



Parlay

EFFICACY REPORT

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# FACILITATING MORE INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT IN K-12 CLASS DISCUSSIONS

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December 2018

A special thanks to...



Andrew Fenstermaker and his team at Iowa City Community School District.  
Dino Miele and Anamaria Dragoi at the District School Board of Niagara.  
The hundreds of teachers and students who participated in this project.

**Without your dedication, this report wouldn't have been possible.**

# THE GOAL

## More Inclusive Class Discussions

From September to November 2018 the Parlay team partnered with The District School Board of Niagara (Ontario, Canada) and the Iowa City Community Schools District (Iowa, USA).

During this period we worked directly with coaches, teachers, and students to implement and evaluate the impact that Parlay RoundTables have on student engagement in class discussions.

Specifically, this Efficacy Report will review the data collected from these efforts in order to test one of Parlay's central hypotheses: **Parlay makes class discussions more inclusive.**

## Why Inclusivity?

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Discussions **more than double** student achievement ([Hattie, 2015](#)). They also teach lifelong skills like **analytical reasoning** and **communication**.

### BUT

These positive results are limited to only a subset of students, namely those who are engaged and actively participating.

### THEREFORE

We must create learning environments where **all students** have the opportunity and desire to contribute to discussions - helping everyone prepare for citizenship and success in our fast-paced world.

# HOW TO DEFINE “MORE INCLUSIVE”?

1

A higher percentage of students contributed to the discussion.

2

More students felt comfortable participating in the discussion.

3

More students were satisfied with how they communicated their ideas.

4

More students felt respected by their peers during the discussion.

# METHODOLOGY

## How we tested our hypothesis.

Over the course of three months (September 2018 - November 2018), 12 teachers and over 250 students ranging from 6th grade to 11th grade participated in this activity.

The project was broken down into four, 3-week segments (see right). At the end of each segment, students were asked to fill out surveys to evaluate their experience in the preceding discussions.

In addition to this work, Parlay was also able to evaluate the participation rate of each discussion through data collected in the application.

## The Breakdown

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### Weeks 1 - 3

Teachers facilitate two 30 minute “traditional” class discussions and track student participation by hand.

### Weeks 4 - 6

Teachers facilitate two Online Parlay Roundtable discussions in class or as a homework activity.

### Weeks 7 - 9

Teachers facilitate two 30 minute Live Parlay Roundtable discussions in the classroom.

