

# Discussion Self-Assessment

Leading discussions requires time and careful planning. Lack of sufficient preparation or simply “winging it” can result in confusion, low participation, student disengagement, and a missed opportunity for learning. Go through the checklist below to see what you might be missing.

## Frame expectations for student discussions

	Yes	No
I explain the importance of discussion and its role in student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I explain how participation will count towards my students' final grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I explain how participation will be determined/calculated/tracked in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I provide examples of high quality versus low quality contributions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I establish high expectations for student preparation for discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I explain how my students will be called on (voluntary, warm calls, cold calls).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I lay out the ground rules for respectful and productive conversations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I provide an opportunity for my students to introduce themselves and meet others in the classroom (an icebreaker) so that they feel comfortable participating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I clearly communicate my expectations for discussions both verbally and in writing so that my students are clear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Prepare for Class

	Yes	No
I require my students to prepare for discussions before class by assigning prework or by providing discussion questions so that they can focus on their readings and be ready to participate in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I plan for discussions, I start with learning objectives and what I want my students to accomplish.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I plan for what will be covered in discussion segments, the timing of each segment and the logical sequence of discussion segments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I devise questions ahead of time to open the discussion, to probe and get my students to think more deeply about content, and to close and transition to other discussion segments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a plan in case conversations go off track.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a plan on how to handle students who are shy versus those who dominate discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a plan on how to handle difficult or controversial conversations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a backup plan in case students come to class unprepared or completely don't understand the material.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Pre-discussion

	Yes	No
I arrive early to class to get to know and build rapport with students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I arrange the classroom (chairs/desks) to encourage student participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I use name placards so that I can learn my students' names and build classroom community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I begin discussions by presenting key learning objectives, making explicit the scope and direction of the discussion, providing context, and making linkages to important concepts, theories, or frameworks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I write a brief framework or agenda up on the board.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Discussion Self-Assessment Form

## Execution

	Yes	No
I open discussions with a hook to spark curiosity and intrigue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I begin with a lead question to anchor each discussion segment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I acknowledge students' contributions with eye contact and head nodding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I move around the classroom and make use of the physical space.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I record key comments on the board and summarize key issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I stimulate student-to-student discussions and interactions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I listen carefully to student responses, solicit reactions from other students and use follow up questions to probe for greater depth or clarity, ask for evidence and explore implications of what students say.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If incorrect reasoning arises, I do not abandon the student or correct them. Instead I guide the student or their classmates to the correct answer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During discussion I provide enough time for students to answer questions (5 seconds) before rephrasing my question.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I keep track of participation and actively solicit participation from those who have not spoken much.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before moving to different discussion segments, I provide a mini-synthesis or summary and frame the upcoming discussion segment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## How to end

	Yes	No
At the end of class I summarize key takeaways while making links to learning objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I evaluate discussion by collecting students' feedback such as asking students to record the muddiest point.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>