



WHAT IS SWAY?

Sway is an educational chat platform that pairs students who disagree into one-on-one, text-based conversations about discussion topics chosen by their instructor or program. Students share their opinions on these topics, and Sway aims to match each student with a peer who holds a different perspective. Students then chat synchronously or asynchronously on their phones or laptops.

An AI facilitator called Guide joins every conversation: it can pose challenging questions, surface implicit assumptions, de-escalate tense moments, and provide relevant information—without ever taking sides. When a student writes something unconstructive, Sway suggests a better way to make the same point, providing real-time coaching in clear, respectful communication.

From the humanities to STEM, more than 10,000 students at over 90 institutions have used Sway to practice constructive disagreement. No extra staff time, facilitator training, or coordination is required. After each discussion, Sway delivers anonymized reports to instructors/staff on how student positions evolved and how well students understood each other's reasoning. Sway is grant-funded and provided to students and educators for free.

Privacy & Moderation

- Conversations are encrypted; instructors/staff cannot read identifiable transcripts or view individual students' opinions.
- Personal attacks and mere insults are blocked.
- Across 200,000+ messages, Sway flagged fewer than 0.4% as unconstructive.
- Students control what gets shared with instructors and can delete their accounts at any time.
- Student data is never used to train commercial AI models and research participation is opt-in.

[Read our privacy policy and consent document →](#)

Inclusion & Fairness

- Guide does not offer opinions—it pushes students to reason more carefully, interrogate their assumptions, and engage seriously with the strongest version of the opposing view.
- In a survey of over 3,500 students, 87% agreed Guide treated both sides with equal respect—and only 3% disagreed.
- In an empirical study, over 600 politically diverse Americans evaluated real Sway transcripts across multiple topics and perceived no directional bias—while correctly detecting bias when it was experimentally introduced.

[Learn more about bias evaluation →](#)



"Students know that Guide is AI and they find it not at all partisan, not at all biased. That was never an issue."

— Diana Mutz, Samuel A. Stouffer Professor of Political Science & Communication, UPenn ([more from instructors](#))

Improving Campus Discourse

- Students are nearly 5x more likely to moderate an extreme view than to harden a moderate one: 56% who entered a conversation at a polar extreme left holding a more moderate view.
- The effect holds on the hardest topics: 51.5% moderated even on polarizing issues such as abortion, immigration, and gender.
- The share of students holding extreme positions dropped by 23% after a single 30-minute conversation with a classmate who held an opposing viewpoint.

Based on a study of 10,000+ matched pre/post opinion pairs across 1,630 topics at 80+ institutions

[Learn more about improving speech cultures →](#)

What Makes Sway Different

- Most programs teach students *about* constructive disagreement; Sway gives every student hands-on, structured *practice*.
- Sway has been used in courses spanning over 15 disciplines—and students across the board [tell us it's valuable and fun](#).
- No facilitators, TAs, or training needed; Sway handles moderation at any scale, on any device, asynchronously or synchronously.
- Generates behavioral evidence of learning, not just self-report.
- 92% of students felt comfortable sharing honest opinions; 93% felt respected by their partner.

[Chronicle of Higher Ed Coverage →](#)



"The engagement aspect is just a million times better than discussion boards. The ability for students to have a back and forth and actually have a real conversation was fantastic." — Patrick Ryan, Professor of Philosophy, Fullerton College ([more from instructors](#))

Sway is free for individual instructors and their students. [Get started now](#) or [book a 20-minute demo](#) to learn more.