How to Engage and Assess Learning Through Discussion in Any Modality

Jef Fisher  
*Western Michigan University, jefrey.1.fisher@wmich.edu*

Megan Hess  
*Western Michigan University, megan.hess@wmich.edu*

Alyssa Moon  
*Western Michigan University, alyssa.moon@wmich.edu*

Matt Strock  
*Western Michigan University, matthew.strock@wmich.edu*

Wendy Swalla  
*Western Michigan University, wendy.r.swalla@wmich.edu*

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How to Engage and Assess Learning Through Discussion in Any Modality

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WMUx Instructional Design Team

Presenters:
Jef Fisher - jeffrey.1.fisher@wmich.edu
Megan Hess - megan.hess@wmich.edu
Alyssa Moon – alyssa.moon@wmich.edu
Matt Strock - matthew.strock@wmich.edu
Wendy Swalla - wendy.r.swalla@wmich.edu
If you have not yet answered the initial reflection questions, please do so by following the link in the chat.
Objectives

- Identify the benefits of using discussion
- Explore examples of discussion strategies
- Examine how to assess student discussions
TRIZ – Let's head to Miro!

Answer the following questions:
• How would you develop the worst possible discussion? What would that look like and how would students respond?

*discussion board posts*
Student: I love bread
Me: Joe, I agree with you! I love bread too. I liked the part when you said you loved bread. Great point!
TRIZ - Debrief

Answer the following question:
• In a perfect world, what would our discussions look like? What would we expect from students?
The “why” of discussion

- Encourage deeper thinking
- Peer to peer interaction/social presence
- Increase engagement
- Retrieval practice
- Assess prior knowledge
Overview of the Process

How to craft better discussions:
• Identify purpose
• Determine outcomes
• Consider lenses/roles
• Develop engaging prompts
• Determine group makeup
• Assess
Our Example

Crafting an introduction discussion in which students actually engage with one another.
Step 1: Identify Purpose
Step 1: Identify Purpose

• What do you want to achieve through this discussion?
• What is the purpose?
  • Examples: solve a problem collaboratively, defend an opinion on a topic, summarize an assigned reading
• What is the interaction?
  • Student to Student
  • Student to Instructor
  • Student to Self
Step 2: Determine Outcomes

THE FISHEYE SYNDROME

IS EVERY STUDENT REALLY PARTICIPATING?

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

CULT OF PEDAGOGY
Step 2: Determine outcomes

• What are you trying to assess?
• How have you taught that?
• Do you have a rubric that explicitly tells students what that looks like?
Step 3: Consider lenses/strategies
Step 3: Consider lenses/strategies

- Six hats
- Assigned roles
- Socratic/fishbowl
- Student led
- Think-Pair-Share
- Jigsaw
- Academic controversy
- Question Formulation Technique (QFT)
- Questioning Pyramid
- Etc.
Step 4: Develop engaging prompts
Step 4: Develop engaging prompts

- Beware questions with easy, concrete answers
- Align prompts to outcomes
- Consider the level of knowledge required (e.g., comprehension vs. application)
- Ask them to solve a problem, complete a task, argue a point, etc.
Step 5: Determine group makeup
Step 5: Determine group makeup

- Group size
- Group formation (self-chosen vs. assigned)
- Doesn’t have to be static (think-pair-share; I do, we do, you do)
Step 6: Create an assessment
Step 6: Create an assessment

- What will students produce?
- Use artifacts to assess learning

Individual assessments

- Exit tickets (e.g., Google Forms survey)
- Written reflectons graded via rubric
Step 6: Create an assessment

Group assessments

• Collaborative notes (Google Docs)
• Peer reviews
• Oral summary
• Audio/video presentation
For more information

- Discussion Resources Virtual Handout
- Discussion Planning Document

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- Alyssa Moon: alyssa.moon@wmich.edu
- Wendy Swalla: wendy.r.swalla@wmich.edu
- Matt Strock: matthew.strock@wmich.edu
- Megan Hess: megan.hess@wmich.edu
- Jef Fisher: jeffrey.1.fisher@wmich.edu