



Inspiring Dynamic Discussion in the Classroom

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Project Focus

- Discussion can help elicit higher-level thinking and talent-spotting
- Project Focus uses professional learning (PL) to support teachers' facilitation of discussion
- By measuring high-quality discussion we can identify its key features and track success of Professional Learning



Outline




What is high-quality discussion?

How can we measure it?

How can we support it?

What is high-quality discussion?



Using sticky notes answer the following prompt
(1 sticky = 1 behavior):

What behaviors might you see
from students in a high-quality
discussion?

Circle the behaviors that are most different between students needing more challenge and those who do not.

What behaviors might signal that a student needs more challenge?





Sort your stickies into like-groups

What themes do you see
across the behaviors?

Reflection

- How many groups did you sort your stickies into?
- What is the theme of each group?
- What behaviors seem important for discussion?

Defining High-Quality Discourse

Collaboration

Contributes to an inclusive environment in which they work together with others to develop shared understanding.

Critical Thinking

Uses reasoning and logic to analyze and construct consistent and coherent judgements, arguments, and understandings.

Divergent Thinking

Generates a broad range of ideas, makes links between different ideas, and elaborates on their thinking.

Collaboration

Actively contribute to discussion

Pose questions to each other

Adhere to discussion norms

Critical Thinking

Articulate reasoning

Question own assumptions

Differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information

Divergent Thinking

Provide different types of responses

Generate unusual ideas

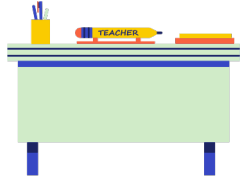
Propose multiple outcomes

How can we measure high-quality discussion?



Student Ratings

Teachers rate the likelihood that students engage in high-quality discussion behaviors



Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teachers rate their confidence in facilitating high-quality discussion



Text Features

Key words and patterns in classroom transcripts



Observations

Instructional quality is rated while reviewing video recordings of classroom discussion

	Collaboration	Critical	Divergent
Student Scale	Actively contributes to discussions	Articulates their reasoning	Provides different types of responses
Teacher Scale	Make sure students speak at least as much as the teacher	Press students to give reasons to support their conclusions	Ask questions that invite many responses
Text Features	Turns of talk, proportion of words per speaker	Keywords e.g., “so” or “because”	Differentiating between authentic and inauthentic questions

How can we support high-quality discussion?



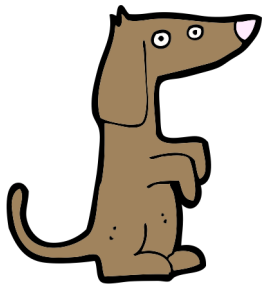
CULTURAL



SOCIAL

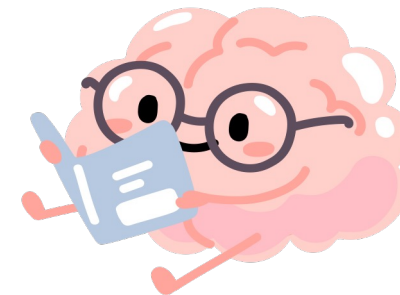


PSYCHOLOGICAL



Pavlov's Dog

COGNITIVE





TALK MOVES

Conversational moves to orchestrate
equitable and productive discussion

(Godfrey & O'Connor, 1995; O'Connor, 1996; O'Connor, 2001; O'Connor & Michaels, 1993, 1996)

Revoicing

Paraphrase a contribution in a clearer way (Chapin et al., 2009)

Marking

Orient on a student's utterance (McKeown and Beck, 2004)

Repeating

Paraphrase another's contribution (Chapin et al., 2009)

Facilitating Collaboration

Fostering an inclusive atmosphere in which all members collaborate towards shared understanding.

Facilitating Deeper Thinking

Facilitating discourse that engages students in critical and divergent thinking.



With a partner, discuss the following:

What can you do to support collaboration during a class discussion?

Complete the sentence:

One barrier to collaboration in a class discussion is _____.



Balance Talk Time

Students speak as much as the teacher

Productive Disagreement

Help students navigate disagreements

Elicitation

Draw out students' contributions

Encouragement

Students are safe to speak their minds without fear of ridicule (Skidmore 2006)

Wait Time

Allow 3-5 seconds for students to think before discussing

Compliments

Recognize students efforts (Stewart-Mitchell, n.d.)

Revoicing

Paraphrase a contribution in a clearer way (Chapin et al., 2009)

Uptake

Incorporate others' ideas or comments into a response (Nystrand et al. 1997)

Marking

Orient on a student's utterance (McKeown and Beck, 2004)

Sharing Knowledge

Invite students to share what they know about a topic

Repeating

Paraphrase another's contribution (Chapin et al., 2009)

Adding On

Prompt students for further participation (Chapin et al., 2009)

Revoicing

Paraphrase a contribution in a clearer way (Chapin et al., 2009)

“Who can put that in their own words?”

