



A Typology of Questions

By The Bok Center Staff

Facilitating student discussions can be one of the most difficult aspects of teaching. Listed below are some different types of questioning one might use to encourage student participation in class.

Open Ended Questions

What's Going On? What do you make of this situation? Casting question nets out to see what comes in. Listening for entry and emphasis points.

Asking for Information

Where? When? Who? What? Facts and opinions.

Diagnostic Questions

How do you interpret and explain "A" and "B's" impact on the situation?
How do you weave these points into some kind of understanding of what else is going on, possibly behind the scenes?

Challenge Questions

Why do you say that? How would you explain? Where is the evidence for what you say? How can you say a thing like that? Is that all? That's just the opposite of what Student X said. Can you persuade him/her?

Extension Questions

Exploring the issues. What else? Can you take us farther down that path or find new tributaries? Keep going? Therefore?

Combination Questions

How would you relate your points to those mentioned by Student A or to something else you said?
How would you understand X in light of Y?

Priority Questions

Which issues do you consider most important? Where do you start? How would you rank these?

Action Questions

What would you do in Person X's shoes? How?

Prediction Questions

What do you think would happen if we followed Student Z's action plan? Give us a forecast of your expectations. How will he/she react to your thinking?

Generalizing and Summarizing Questions

What inferences can we make from this discussion and case? What generalizations would you make? How would you summarize the three most critical issues that we have discussed? Can you summarize the high points of the discussion thus far?