteboard markers, markers, paper

### PURPOSE

To encourages 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

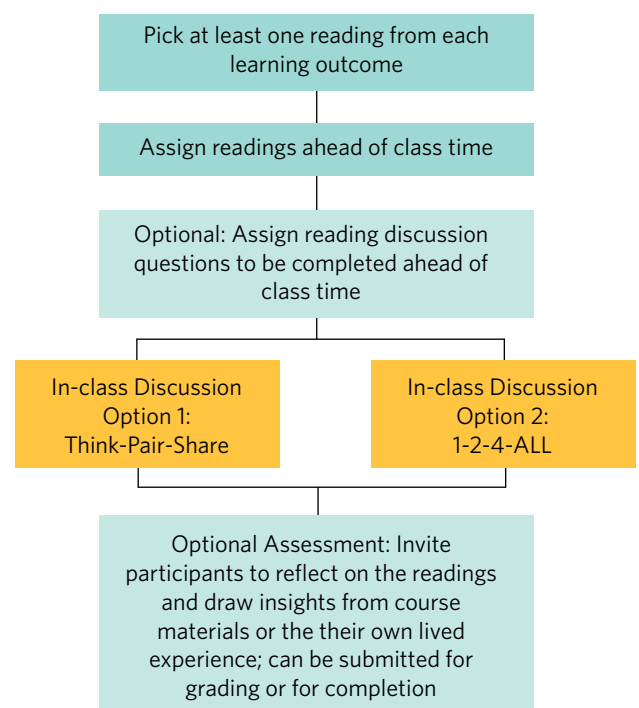
Readings are linked to the module's Learning Outcomes (LOs) with a minimum three readings listed per learning outcome. Pick and choose readings based on what LOs work best in your classroom and which readings are most relevant to your discipline. Feel free to modify the questions to suit your own contexts. 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-ALL<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> 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

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:** Identify one's own positionality in relation to the food system.

### 1. [Food as Radical Empathy: Alison Alkon](#)

Alkon, A. (2018). "Food as Radical Empathy." *Tedx Talks* [Video].

- a. Alison Alkon notes that food is an important part of who we are, and a key element in many communities, traditions, and social movements - How does food play a role in your community?
- b. Why does Alison Alkon describe the food movement's relationship with radical empathy as complicated? What does this complicated relationship look like in the food system?
- c. Provide three examples of inequality within the food system that Alison Alkon described - what forms of oppression or discrimination shaped those relationships?
- d. Summarize (in your own words) how Alison Alkon suggests we use food as a 'radical empathy'.
- e. How do you position yourself within the food system? Which structures and systems (economic systems, social norms, land and food management, knowledge systems, cultural backgrounds, etc.) have situated you in this position?

### 2. [What are intersectionality, privilege and positionality?](#)

Brimhall-Vargas, M. (Goodman, L.) (2019, October 8). *The Take: Big Ideas Explained in Under 5 Minutes* [Audio podcast].

- a. Provide three examples from the podcast, or from your lived experiences and observations, that demonstrate social advantages which produce inequity within the food system.
- b. How have these social advantages been assigned, decided, and communicated in society?
- c. Many promising alternative food movement initiatives tend to be dominated by people who are privileged by whiteness - why do you think this is? Do you see examples of this in your community?

### 3. [5 Tips for Being an Ally](#)

Ramsey, F. (2014, November 22). *5 Tips for Being an Ally*.

- a. What ways can you practice allyship within your daily life? Think of your personal, professional, and academic spheres.
- b. In what ways do you hold power within your local food system?
- c. How do you think you can act as a better ally within the food movement?

**Learning Outcome #2:** Distinguish between equity, equality and the three forms of power (personal, positional, and systemic power).

### 1. [Equality Is Not Enough: What the Classroom Has Taught Me About Justice](#)

Sun, A. (2014, September 16). "Equality Is Not Enough: What the Classroom Has Taught Me About Justice". *Everyday Feminism*.

- a. Sun describes how equal treatment is unfair, even though students have come to associate equality with fairness. Give an example of equal treatment that may be associated with fairness yet actually leads to inequity.
- b. How does "erasure of differences" create inequities within the food system?
- c. Think about governance structures from your country that you may have interacted with before, such as your municipal government or public community consultations. Do these structures center equitable decision-making processes? Or do they follow 'majority rules' principles?
- d. Who benefits from 'equal treatment' in the food system? Who is disadvantaged?

### 2. [Valuing Different Perspectives on Power in the Food System](#)

Anderson, M., Nisbett, N., Clément, C., & Harris, J. (2019). Introduction: Valuing Different Perspectives on Power in the Food System. *IDS Bulletin*, 50(2).

