

Guidelines for conducting a panel discussion



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A panel discussion is designed to provide an opportunity for a group to hear several people knowledgeable about a specific issue or topic present information and discuss personal views. A panel discussion may help the audience further clarify and evaluate their positions regarding specific issues or topics being discussed and increase their understanding of the positions of others. How to Proceed Identify, or help participants identify, an issue or topic that involves an important conflict in values and/or interests. The issue or topic may be set forth as a topical question, a hypothetical incident, a student experience, an actual case, etc.

Select panelists who are well informed about and have specific points of view regarding the issue or topic. A panel discussion that includes three to five panelists is usually most workable. Select a leader or moderator. Indicate to panelists the objectives the panel discussion is designed to promote and allow-time for panel members to prepare for the discussion. In some situations ten or fifteen minutes may be sufficient time for preparation while in other situations, panel members may need to prepare several weeks in advance of the scheduled discussion. Decide upon the format the panel discussion will follow.

Various formats are appropriate. The following procedures have been used effectively: * The leader or moderator introduces the topic and the panelists present their views and opinions regarding the issue or topic for a set amount of time. * b. The panelists discuss the issue or topic with each other by asking questions or reacting to the views and opinions of other panel members. A specific amount of time should be established.

* c. The leader or moderator closes the discussion and provides a summary of panel presentations and discussion. * d. The leader or moderator calls for a forum period during which the members of the class may participate by addressing questions to various panel members or by voicing their views and opinions. The forum period should be conducted by the panel leader or moderator. Principal Responsibilities of the Instructor* Identify, or help participants identify, issues or topics upon which to base a panel discussion.

* Insure that all panelists and the moderator are familiar with the procedures for panel discussion in advance of the discussion itself so that they will be able to fulfill the responsibilities of their roles. * Assist panelists and participants (when necessary) in preparation for the discussion by directing them to various source materials, authorities in the field, etc. * Help participants understand the need for fair procedures in discussing an issue or topic, e. g., the freedom to discuss an issue, the obligation to listen to other points of view, the need for orderly, courteous discussion, etc.