

## **Working With Small Groups**

### **Index Card Questions**

At the beginning of the session, hand out index cards to each student and have them write down three questions that they have from the textbook chapter, from lecture notes, or from class handouts. Then, have them trade cards and answer each others' questions as a whole group. You might break-up the material, and assign each individual or pair a specific topic. You can also make this into a game, or do it in pairs. This is a good technique to prepare for an exam.

### **Scribe Notes**

At the beginning of each session, appoint (or ask for a volunteer) to take notes on the discussion. The notes can be informal, funny, or serious, and should include all the information the note-taker thinks is important. At the beginning of the next session, have the note-taker read his or her notes. This promotes "group memory" and helps connect current topics to previously covered material.

### **Board Notes**

Try to make good use of the chalkboard or white board during discussions. Whenever possible, have a group member write or draw on the board to illustrate concepts. Seeing material displayed on the board helps visual learners, writing or drawing on the board helps kinesthetic learners, and the process of summarizing information models effective learning strategies.

### **Team Debate/Quiz**

Divide the group into two teams and use a quiz or game show format to have team members ask and answer course-related questions posed by the opposing team. Have the teams consult for a few minutes to develop their list of questions before playing the game. Make sure everyone agrees on the rules and keep score.

### **Free writing**

Begin a session by having students write for three minutes on a topic related to course material. Potential topics include: how they applied specific learning strategies during the last week, their thoughts on a specific concept covered in lecture and readings, what questions they have for this session, or any other topic that might help focus their minds on the discussion to follow. Tell them to write as much as they can, as fast as they can, without worrying about grammar, spelling, or sentence structure. They do not have to share their writing unless they want to. The goal is to have students focus their energy and clear their minds so that they can concentrate better during the discussion.

### **Rotating Leader**

When you begin to know the students in your group, invite one of them to lead the discussion. Point out that the most important role of a leader lies not in mastery of course content, but in the ability to include the whole group in a focused and productive discussion. You might want to sit down with the student leader for a few minutes before the session and help him or her think of some questions to guide the discussion.

Source: [http://www.anokaramsey.edu/tutor\\_training/module9/group.cfm](http://www.anokaramsey.edu/tutor_training/module9/group.cfm)