

<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Debate</b>	<b>Dialogue</b>
Conceptual and/or conversational	Competitive	<b>Collaborative, towards a sense of community understanding</b>
Presents ideas, often in a “clean” or “sophisticated” way	Succeed or win, often by proving others’ logic to be ‘wrong’	<b>Re-evaluate and acknowledge assumptions and biases</b>
Share information, seek ‘neutral’ conclusions	Focus on ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ through evidence	<b>Bring out areas of ambivalence</b>
Seek answers and solutions	Look for weakness	<b>Look for shared meanings</b>
Give answers, often those in accordance with academic standards	Search for flaws in others’ logic; critique their position	<b>Discover collective meaning; reexamine and destabilize long held ideas</b>
Listen to find places of disagreement or to gather rational pieces of an argument	Listen to form counterarguments	<b>Listen without judgment and with a view to understand</b>
Avoid areas of strong conflict and difference	Focus on conflict and difference as an advantage	<b>Articulate areas of conflict and difference</b>
Retain relationships	Disregard relationships	<b>Build relationships</b>
Avoid silence	Use silence to gain advantage	<b>Honor silence</b>
<small>The Dialogue vs. Discussion table was adapted from: <i>Differentiating Dialogue From Discussion: A Working Model</i> (Kardin and Sevig, 1997) and <i>Exploring the Differences Between Dialogue, Discussion, and Debate</i> (Tanya Kachwaha, 2002, adapted from Huang Nissan, 1999).</small>		

## Asking Strong Questions: Tips and Types of Strong Questions

**1. Relate to a relevant topic that lends itself to sharing experiences (not just opinions).**

*Do:* "What have your experiences been with affirmative action on campus?"

*Don't:* "What do you think about affirmative action?"

**2. Illuminate participants' backgrounds, rather than illuminating interesting concepts.**

*Do:* "You mentioned fairness. What's an experience that makes you passionate about fairness?"

*Don't:* "How do you define the concept of fairness?"

**3. Evoke feelings and experiences meant to lead to dialogue, not debate.**

*Do:* "Where have you seen division between liberal and conservative students?"

*Don't:* "Don't you think liberal students should spend more time with conservative students?"

**4. Invite personal reflection, NOT "answers" or philosophical postures.**

*Do:* "Have you ever felt dehumanized?"

*Don't:* "What could we do if we all saw each other as humans?"

**5. Ask open-ended questions from a place of curiosity, not suspicion**

*Do:* "How did you come to that conclusion?"

*Don't:* "Do you think you said that because you're sexist?"

**6. Can be based on what is noticeable in the room (i.e. lots of energy, silence)**

*Do:* "I noticed you pausing a lot when talking about that one topic. Is there something you want to share?"

*Don't:* Brush past it.

**7. Pose an alternative perspective to catalyze conversation and avoid attack (which can end dialogues)**

*Do:* "I've heard some people say they feel like this space isn't tolerant or welcoming. What do you think?"

*Don't:* "Actually, I think you're being rude and intolerant."

## Asking Strong Questions

### Questions to Intervene in Tense Conversations

What can I do when someone states a controversial opinion or makes someone upset?

#### Why use these questions?

- To engage the other person in a productive dialogue around a tough topic or statement.
- To keep from fighting, debating, or discussing.
- To push individuals to dialogue through using "I" statements.
- To lean into discomfort and lack of consensus, rather than ignore it or pretend that it isn't happening.

**Statement: "We don't need feminism because men and women are already equal."**

1. **Clarify** the speaker's comment to get a sense of what they are actually saying.
  - *"Tell me more about what you mean when you say\_\_\_\_\_."*
2. **Change the conversation to experiences.**
  - *"What experiences have you had are important for helping us understand what you're sharing?"*
3. **Create space for others** to react (for use in group situations).
  - *"How do others react to that statement? Does anyone have thoughts or feelings to share?"*