



When students use new information, prior knowledge and their own experiences to debate a topic, generate a solution to a problem, or generate an opinion, we call this grappling. This practice asks the teacher to facilitate a higher level of thinking from students by posing a problem or question and presenting resources that challenge students to explore more than one solution or answer. The intended outcome of grappling is that students learn about the topic from a variety of perspectives, ask questions, generate their own opinions, and are able to defend their responses.

- Determine the bigger problem or question you want students to study and grapple with (using the state standards as your starting place)
- Research the topic and think about the possible solutions/answers to your problem or question. Gather resources that will give students background knowledge. Ask yourself: What information/resources would a student need to effectively grapple with the topic, question, or problem?
- Present the problem or question to students.
- Communicate expectations to students by sharing how they will be assessed.
- Guide student exploration by providing focused research, guiding questions, learning activities, and/or experiences. Be sure you present opportunities for students to arrive at more than one solution or answer.
- Assess student learning. Types of assessment can include written responses and:
 - Models
 - Generate a movie/documentary
 - Craft an editorial
 - Test the solution
 - Write a letter to share opinions/ideas
 - Start a campaign
 - Role play



Additional Tools

Project Based Learning

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered approach that engages and challenges students by using authentic problem solving and real problems. Consider having students work in pairs or groups.

Exploring with peers encourages students to grapple with additional perspectives.

Classroom Debate

Students take opposing positions on a topic or issue. Teacher provides opportunities for students to research and learn about the topic/issue. Students then take a stand for one side or the other in a structured discussion over the topic where both sides have an equal opportunity to defend their position. Classroom debates provide students with opportunities to build their skills in leadership, team building, group problem solving, and oral presentation. Embedding debate skills into the curriculum increases student engagement and rigor.

For more strategies and/or resources, visit houstonisd.org/EffectivePractices



ALERTS

Presenting problems and/or questions that are either too general or too focused can pose a real challenge for students. Making either of these mistakes will mean that your students may not have the time or resources to complete the “grappling process” successfully.



QUICK TIPS

Consider having students work in pairs or groups. Exploring with peers encourages students to grapple with additional perspectives. Suggested activities include field trips, conducting an interview, and gathering evidence through a survey.