



# Talk and Tech: Discussion

# “Hatful of Quotes”

- Injects content immediately into the discussion
- Requires everyone to speak
- Mitigates the stress of being required to speak
  - Students have a specific idea to which they can respond
  - Students choose the order of response
  - Students who feel uncomfortable or confused by the quote can wait to respond to what their peers have said

- *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*,  
Brookfield and Preskill (1999)

# Why Don't Students Talk?

- Introversions
- Fear of looking stupid
- Feeling unprepared
- Fearing a trap
- Feeling unwelcome
- Bad experiences
- Fear of being “uncool”
- Reliance on teacher
- Lack of reward

# So Why Bother?

- Helps students explore a diversity of perspectives
- Increases students' awareness of and tolerance for ambiguity
- Helps students recognize and investigate their assumptions
- Increases intellectual agility
- Develops habits of collaborative learning
- Encourages attentive, respectful listening
- Helps students become connected to a topic
- Shows respect for students' voices
- Increases breadth and makes students more empathetic
- Develops a capacity for the clear communications of ideas and meaning
- Helps students develop skills of synthesis and integration
- Leads to transformation

# When *not* to use discussion

“Discussion is not suited to teaching that is intended to initiate students into a predefined body of truths, facts or ideas.”

- *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*

Brookfield and Preskill (1999, p. 24)

# Distinguishing Among “Discussions”

**Conversation** – genial, aimless,  
collaborative

**Dialogue / Debate** – designed to resolve  
a problem or issue through point /  
counterpoint

**Discourse** – one person talking at length

# What kind of discussion should I use?

What do you want the journey to be like?

Where do you want your students to end up?



# What kind of Blackboard tool?

- Discussion Boards (Forums)
- Blogs
- Journals
- Wikis