

Strategy: Preparing Students for Class Participation

Providing opportunities for students to participate in class can ensure that students come to class prepared to participate, specifically through reading assigned material before coming to class.

Origin

Frederick, P. (1981). "The dreaded discussion—Ten ways to start," *Improving College and University Teaching*, 29 (2), 109-114.

Gose, M. (2008). When Socratic dialogue is flagging: Questions and strategies for engaging students. *College Teaching*, 57 (1), 45-49.

Application

Asking guided reading/discussion questions

- Find and read passages where you had trouble.
- Find and read passages that help sort out issues with the readings.
- Read a passage aloud and answer a question about it.
- Clarify a key term in the reading.
- Discuss the basic organization or logic of the text in a step-by-step manner.
- Summarize key points or important ideas.
- Explain two passages that seem to contradict one another.
- Find a key sentence or paragraph that suggests the meaning of the whole work.
- Ask a question about the reading that stands out.
- After discussion, ask the best remaining question about the text/topic.

Ten ways to start a discussion

1. Goals and values testing:
In pairs or groups, have students discuss: Why are we reading this? Why now?
You could also have students do tasks related to reading: Identify three themes common to both texts; Suggest the most obvious differences between the texts; Examine what you liked best and why; Make a list of as many comparisons and/or contrasts as you can in ten minutes.
2. Concrete images:
In pairs or groups, have students provide one concrete image/scene/event/moment from the text that stands out to them. Have students record these images and then ask: What themes emerge? What connects these images? What is missing?
3. Generating questions:
As individuals or in pairs or groups, have students formulate questions about the text ahead of time, as a "ticket" to enter class or to guide their group discussion.
4. Finding illustrative quotations:
In pairs or groups, have students read aloud from the text to one another. Prompt students to: Find a quotation they especially liked/disliked; Find a quotation that illustrates the major thesis of the text; Select a quotation that is a symbol of the text.

