

Supporting Academically Productive Discussions

The Teacher's role in guiding academically productive discussions is to ask clarifying questions to ensure the following:

Goal	Suggested Strategy	Examples
Intelligibility	Revoicing	<p>"So let me see if I've got your thinking right. You're saying..."</p> <p>Always check back with student to follow up and make sure you've understood them.</p>
Coherence or Rigor	Asking students to restate someone else's reasoning	<p>"Can you repeat what he just said in your own words?"</p> <p>After a student has restated someone's reasoning, have him or her ask "Is that what you meant?" to make sure they understood.</p> <p>If the student didn't hear the original speaker, have him or her ask: "Can you say that again?", or "Can you please speak louder?"</p>
	Challenging or providing a different example	<p>"Does it always work that way?"</p> <p>"What about....?"</p>
Equitable Participation	Asking students to apply their own reasoning to someone else's reasoning	<p>"Do you agree or disagree?"</p> <p>"Why or why not?"</p>
	Prompt students for further participation	<p>"Would someone else like to add on?"</p> <p>"What thinking can someone else share with us?"</p>
	Using Wait Time	<p>"Take your time, we'll wait."</p> <p>"Do you want more time, or do you need some help?"</p> <p>Encourage the rest of the class to have their hands down and to be formulating their own thoughts while they wait. This makes them accountable, AND it gives the student you've called on time to truly concentrate and think about what he or she wants to say.</p>
Explanation of Ideas and Opinions	Asking students to explicate their reasoning	<p>"Why do you think that?"</p> <p>"How did you arrive at that answer?"</p> <p>"Say more about that."</p>