

Questioning “Dos” and “Don’ts”...

Here are some techniques for eliciting relevant responses and maximizing engagement.

<i>Questioning “Dos”</i>	<i>Questioning “Don’ts”</i>
<p><u>Ask open-ended questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, Why, When, Where, Who and How are the key words that will secure facts and information. • Open-ended questions enhance conceptualization, application, examples, connections, etc. 	<p><u>Excessive Closed Ended Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that questions that begin with Did, Do, Would, or Will elicit yes or no responses and are rhetorical. Such “closed end” questions should be used sparingly. • Watch out for questions that are too non-directive. Examples of these types of questions include “How do you feel?”. In other words they leave the participant grasping for what you really are looking for.
<p><u>Use Pauses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure to pause for a few seconds before selecting a respondent. Look around the group. Restate the question. Give everyone time to formulate a response in their heads. Then select a respondent. 	<p><u>Calling on others “cold”</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some that are not comfortable with silence after asking a question feel the need to call on participants to break this silence. By doing this, it can cause uneasiness among the participants.
<p><u>Follow-up Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask follow-up questions that make participants go deeper. Ask for evidence, examples, or explanations to discover reasons behind thinking. • In cases where participants provide a response that may be in a different direction than you are heading, ask them to clarify and redirect the conversations in a positive direction. To help in a redirect, throw the issue back to the group as an opportunity for discussion. 	<p><u>Tell participants they are “wrong”</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid creating situations where there is a “right” and a “wrong” response to a question. Such an environment can destroy trust. • Avoid using questions which require the participants to parrot back information just presented by the instructor. Participants view these as patronizing and condescending.
<p><u>Ask “Suppose” Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a new idea, break a deadlock, or bring up an overlooked point with “Suppose we...” • From time-to-time, ask your participants to take a guess on something prior to teaching the point (e.g., What percentage of the time does the average manager communicate?) 	<p><u>Patronizing or presenting an opinion as “fact”</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitators have the responsibility to remain neutral and establish an environment where all opinions are valued. • If trust is not established, participants can become argumentative.