Marking

Orient on a student’s utterance (McKeown and Beck, 2004)

“_____ just said something really interesting.”

Repeating

Paraphrase another’s contribution (Chapin et al., 2009)

“Can you repeat what they just said in your own words?”

QSSSA



Ask a Question



Use a Signal



Give a Stem



Share Out



Assess Learning

pencils down, stand up, point to nose

giving vocabulary, scaffolding language

elbow partners or turn & talk

random pickers like popsicle sticks

**Facilitating
Collaboration**

Fostering an inclusive atmosphere in which all members collaborate towards shared understanding.

**Facilitating
Higher-Level Thinking**

Facilitating discourse that engages students in critical and divergent thinking.

Facilitating Deeper Thinking

Critical Thinking

Uses reasoning and logic to analyze and construct consistent and coherent judgements, arguments, and understandings.

Divergent Thinking

Generates a broad range of ideas, makes links between different ideas, and elaborates on their thinking.



With a partner, discuss the following:

What can you do to support deep thinking during a class discussion?

Complete the sentence:

One barrier to deep thinking in a class discussion is _____.



Authentic Questioning

Open-ended questions that do not have a prespecified answer (Nystrand et al., 2003)

Predicting

Anticipating what will happen next

Elaboration

Press students to detail a new idea

Connecting

Finding commonalities between responses (Teo, 2016) or ideas

Instructional Groups

Leverage advantages of whole, small, and partner groups (e.g., Howe and Abedin, 2013)

Reference Evidence

Providing reasons to support conclusions

Critique

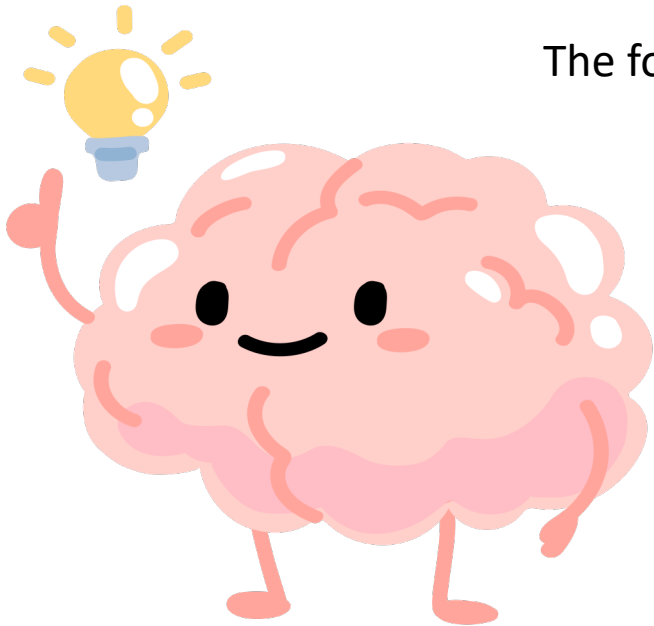
Evaluate others' contributions (Mercer and Littleton 2007)

Reasoning

Apply own reasoning to another's contribution (Chapin et al., 2009)

Let's do some deep thinking

The following is an activity you can implement with your students







 **Question**

 **Formulation**

 **Technique**



Generate as many questions as you can

1. Do not answer, judge, or discuss
2. Write down every question as stated
3. Change any statements into questions

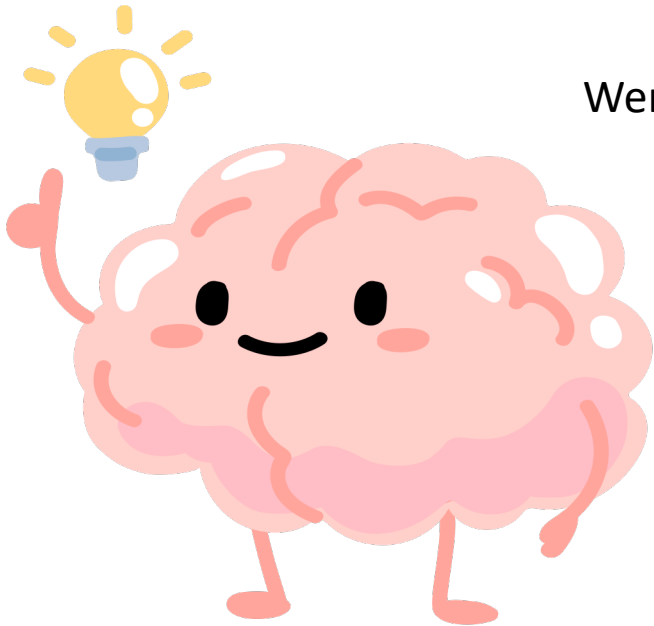
What are the pros and cons of open-ended questions?
Closed-ended?

