

# Leading Effective Class Discussions

A workshop from the University of Pittsburgh's  
University Center for Teaching & Learning



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## Techniques for Successful Questioning

1. *Phrasing*: teacher communicates the question so that the students understand the response expectation (ie: no run-on questions).
2. *Adaptation*: teacher adapts the question being asked to fit the language and ability level of the students.
3. *Sequencing*: teacher asks the questions in a patterned order indicating a purposeful questioning strategy.
4. *Balance*: teacher asks both convergent and divergent questions and balances the time between the two types. The teacher uses questions at an appropriate level or levels to achieve the objectives of the lesson.
5. *Participation*: teacher uses questions to stimulate a wide range of student participation, encouraging responses from volunteering and non-volunteering students, redirects initially asked questions to their students.
6. *Probing*: teacher probes initial student answers, and encourages students to complete, clarify, expand or support their answers.
7. *Wait Time (Think Time)*: teacher pauses three to five seconds after asking a question to allow students time to think. The teacher also pauses after students' initial responses to questions in class.
8. *Student Questions*: teacher requires students to generate questions of their own.