

## Questioning Strategies

A large amount of group interaction may occur as a result of using a variety of questioning strategies. Questions are the basis for interactivity and should be designed to stimulate interactivity between sites as well as the instructor and the student(s).

### Some functions of questions:

- They assist to organize thoughts and sequence learning.
- Questions guide learning by emphasizing what is important as well as what is relevant.
- They stimulate discussion centered around important points and concepts.
- Questions provide clues as to how students will be assessed.
- They provide students with the opportunity to integrate and synthesize prior learning experiences with current learning.
- Appropriately phrased questions can provide an opportunity for students to explain and express values and attitudes.

### Descriptions of question techniques:

(These are broad categories and some of the categories may overlap).

- Trivia questions are designed to elicit bits of related and unrelated information.
- Study questions accompany homework assignments and special projects or focus attention to significant events while observing videotapes/films/slide presentations/guest presenters.
- Provocative questions frequently overstate, understate or express an extreme attitude or value and are designed to capture the student's attention immediately and provoke an immediate response.
- Linking questions are used when you are trying to gather facts where the response from one question provides the stimulus to the next question(s). You are continually branching out. There does not tend to be any cause/effect relationship nor does there appear to be a conclusion to the question.
- Probing questions are used when you believe in the possibility of a conclusion and probe backwards.
- Hierarchical questions are a sequence of questions leading the students from seemingly unrelated responses to the application of a skill.
- Value questions employ strategies that allow the student to explore what his/her values are and what might have influenced his/her value positions.

### Suggestions for framing student questions:

- Try to begin your first few classes with some probing questions either verbally or on a written handout for later discussion.
- Use simple, direct wording, acknowledge the correct response and provide appropriate feedback.
- It is best if you ask one question at a time providing reasonable time (7-10 seconds) for response. If the mics were muted, ask to have the mics unmuted prior to asking the question.
- If you use jargon or technical language, make sure students are familiar with it or offer clarification.

- Plan questions ahead of time being aware of the cognitive process the question is intended to elicit.
- Once the question is posed, provide an appropriate amount of time for a response. Silence can stimulate reflective thought processes, plus, response time on ITV tends to be longer than in the traditional classroom.
- At times a student may appear inattentive. Asking a question of the student and then following with the response can re-focus the student. It is not meant to be a humiliating experience but rather a "helpful hint."
- Do not glare, smirk or frown at an incorrect response. Be aware! ITV tends to exaggerate facial gestures. Rephrase the question, as your first question may not have been clearly phrased.
- Avoid domination by one student. It may be necessary to solicit responses from other students by name. If one student does appear to be dominating the class interaction, discuss the issues with the student one-on-one either via the telephone or e-mail.
- If you are not receiving questions from the distance site(s), address each site by name or have a student at each site designated as the spoke person for the site. Or, if you are not receiving responses to questions from students at the distance site(s) ask a student at each site if he/she would like to respond to the question.
- It may be helpful to repeat or rephrase a question asked in class for clarity and so all students can hear the question.