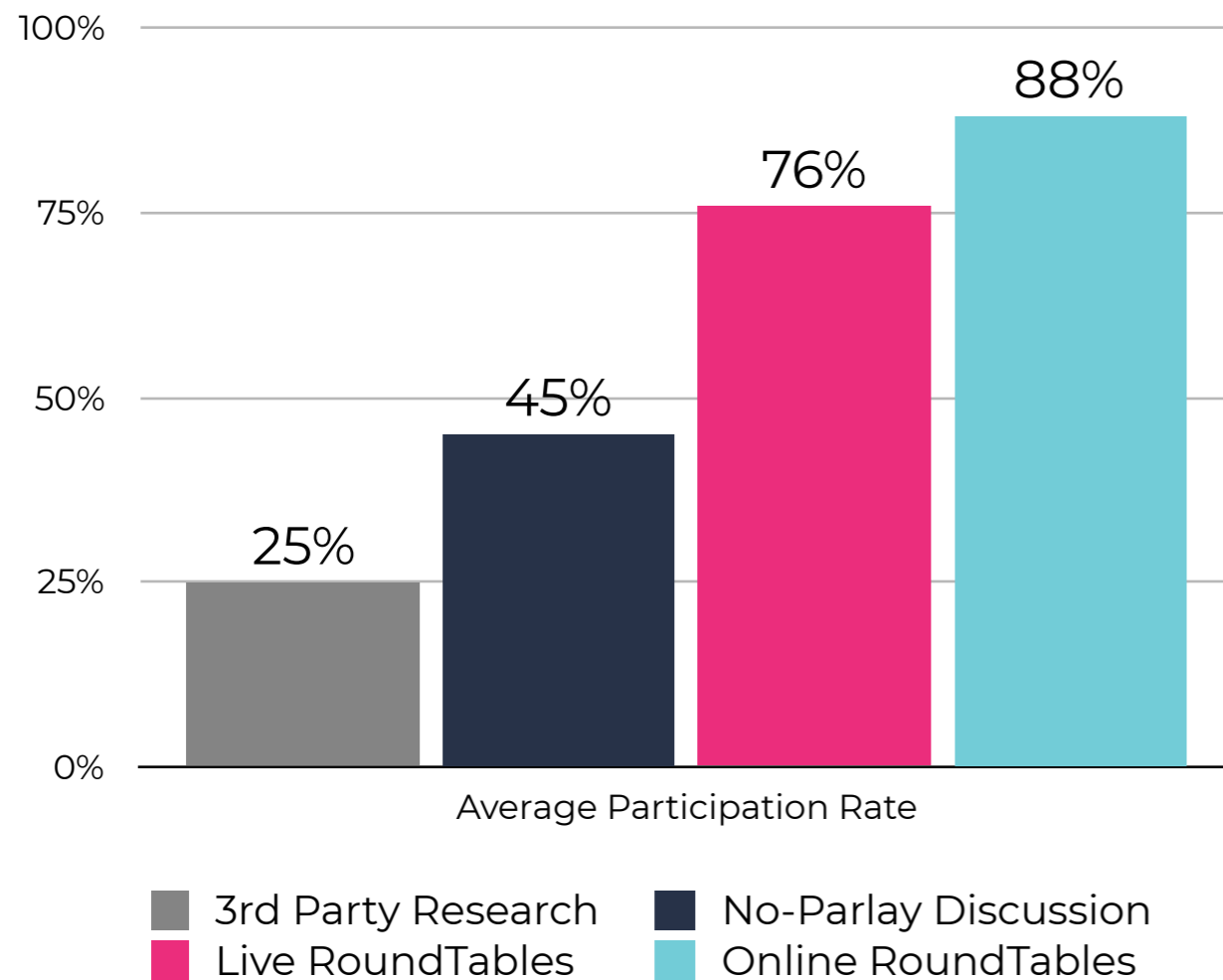
### Weeks 10-12

Teachers facilitate two discussions that combine both types of RoundTables - start with Online RoundTable and then move to Live RoundTable.

# RESULTS - Part 1

## Participation Rate

$$\text{Participation Rate} = \frac{\text{\# of students who contributed}}{\text{\# of students present}}$$



### Our Analysis

In a typical classroom discussion, third-party research indicates that 25% of students actively and willingly participate ([Weimer, 2013](#)). During our case study, teacher-collected data (using a pen-and-paper tally system) suggests that this number is higher: 45%. Parlay's Live RoundTables saw an average participation rate of 76% — 31% higher than the total number of students who willingly contributed without Parlay. Parlay's Online RoundTable saw an average participation rate of 88% — 43% higher than the total number of students who willingly contributed without Parlay.

"I teach 5/6. They have been participating excellently. I have adjusted Parlay according to the needs of my classroom and have been very happy with it."

