

# Facilitating discussion

---

Amy L. Housley Gaffney

## Agenda

---

- Background
- Structural and relational considerations
- Case studies in discussion

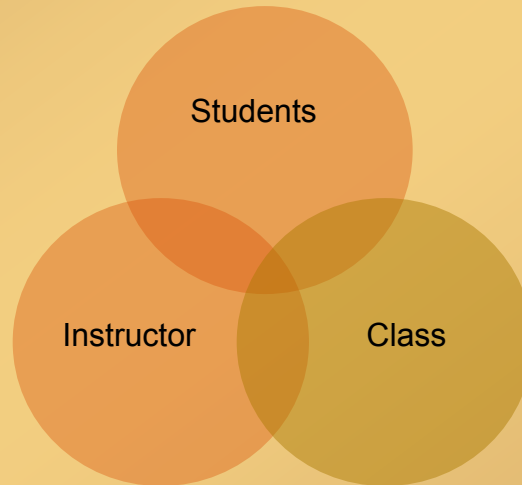
## Brainstorming

- What are some barriers to using class discussion?

## Background

- Participation is important...
  - Learning is an active process
  - Enhances learning
  - Helps in content retention
- ...But not much actually happens
  - Less than 3% of class time is participation
  - A small portion of the students do most of the participating

## What influences participation?



## Influences on Participation

- Student Characteristics (age, gender, interest)
- Instructor Characteristics (communication)
- Class Characteristics (subject, level)

## Facilitation Strategies

- Structural
  - Environment, opportunities
- Relational
  - Questioning, support

## Case Study Structure

- With those around you, devise a response to the vignette provided
- Be prepared to share your response and to evaluate others' responses

## Case Study

- Jane has always been the student with an attitude that she is right and everyone else is wrong. As you begin a discussion one day in class, she loudly grumbles “Why do we have to do this *again*? What’s the point anyway?”
- What do you say to Jane?

## Case Study

- Franklin and Carmine are both good students and actively engage in discussion. During a particularly emotional topic, the two begin arguing with personal attacks and dominate the discussion.
- How do you change the situation?

## Case Study

- Marcus told you early in the semester that he tends to be quiet but one of his goals in your class is to speak up more. During a discussion, he tentatively puts his hand up, but pulls it back down when someone else speaks up.
- How can you help Marcus?

## Reflection Questions

- How does discussion fit into your personal teaching philosophy?
- What disciplinary opportunities and constraints may affect implementations of discussion?
- What is one change you can make in the next week?

## Faculty Development Strategies

- Structural
  - Variety of opportunities
  - Grounding in research
- Relational
  - Listen to needs
  - Interactive, proactive approach