Which 3 questions are most important? Why?

What's your action plan?
Can you connect information to action?

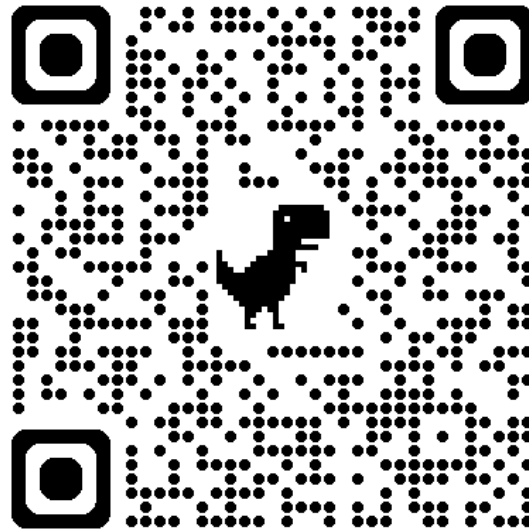
How did the activity stir deep thinking?

Were there times you were thinking divergently? Critically?



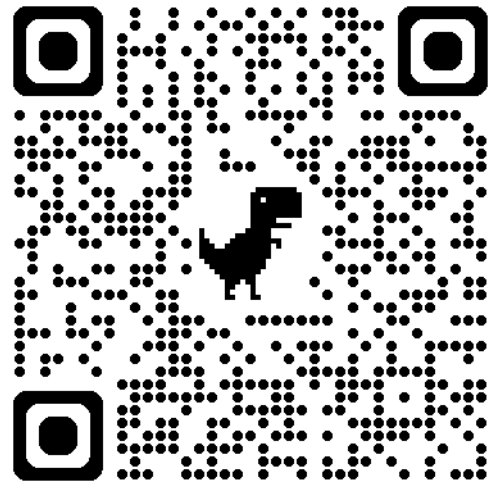
Project Focus – Research Participation

Project Focus at UConn is seeking participants for a research study. We are conducting a survey focused on **teacher self-efficacy**, especially related to **questioning and discussion**. We are seeking responses from currently and recently practicing teachers at grades K-12. Teachers who participate are eligible for a \$10 electronic gift card. Please use the QR code to access the survey. Contact Catherine Little at catherine.little@uconn.edu or project.focus@uconn.edu with any questions.



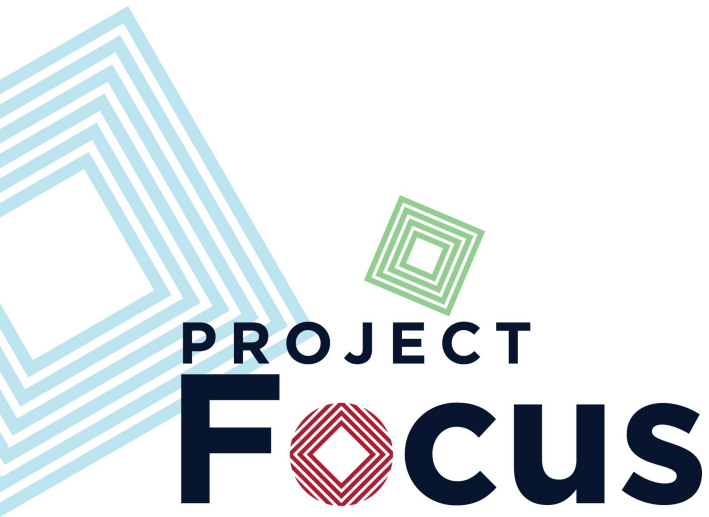
Project Focus – Research Participation

Project Focus at UConn is seeking participants for a research study. We are conducting a survey about how teachers describe their students' participation in classroom discussion. We are seeking responses from U.S. teachers at grades K-12. Teachers who participate are eligible to enter a drawing for one of 25 \$25 electronic gift cards. Please use the QR code to access the survey. Contact Catherine Little at catherine.little@uconn.edu or project.focus@uconn.edu with any questions.



Project Focus – Research Participation

Project Focus at UConn will be inviting schools in 2024-2025 to participate as professional learning and research sites. We will be looking for schools with multiple potential teacher participants at grades 3-5. Contact Catherine Little at catherine.little@uconn.edu or project.focus@uconn.edu to learn more.





Thank You!

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