*Jane Townsend*

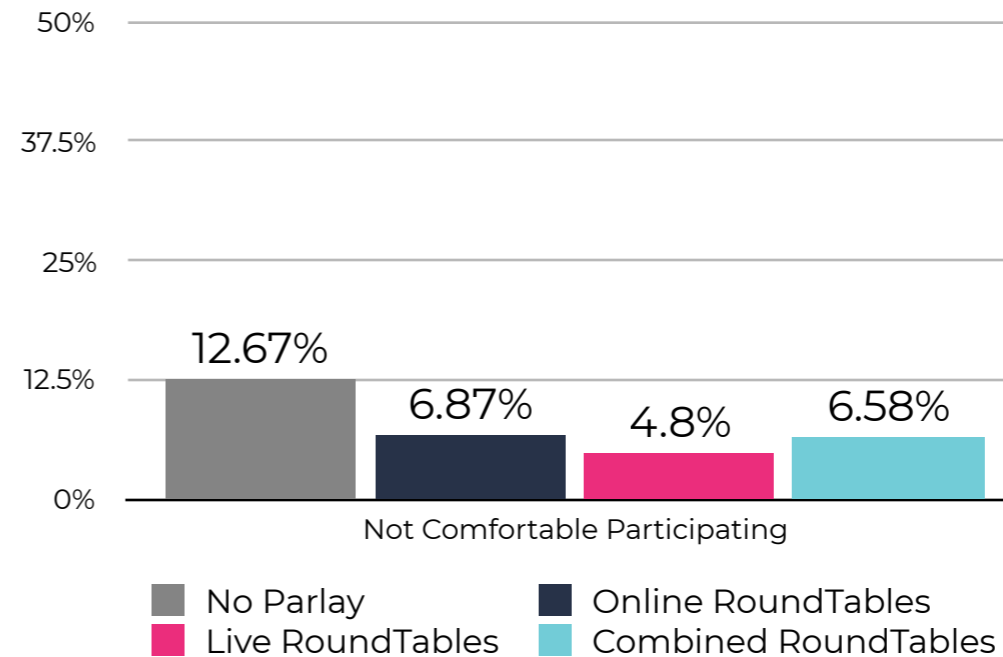
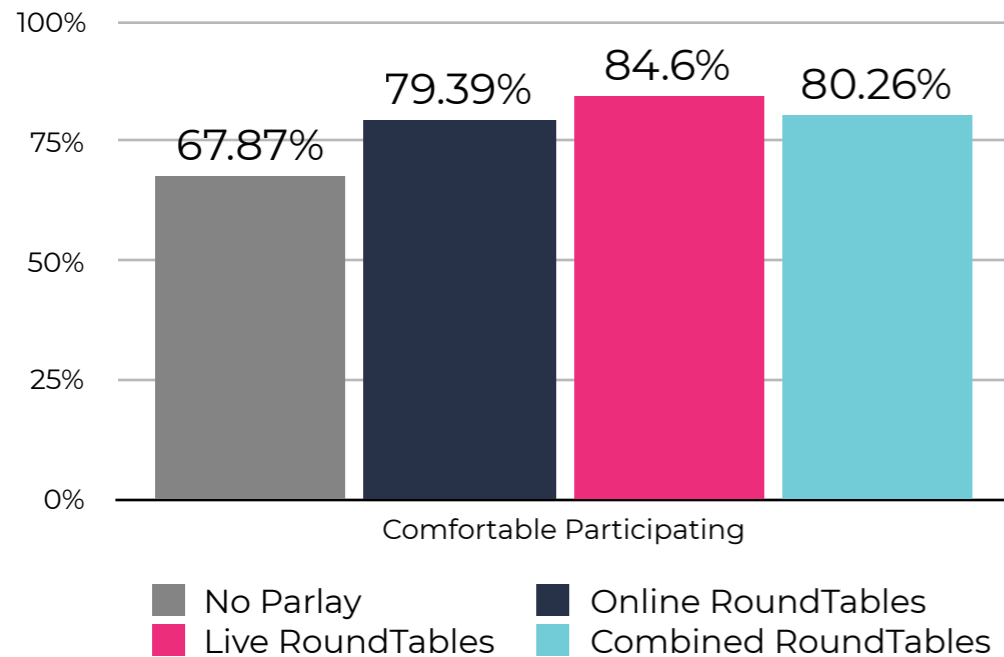
"Parlay is a big hit with my class!"

*Amanda Fong*

# RESULTS - Part 2

## Comfort In Participating

“I feel like it was easier to get my ideas out or if a point I wanted to speak on passed I could just write it in the notes, and still show my understanding, I also felt like it was easy to get a chance to speak.”  
*Grade 10 Student*



