

Faculty Mentoring Faculty
Discussion Questions for Mentors and Mentees:
Engaging Students with Readings & Discussion

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Questions for a Mentee to Consider:

1. Have you been successful with encouraging your students to complete their readings for class? If so, what techniques have you found to be successful?
2. Do you review readings in class? What methods have you tried for doing so?
3. Have you incorporated various media (podcasts, Youtube videos, etc.) into your classes, to make the readings come alive?
4. Have you thought about using more of a discussion approach, rather than a lecture approach in your classes? What do you want to come out of the discussion?
5. How do you emphasize the significance and importance of assigned readings? How do you connect them to the course and to everyday life?

Questions for a Mentor to Consider:

1. Have you talked to your mentee about how to hold students accountable for their readings? (Some ideas are listed below.)
 - a. **Homework on readings** – Assign notes or an abstract or summary of readings; an outline or concept map; one or more questions on the readings on cards; end of chapter questions; solutions to problems; outside material that illustrates important point of the readings, etc.
 - b. **Quizzes on the readings** – Give frequent and regular quizzes; accountability quizzes that focus on main topics; have students answer conceptual questions.
 - c. **In-class problem-solving or written exercises on the readings** – Have students write a one-minute paper; a reading response mini-essay; a summary, or an audience-directed paraphrase; a summary drawing, a poster; do a “mind dump.”
 - d. **Oral performance on the readings** – daily recitation or discussion sessions or short impromptu presentations on the readings.
2. Have you talked to your mentee about how to review readings with students? (Some ideas are listed below.)
 - a. Have students write out the main points made in the readings and then put them together into **summaries**.
 - b. Have students draw a **concept or mind map** of their readings.
 - c. Have students do **reflective writing** -which relies on freewriting- about their readings.
 - d. Help students apply readings to their current situations or to real life.

3. Have you talked with your mentee about methods for **Classroom Discussion**?

(Some ideas are listed below.)

- a. **Eliciting participation** – put seats in a circle; start with a common experience or a classroom experience, or video or demonstration; let students jot down their answers; extend wait time; break class into small groups to develop responses; use social or subject-oriented icebreakers; use index cards to fill out about themselves; call students by name; causally chat before class.
- b. **Setting ground rules** – set rules from the start, such as everyone participates; announce what the key role of the discussions will be in the course; reasons for the discussion; tell students how you will be calling on them (i.e., alphabetically? cold calling? randomly?) Be sure to tell them ALL questions are welcome.
- c. **Facilitating the discussion** – Start off the discussion and add to it as necessary; warm up class to topic for the day; begin with a brief review of the previous class period info; draw highlights out of the students; draw students attention to the discussion for the day with a road map (outline on board); start discussion with questions on the readings to refresh them; ask them about their emotional reactions to the readings; use a writing prompt for 3-5 minutes on a statement students can reflect on about readings or other. To keep attention, have students take notes on a discussion and later summarize these notes. Instructors should try to stay out of class discussion, as much as possible. One idea to consider: Have students lead class discussions.
- d. Grading the discussion- Will you grade class participation in discussions? Will you use discussion topics as the basis for exam questions?

GENERAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

Use Icebreakers

- Use “pick up the pace” activities to hold student attention
- Give options for nonlinear learning
- Incorporate games or game characteristics to infuse energy into activities
- Include learning activities that involve physical movement
- Incorporate more visual representations/handheld items to intro concepts
- Use learning stations
- Experiential Learning Activities
- Problem-Based Learning Activities