**November 2019**

*Please share with your faculty:*

**Tips for Generating and Posing Strategic Questions in the Classroom**

Knowing what kinds of questions to ask students, and how to effectively ask them is essential for generating meaningful student responses and lively classroom discussion. Effective questioning of students’ knowledge can provide useful formative assessment feedback for both instructors and students about students’ learning in the classroom. Below are some tips for how to design effective questions that will produce informative responses:

* **Plan questions ahead of time, but also be flexible in questioning of students:** It is important to not only generate questions with intended content, but also pose them in ways that will elicit meaningful responses. Advanced planning of discussion questions can help ensure that purposeful questions are asked, and that they are phrased in succinct, organized, and meaningful ways (Illinois CITL Teaching & Learning, n.d). That being said, questioning of students should also be flexible if additional follow-up questions, or better phrased questions are thought of on the spot (Illinois CITL Teaching & Learning, n.d). Part of effective planning also involves anticipating possible responses ahead of time, and how to respond to, or handle those responses. For example, how will correct responses be reinforced, or how will incorrect responses be addressed? Thinking about possible student responses in advance, can allow for planning of follow-up questions, question probes, and references to previously learned or supplementary material.
* **Align questions with intended learning goals:** When planning discussion questions, it is important that the question aligns with the intended learning goal (Illinois CITL Teaching & Learning, n.d). For example, if the intended goal is for students to engage in higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating, or creating information, then it is important that the questions posed should require students to respond in ways that will utilize these skills. Merely asking students to recall or summarize material that was presented would not be sufficient for demonstrating these higher order thinking skills.
* **Decide whether closed-ended or open-ended responses are desired:** Based on the intended student learning goals, it should be decided if closed-ended or open-ended questions are most appropriate. For closed-ended questions there are a limited number of correct responses, and for open-ended questions there are many possible answers (Illinois CITL Teaching & Learning, n.d). Open-ended questions usually result in more meaningful classroom discourse. Closed-ended questions can serve as an effective check on whether students are effectively comprehending information.
* **If unintended responses are given, or if no one responds at all-don’t panic:** Even with advanced planning of questions, students may respond in unanticipated ways, or they may not respond at all. When this happens, don’t get flustered, and instead view this as a formative feedback opportunity. More specifically, think about what may have led a student to his or her response or question, or why might no one have responded to your question. Although this might indicate students are having trouble attaining the intended learning goal, it might also mean that the question needs to be revised, or rephrased. In these instances, it might be necessary revisit previously learned concepts, refer to supplementary material, ask follow-up questions and probe students’ thinking to better understand why they responded in the way that they did, or perhaps did not respond at all. These instances can provide meaningful opportunities to revise or enhance teaching approaches and improve student learning and engagement.

**Check Out!:** Illinois CITL Teaching & Learning, n.d. Questioning strategies. Retrieved October 17, 2019 from <https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/resources/teaching-strategies/questioning-strategies>

**Please share examples of effective questioning strategies you use:** If you have examples that you would like to share of effective questioning strategies you use, please email them to me, and I will feature those examples on YU’s Learning Assessment Website.

**Please contact me if you need any assistance with your Fall 2019 assessment activities.**