- a. Provide three examples from the paper, or from your lived experiences, of power dynamics within the food system.
- b. Who are the dominant actors in the food system and which actors are often invisible or marginalized? How do dominant actors benefit from this power dynamic?
- c. Thinking of these actors again from your example - what level does each actor have the power to influence (individual, positional, systemic)? At what level of power is each actor limited, disadvantaged, or oppressed?

**Learning Outcome #3:** Define the concepts of food justice, food security, and food sovereignty to be able to identify the concepts in practice.

### 1. Food security, Food Justice, or Food Sovereignty?

Holt-Giménez, E. (2010). Food Security, Food Justice, or Food Sovereignty?. *Food First Backgrounder*.

- How does your understanding of 'food justice' differ from the term 'food sovereignty'? How do these terms differ from 'food security'?
- How does food justice intersect with other forms of justice? (For example, climate justice or gender equality)
- 'Food justice' and 'food sovereignty' can be abstract and difficult notions for the public to understand - in your opinion, how can academics and policymakers communicate these ideas to make them more palatable for the everyday person?

### 2. What does it mean to do Food Justice?

Cadieux, K. V., & Slocum, R. (2015). What does it mean to do Food Justice? *Journal of Political Ecology*, 22(1), 1. doi:10.2458/v22i1.21076

- Think about an NGO, university, or government organization in your community - how does the organization or institution's practice of Food Justice compare to your understanding of Food Justice?
- Cadieux and Slocum discuss how widely accepted the perspective that "food insecurity is due to a lack of food" (4). What explanations and solutions are proposed for this perspective? What might this perspective be missing?
- List and describe the "four nodes around which Food Justice organizing appears to occur".
- How do Cadieux and Slocum's definitions of food justice and food sovereignty converge and diverge?
- Figure 3 shows the limits of common approaches to food problems and dynamics that hinder the ability to practice justice - what examples of this do you see in your local food system?
- What are the pros and cons of universally defining food justice?

### 3. Food sovereignty: Valerie Segrest

Segrest, V. (2014). "Food Sovereignty". *Tedx Talks* [Video].

- How does Valerie define "food sovereignty"?
- What does "access to foods" look like in relation to Indigenous ("Tribal") Food Sovereignty - using Valerie's examples, why is access to traditional foods important to culture? What lessons have your cultural foods taught you?
- How did the food systems and diets of Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Northwest change following settler colonization, according to Valerie? How does this impact culture and traditional knowledge?
- What methods (ex. events, activities, and teachings) are Muckleshoot community members using to move towards Indigenous Food Sovereignty?
- What 'teachings' did you take away from Valerie's speech?

**Learning Outcome #4:** Identify the three types of (in)justice (epistemic, distributive, procedural) as they relate to food systems.

### 1. Food + Justice = Democracy: LaDonna Redmond

Redmond, L. (2013). "Food + Justice = Democracy". *Tedx Talks* [Video].

- Redraw LaDonna Redmond's 'Global Food Industrial Complex' Mind Map - using arrows, add examples of food and social justices that occur within the food system. Use lines to connect issues that are interconnected.
- What stories have been left out of the food movement in your community?
- What does LaDonna Redmond mean by 'modern day slavery' throughout the food chain?
- Summarize the solutions that LaDonna Redmond proposes to create a more fair, just, and healthy food system.

### 2. Mining for justice in the food system: perceptions, practices, and possibilities

Allen, P. (2008). Mining for justice in the food system: Perceptions, practices, and possibilities. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 25(2), 157-161. doi:10.1007/s10460-008-9120-6

- "Consumers increasingly express their interest in justice largely through the marketplace". How do you see this demonstrated in the food system? What are the pros and cons of this approach?
- Reflect on the types of justice (distributive, procedural, and epistemic) - summarize the interventions Allen suggests for addressing injustice.
- What does Allen mean when she describes the agrifood system as "socially organized"?

### 3. [Why We Can't Separate Justice and Sustainability in the Food System](#)

Ferguson, R.S. (2019, January 31). Why we can't separate justice and sustainability in the food system. *Union of Concerned Scientists*.

- a. After reading this article, how would you define justice in the food system?
- b. What themes are imperative to achieving food justice (eg. labour rights, indigenous sovereignty, accessibility to cultural foods, inclusivity...)?
- c. With your discussion group, choose one of the questions Ferguson posed at the end of the essay. Collectively imagine an alternative reality in the food system based on the question that you choose. How could this alternative be achieved justly?
- d. What would farming look like if every farmworker had alternatives, and the political capital to refuse to be exposed to dangerous pesticides?
- e. What would happen to the market for unhealthy processed foods if everyone had access to fresh and healthy whole foods, throughout their lives?
- f. How could polluting industries continue if they had nowhere to pollute—i.e. if every community had the clout to refuse and reject the byproducts of those industries?
- g. How would industrial farms acquire land and undercut competition without the policies that favor them at every step—i.e., if all farmers received the support that they needed?

## **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.

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## **NOTES:**