Learning Objective

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

✓ Plan and implement effective strategies to ensure an inclusive and engaging discussion in any classroom setting
Outline

- Introductions
- Why use Discussion?
- Developing Meaningful Questions
- Facilitating Discussions in Class
- Challenges...and Solutions
Introductions
What is the Purpose of Discussion in Higher Education?

- Establishing subject matter relevance motivates student learning (Kember, Ho, & Hong, 2008)

- Peer discussion improves student learning (Smith et al., 2009)
Why use Discussion?

It is touted as one of the most effective and widely used teaching strategies in higher education.

Dallimore et al., 2004

Q: What are/would be the goal(s) of discussion in YOUR class? (small group discussion w/ flipcharts)

Effective discussions can:

- Increase the learner’s understanding of the subject matter
- Promote the development of effective communication, active listening, and presentation skills
- Encourage an appreciation for diverse points of view
Generating Questions

Q: What makes a good question for discussion?

(pair-share)

Good Discussion Questions

- Sharp & precise
- Low barrier to entering discussion
- Multiple answers, diff. points of view
- Defend viewpoint/answer/reasoning
- Clear language
Facilitating Discussion
What are some strategies that you’ve used or have seen us use here?

**Strategies**
- Think-pair-share
- Distribution of answers determines pairs
- Observe facilitation styles
- Layer questions to build momentum — make it interesting
- Give students Qs beforehand
- Assign moderator/recorder role to quieter students
- Remove yourself → students should talk to each other
- Set up as a class practice
- Assign students to groups → collective responsibility
- Open-ended Qs
Consider your own participation in class discussions as a student:

- When were you most likely to participate?
- When were you least likely to participate?
- What are the characteristics of an effective discussion?

(Think-pair-share)

Participation...

- Know they have something to contribute
- Use jigsaw format
- Need to be motivated
- Profs can be intimidating!
- Opportunity to learn something
- Dominant speakers can discourage others
- Group “like to like” from participating
Challenges

- What are some of the challenges you envision or have experienced with leading discussions?

- What are some potential solutions?

(small group discussion w/ flipcharts)
Summary

- General purpose of discussion
- Generating questions
- Facilitating discussion
- Anticipated challenges and potential solutions
References


