

Responding to Others in Class Discussions

In classroom discussions, students can respond to others, answer each other's questions, and present new questions or thoughts based on others responses.

KEY POINTS

- This is as important as responding directly to the teacher, or to questions posed by the teacher.
- Dialogue among students not only makes classroom discussion more lively and robust, but building on multiple points of view is more intellectually stimulating.
- As a student, a one way to think about participating in this discussion would be to respond to classmates' comments, rather than the teacher's original prompt.
- Classroom discussion is a more interesting, fun, and interactive assessment method.
- Classroom discussions encourage the practice of social skills and informal oral communication.
- Class discussions encourage learning through active participation, comprehension and listening.

TERM

- response
An answer or reply, or something in the nature of an answer or reply.

EXAMPLE

- Here is an example of how to frame your comments as a response to another student in class: "I think John's previous statement was correct, particularly when he pointed out that the text really revolves around the term 'constantly'. Continuing with that thought, doesn't it seem like the concept of reification is really aligned with the idea of constancy?" In this example, the speaker has taken the insights provided by a previous speaker, John, and used them to generate a new question. Framing comments as a response to what another speaker has already said provides a sense of continuity to the classroom discussion while also encouraging students to listen to and understand the insights provided by fellow classmates. Even disagreeing

with another student's position can be an opportunity to articulate what in the text supports or refutes their specific points. Centering responses around the content of text avoids unsupported disagreement.

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Classroom discussions can be used for more than the expression of raw knowledge. Classroom conversation allows the expression of students' opinions, thoughts, and questions about the subject being discussed. Students can respond to others, answer each other's questions, and present new questions or thoughts based on others' responses. Students can also share their own experiences pertaining to the discussed topic, which can help others learn because they are given clearer and more practical examples.

For students, one important component of classroom discussion is responding to others, answering each other's questions, and presenting new questions or thoughts based on others responses. This is as important as responding directly to the teacher, or to questions posed by the teacher -- dialogue among students not only makes classroom discussion more lively and robust, but building on multiple points of view is more intellectually stimulating.

An example of this would be a high school art teacher mediating a weekly artwork critique of his or her students' artwork. The teacher can assess not only the artwork, but also each students thoughts about the artwork based on information presented in class. After the students post each of their works at the front of the class, the teacher goes through each piece and opens a class discussion by asking the students what they like and dislike about the artworks.

As a student, a one way to think about participating in this discussion would be to respond to classmates' comments, rather than the teacher's original prompt. For example, if you disagree with the opinion of a fellow student on a piece of art, expressing your disagreement (respectfully) may be more productive for class discussion than coming up with a new comment on a different piece of art.

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The Practice of Conversation

KEY TERM GLOSSARY

comprehension

The act of understanding. The totality of intentions or attributes, characters, marks, properties, or qualities, that the object possesses; the totality of intentions that are pertinent to the context of a given discussion.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Presenting Quotations](#)
- [The Understanding Stage](#)
- [Class Discussions](#)

conversation

A form of interactive, spontaneous communication between two or more people who are following rules of etiquette. the expression and exchange of individual ideas through talking with other people; also, an instance of such talking

Appears in these related concepts:

- [The Responding Stage](#)
- [Introducing Quotations](#)
- [Differences between Public Speaking and Conversation](#)

discussion

Text giving further detail on a subject.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Presenting the Prevailing Theories](#)
- [Indicating Who Cares](#)
- [Analyzing Your Data](#)

idea

The conception of someone or something as representing a perfect example; an ideal.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Writing Concisely](#)
- [Repeating Key Terms and Phrases](#)
- [Writing as You Research](#)

method

A process by which a task is completed; a way of doing something.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Critical Thinking](#)
- [Browsing Content and Text Online](#)
- [Entering the Scientific Conversation](#)

question

A subject or topic for consideration or investigation.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Generating Further Questions](#)
- [Reading Challenging Texts](#)
- [Developing a Question in Your Topic](#)

subject

A human research subject is a living individual about whom a research investigator (whether a professional or a student) obtains data. In a clause: the word or word group (usually a noun phrase) that is dealt with. In active clauses with verbs denoting an action, the subject and the actor are usually the same. A particular area of study.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Making Subject and Verbs Agree](#)
- [Deciphering the Conversation](#)
- [Misleading the Subjects](#)

topic

Subject; theme; a category or general area of interest.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Introducing the Topic, Thesis, and Main Points](#)
- [Scoping Your Topic](#)
- [Choosing Your Topic](#)

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