

Scenario 1

Imagine you are leading a seminar of an eager group of mixed-level students (some newer to the material and some more advanced). This week's material covers a particularly important set of themes that are essential for the rest of the course. As the discussion begins, things start off well—students are engaged and grappling with the material. One student poses a question that is not especially apropos but seems to strike a chord with students and suddenly the discussion has gone in a very different direction than you intended.

Scenario 2

Imagine you assign an important text to discuss in class this week. Either because the concepts are theoretically (or technically) sophisticated or because the material deals with controversial themes or ideas, imagine further that as students wade through the material during class, things become increasingly tense—so much so that you can see and feel the displeasure from the majority of students.

Scenario 3

Imagine you are teaching a course in which some material you assign covers what might be considered controversial or provocative subject matter. For this course, you typically ask students to engage in dialogue around the assigned materials for a particular class over Canvas ahead of your in-person class meeting. They are allowed to write any sort of reflection on the reading they'd like or respond to others' reflections via this discussion board. On one particular occasion, you notice that two students have become engaged in an argument over a reading. The next day, in class, their argument continues, and while a few other students chime into the discussion, most turn silent.

Scenario 4

Imagine you are teaching a course wherein the vast majority of students appear, superficially, to share the same viewpoints on the materials you discuss. Conversations flow easily, but they don't often drift into unfamiliar perspectival terrain. You have a few quieter students who, based upon written assignments and one-on-one conversations, you believe may hold opposing viewpoints in some areas in relation to their classmates, but they participate minimally in discussions.

Scenario 5

Imagine you are teaching a heavily-discussion based seminar, it's the third week into your new semester, and although you've tried to gently encourage students to direct their questions and responses about the material to one another, they still seem to look to you to do the 'heavy lifting' in the conversation. While it varies from meeting to meeting, they don't seem particularly enthusiastic about many of the materials and thus produce lackluster responses for discussion.

Scenario 6

Imagine you have a class comprised of close friends. It takes you many minutes to silence the chatter and get going at the beginning of class. During group work, conversations drift from the intended objectives into the realm of cocktail chatter, and every chance students have to take class in the direction of leisurely conversation, they will. You love their enthusiasm, but wrangling their attentional efforts seems to be the challenge.