



Do You Really Want a Discussion?

*Worksheet*¹

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Teachers assume that it would be nice to have students discuss the content of the course. But when it comes right down to allowing and encouraging discussion lots of things scare us off.

1. It simply takes too much time. Covering the material is far more important.

Is this true? (Give it a Likert score in the left margin: 1 - 5, where 1 is **definitely yes** and 5 is **definitely no**.)

What comments can you make about the statement?

2. Students rarely know enough about the right things to carry on a worthwhile discussion.

Is this true? (Give it a Likert score in the left margin: 1 - 5, where 1 is **definitely yes** and 5 is **definitely no**.)

What comments can you make about the statement?

3. Students seem to enjoy getting off the subject and talking endlessly about their own thoughts.

Is this true? (Give it a Likert score in the left margin: 1 - 5, where 1 is **definitely yes** and 5 is **definitely no**.)

What comments can you make about the statement?

4. Some learner groups are not interested in having a discussion. They would rather hear the professor talk.

Is this true? (Give it a Likert score in the left margin: 1 - 5, where 1 is **definitely yes** and 5 is **definitely no**.)

What comments can you make about the statement?

5. Discussions rarely advance learning very much.

Is this true? (Give it a Likert score in the left margin: 1 - 5, where 1 is **definitely yes** and 5 is **definitely no**.)

What comments can you make about the statement?

¹ For workshop with Salvation Army personnel, Chicago, 1999

6. Since I can't predict where students will go with a discussion, it makes me uneasy. I'd rather stick to the things that I am most prepared to present.

Is this true? (Give it a Likert score in the left margin: 1 - 5, where 1 is **definitely yes** and 5 is **definitely no**.)

What comments can you make about the statement?

OK things to say when leading a discussion:

1. Write a short note about what you would want to say about this question. We may want to hear from you. (Don't give very long for this writing—perhaps 30 seconds.)
2. How does your comment relate to the topic?
3. Let's hear another opinion about that matter.
4. Is that opinion or comment consistent with what you have read about the matter? Explain your position for us.
5. Why does the writer (of the source material) take a different position?
6. Let's hear another comment on that matter.
7. Now we need to go to another topic. Who will start us off? (Or Who can give us a thought on . . .)