**How to prime student engagement: Breakout room activity**

Within your breakout rooms:

1. Share your materials with the other members. Describe the context you use them in.
   * + Other members: approach the questions/prompts as if you were a student. What responses do they prime?
2. Evaluate whether or not the question elicited the desired responses. Other members might help identify key phrasings, potentially vague areas, barriers to understanding, etc.
3. Collaboratively suggest revisions, additions, or elucidations. Consider the list of questions below. Additional tips are provided on the following page.
4. Repeat with each participant’s materials.

Questions to apply to your discussion questions/prompts:

**Consider your outcomes:**

* What are your learning goals?
* What do you want student to do?
* How do you want students to feel?

**Consider your language:**

* What feelings does your language elicit?
* How is your language shaping student responses?
* How might you adjust your language to better connect with your desired outcomes?

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**Tips/pointers for the posing of questions:**

* If you want a critically engaged response, frame the question as open-ended.
  + Note that questions beginning in how, what, or why, can often feel like there is “one right answer.” Instead, consider phrases like “in what ways does x do y,” or “develop your thoughts around z,” or “given the evidence of A, how do you interpret B?” These strategies work as well for checking conceptual understanding.
  + Being *specific* in open-ended questions actually helps drive better answers, and won’t necessarily staunch creativity!
* Create questions that will elicit more than one answer or solution
* Ask students to provide support for their response with examples/references, e.g. personal experience, course materials or outside sources.
* Create questions that encourage students to voice their opinion, perspective or personal experience
* Make specific reference to theories, diagrams, authors, and/or page numbers
* **Verb cheat sheet**: Words such as *describe, explain, compose, defend, evaluate, develop, predict, interpret, classify, analyze, propose,* or *infer* tend to elicit deeper and more specific responses.
  + Make sure the primed response matches your intended learning outcome.
* Consider how you want students to *feel*, eg. empowered, curious, excited, critical? Use those words—or other emotionally related words—in your prompt.
* Review and consider the surrounding course/module objectives —ask  ‘does this discussion question support the course/module objective or focus?’
  + Students dislike busy work— discussion questions without a focus and purpose lead to shallow responses

**Spots to use primed questions:**

Canvas modules Syllabus

Assignment prompts Lecture

Conferencing Feedback

Discussion boards Peer review activities