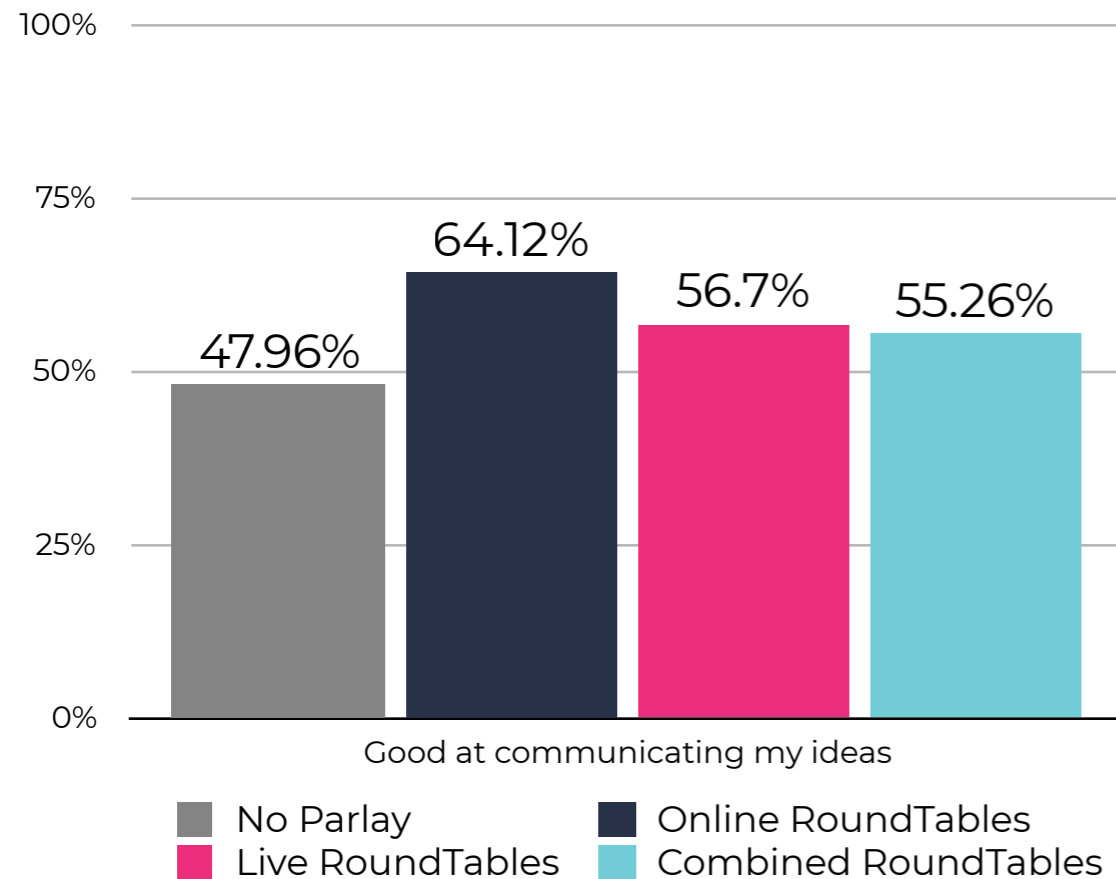
### Our Analysis

The number of students who felt comfortable participating (Agree or Strongly Agree) in the discussion increased from 67.9% in discussions that did not include Parlay to 81.4% with Parlay (average across RoundTable types). This represents an increase of 13.5% increase in those who self-identified as “comfortable participating”.

The number of students who felt uncomfortable participating (Disagree or Strongly Disagree) in the discussion decreased from 12.7% in discussions that did not include Parlay to 6.1% with Parlay (average across RoundTable types). The number of students who self-identified as “uncomfortable participating” was cut in half.

# RESULTS - Part 3

## Satisfaction With Own Communication of Ideas



### Our Analysis

The number of students who felt that they were able to effectively communicate their ideas participating in class discussions rose from 48.0% in discussions that did not include Parlay to 58.7% in discussions that did include Parlay (average across RoundTable types). It is also worth noting that the Online RoundTable (a written discussion) led to a significant increase (16%) in student satisfaction with their ability to communicate.

There was a 10.7% increase in the number of students who felt they were “good at communicating their ideas” when Parlay discussions were present.

