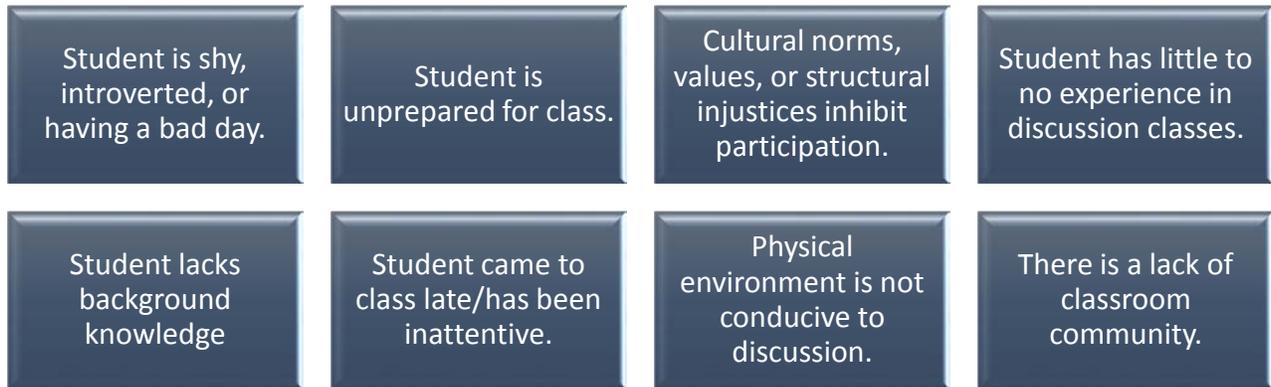


# How to Resuscitate Class Discussions

## Start By Assessing the Silence <sup>i</sup>

Why is X student not participating in our discussion?

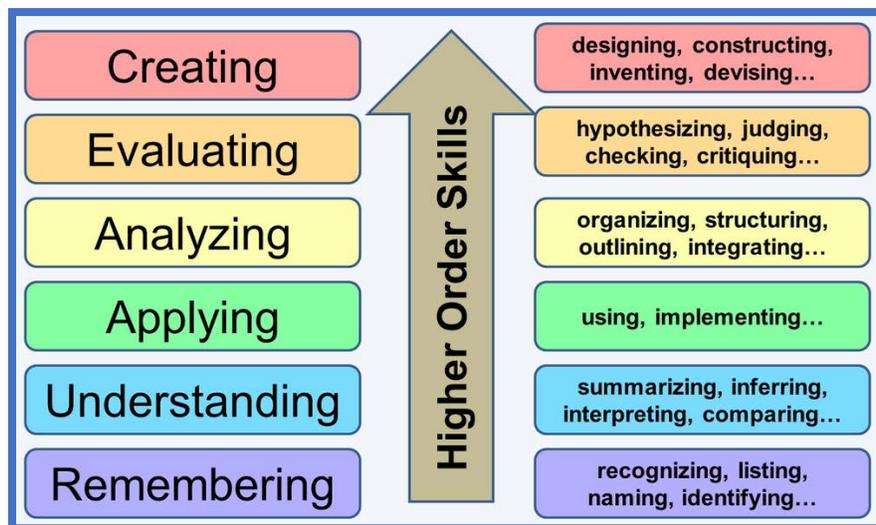


## Self-Evaluation <sup>ii</sup>

Did I, as an instructor, lay the groundwork for a successful discussion? Did I:

1. Articulate the goal (SLO) of the discussion?
2. Define my expectations so students know *how* to contribute?
3. Set the rules of engagement and build an inclusive classroom community?
4. Write out my questions in advance and make sure they are clear and concise?

## Asking the Right Questions, in the Right Order... <sup>iii</sup>



Treat discussion questions the same way you treat student learning outcomes: think first about what you want your students to DO in their answer (see Bloom's Taxonomy above) and select a question type, and sequence of questions, accordingly.

## QUESTION STYLES

- **Summary:** “What was the main argument of the journal article we read for homework?”
- **Descriptive:** “How do you calculate earthquake magnitude?”
- **Cause-and-Effect:** “How did the American Civil War impact the global economy?”
- **Exploratory:** “How might controlling for X change the outcome of this experiment?”
- **Relational:** “Do students in small classes perform better on assignments than students in large classes?”
- **Probing:** “Can you tell me more about that?” “What assumptions are you making here?”

## ACTIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES <sup>iv</sup>

### 1. Small-groups

- a. **“Listening Teams”** – Students divide into groups of 4, each person has a role. “Example Giver” gives examples/applications of key concepts. “Questioner” comes up with 2 clarifying questions about the material. “Devil’s Advocate” identifies areas of disagreement with the content and explains why. “Team Player” identifies areas of agreement with content and explains why. Students listen to lecture, then have 5-10 minutes in groups to prepare responses based on their roles.
- b. **“Think-Pair-Share”** – Students think to themselves on a topic provided by the teacher; they pair up with another student (or students if a larger class) to discuss it; they then share their thoughts with the class.
- c. **“Co-op”** – Students work in groups to produce a particular group product to share with the whole class; each student makes a particular contribution to the group.
- d. **“Jigsaw”** – Students break into groups, each group works on a particular topic or aspect of a larger topic. Then, groups are rearranged so that each new group contains one “expert” on each topic. Each member presents his/her “expert topic” to the group.

### 2. Individual activities

- a. **“Minute papers”** - Instructor poses a thought question, students write a brief response, selected students share responses.
- b. **“Test questions”** - Students individually come up with test questions. Instructor can compile questions into a practice quiz or point out examples of good questions.
- c. **“Note-comparisons”** - Instructor pauses lecture periodically for students to share notes with their neighbors and fill in anything they missed.
- d. **“Response Cards”** – Every 10-15 minutes, instructor pauses lecture to ask a content question. Students respond by raising cards that have the answer choices written on them. A good way to check for understanding before moving to a new concept.

### 3. Games (great for review sessions!)

- a. **“Game-Show”** - Substitute course material for the trivia in game show formats. You can write the questions or the students can. Real prizes like candy are an incentive and an energy provider. Examples include: Jeopardy, Catch Phrase/Taboo, Family Feud, etc.
- b. **“Team Quiz”** - Students divide into a few groups. Group A creates a quiz, then other groups have to answer quiz questions, if one group gets a wrong answer, other groups have a chance to respond. Then Group B comes up with quiz and so on.

**4. Debate**

- a. Teams prepare opening statements, give rebuttal, and summaries. This can be very dramatic and you'll find the students really take on the roles.
- b. **"Fishbowl"**– Small group of students in the middle, rest of students circle around the outside. Group in the middle presents one side of an issue, those around the circle respond with questions from the opposite perspective.

**5. Technology**

- a. **"Noteboard"** - On the EEE website, you can create a website for your discussion. This can contain a Noteboard where questions can be posted. Having them post questions before class forces them to do the reading and/or the homework. (Note: this function also exists in Canvas.)
- b. You can email them with questions; tell them to write down their "answer" and bring it to class.
- c. Media, video, music, pop culture, YouTube, etc.

**6. Student presentations**

- a. All the students can present in one class session or they can rotate weeks. Presentations can be individual or in groups.
- b. Helps to provide students with a sample lesson outline, give them specific, focused topics, and let them know if and how they will be evaluated.
- c. **"Role-Play"**– Have students present group or pair role-plays. Then, class can critique role play, ask questions, or discuss questions raised in the role-play.

**ACTIVE LEARNING ONLINE**

Socrative (<https://socrative.com/>)

Padlet (<https://padlet.com/>)

Poll Everywhere ([www.polleverywhere.com/](http://www.polleverywhere.com/))

Tricider (<https://www.tricider.com/>)

NearPod (<https://nearpod.com/>)

Kahoot (<https://getkahoot.com/>)

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<sup>i</sup>This portion of the worksheet was adapted from the Carnegie Mellon Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence & Teaching Innovation website. (<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/solveproblem/strat-dontparticipate/index.html>)

<sup>ii</sup>ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> Image from <http://bit.ly/2q8lbWd>.

<sup>iv</sup>This portion of the worksheet was developed by Danny Man (UCI Center for Engaged Instruction), and adapted partially from Lindsay Lupo's 2003 "Leading Discussions" workshop. Some techniques adapted from Halvorsen, T (2011) Active Learning Techniques. BYU Center for Teaching and Learning: <http://ctl.byu.edu>