

Leading Substantial Discussions*

This tool can be useful for documenting current practices and selecting target areas for improvement. Select one or more focus areas to record events and examples.

Focus Area	Examples
Questioning	
Provokes thinking and engagement	
Uses open-ended questions	
Uses higher level questions that require thinking or reasoning	
Uses follow-up questions (“Can you tell me more?”)	
Monitors number/types of questions asked of various groups (male/female; race; ELL, ability)	
Encourages students to ask their own questions	
Finds out how many students agree or disagree with a point	
Asks students to defend their opinions	
When a student doesn’t answer, asks: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a simpler question• yes/no type• select from choice• repeats question• waits longer• provides a cue to keep all participating	

* Adapted from http://www.caii.net/publications/Tool_3_class_observation.pdf (retrieved 3/23/04)

Wait Time	
Waits 3-5 seconds before calling on a student	
Waits 10-20 seconds to provide time to respond to higher order questions	
Increases wait time to encourage more thoughtful responses	
Increases wait time to encourage participation by more students	
Encouragement	
Uses positive body language with all students	
Offers non-judgmental remarks	
Uses same responses for various groups (male/female; race; ELL; ability)	
Makes comments that create a safe environment for sharing ideas	
Paraphrasing and Summarizing	
Reflects back and restates what the student says	
Shows students the teacher is really listening	
Brings out clarity	
Resolves conflicts or issues	
Pulls information and facts together	
Models how to organize and synthesize information	