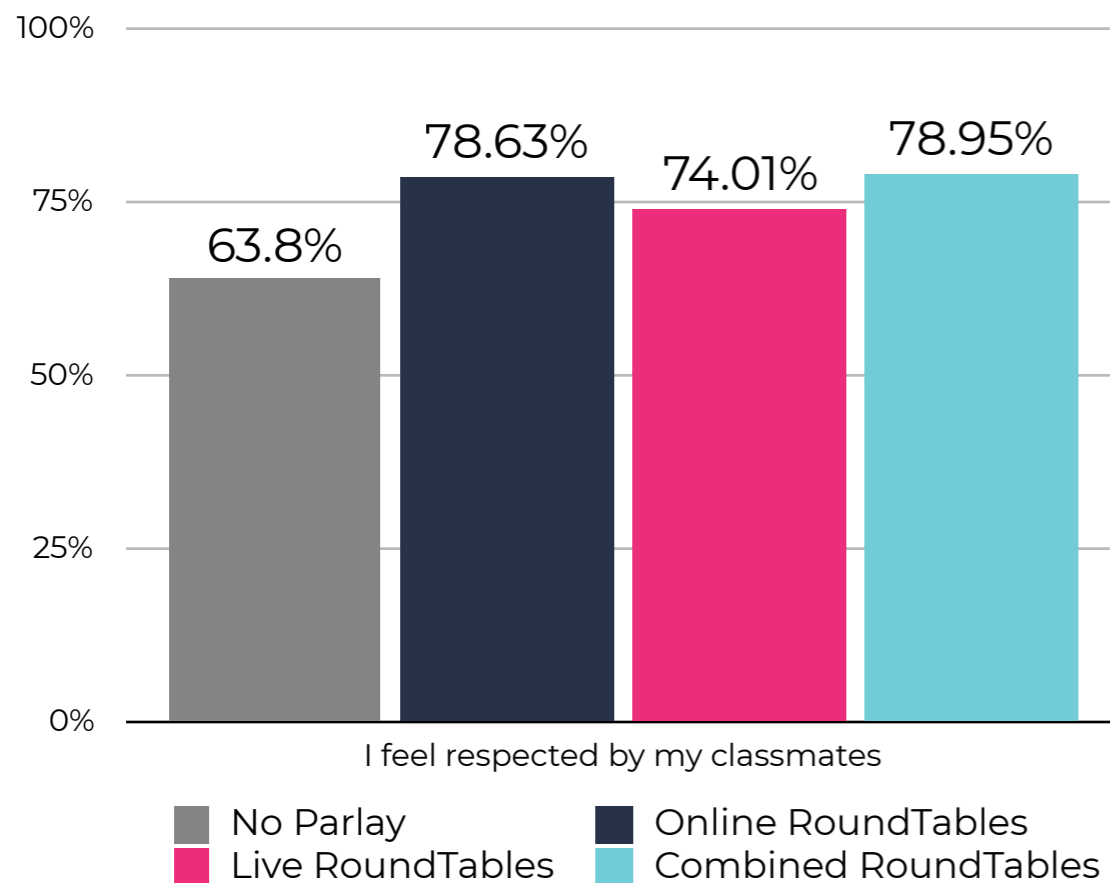
“I like talking to my peers [in the Online RoundTable]. It gives me more confidence to speak out loud.”

*Grade 9 Student*



# RESULTS - Part 4

## Feeling Respected By Classmates



### Our Analysis

The number of students who felt that they were respected by their classmates rose from 63.8% in discussions that did not include Parlay to 77.2% in discussions that did include Parlay (average across RoundTable types).

There was a 13.4% increase in the number of students who felt they were “respected by classmates” when Parlay discussions were present.

“I liked that no one could shout out, and it was more organized.”  
*Grade 6 Student*

# CONCLUSION

## A Solid Step In The Right Direction

The most dramatic changes we observed were the increases in participation rates that came from the use of Parlay RoundTables in the classroom. The benefits of Parlay in this activity were very clear and realized immediately.

The remaining three evaluations (comfort participating, confidence in own communications, and feeling respected from classmates) all saw meaningful increases. It is worth noting that these changes were all seen in a short period of time (less than 3 months), and with a small number of class discussions (8 RoundTables for each class). Our hypothesis is that over a longer time horizon we would see these figures continue to rise, both as a consequence of Parlay's intervention and the students' increased level of familiarity and comfort with the tool.

This report represents one of many research and efficacy studies that we hope to complete in the coming months and years. We see this activity as an integral part of our quest to create classroom experiences that engage students, are grounded in the best pedagogy, and fulfill our product vision for more meaningful, measurable, and inclusive class discussions.



# Parlay

**Class Discussions for a better world.**

Parlay is an instructional tool for teachers looking to inspire meaningful, measurable and inclusive discussions in their classrooms. We work with thousands of passionate educators and some of the most prestigious and innovative schools from all over the world. Parlay is headquartered in Toronto, Canada.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Visit us at [www.parlayideas.com](http://www.parlayideas.com) or;

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