Leaderless Discussion Format

The purpose of the leaderless discussion is to allow students the freedom of choosing what parts of the book/podcast/video they would like to discuss.

Pre-discussion:

- In preparation for the discussion, each student creates two questions that he or she would like to discuss. See the next page for tips on creating good questions.
- Each student spends a few minutes reflecting on his or her questions.
- The group chooses a time-keeper.

Process:

- The group chooses a time-keeper. The time-keeper makes sure that each question is only discussed for five minutes.
- One student reads her question to the class, and explains why she is asking it.
- The question is projected on the board during the discussion.
- Members of the group respond to her question.
- When the time has expired, the original questioner gives a quick summary of the discussion.
- The group moves on to the next question, and repeats the same process.
- At the end of the discussion, each student writes a brief response to the discussion.

Rules:

- You have to raise your hand if you wish to speak.
- When you raise your hand, you also hold up a finger for each time you have spoken. For example, if you have spoken three times in the class, you would hold up three fingers.
- After you speak, you call on the next speaker.
- The teacher may seed the discussion with questions.

Evaluation:

- Pre-discussion:
  - Did you complete your pre-discussion question starters?
  - Were your question starters high quality?
- Discussion:
  - Did you follow the process?
  - How many times did you speak?
Did your comments indicate that you had done the reading?
Did you listen to your classmates?
Did you stay on task?

**Post-discussion response**
Did your post discussion response indicate that you engaged in the process

Sources: [http://ronritchhart.com/ronritchhart.com/COT_Resources.html](http://ronritchhart.com/ronritchhart.com/COT_Resources.html)
Leaderless Discussion Question Starters

In order to make leaderless discussions effective, students must generate questions before the discussion begins. These may help you create good questions.

- What do you think the speakers/authors/you mean by …?
- What's another example of …?
- What do you think the authors/speakers/you are assuming when they/you say?
- What evidence and reasons are there for …?
- What's an alternative point of view on …?
- What's the consequence or effect of … likely to be?
- What's the take away lesson from …?
- What's the core idea being expressed by …?
- How would things change or be different if … were to happen?
- Where else might the idea/concept of … be used?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of …?
- What is … analogous to?
- How does … affect …?
- How does … relate to what we learned before about …?
- To whom is the idea of … most important?
- Why does … matter?
- What’s the difference between … and …?
- Who might see … differently?
- What’s the cause of …?
- How does … relate to …?
- What’s another way of saying…?
- How do you think the idea of … can be applied to…?
- What’s the most surprising thing about …?
- What’s the most familiar thing about …?
- How does the idea of … challenge what you already know or think about?

Statements relating student-centered classes

- My classroom is student-centered because…
- My classroom is NOT student-centered because…
- Differentiation is important to being student-centered because…
- Technology helps me move students to the center of the class by …
- Becoming more student centered is difficult for faculty because…