

context •

- During class time, pose a question to your students. Give them a few minutes to write down their thoughts. After they have had time to think through their ideas alone and commit those ideas in writing, place the students in discussion pairs. Allow students to share their ideas with their partner. Now expand the discussion groups so that two pairs are put together to form groups of four. After students have had an opportunity to share in a group of this size, move to groups of 8, 16, and finally to full class size. By the time you reach full class size, every student will have had ample opportunity to think about and discuss the question, thus providing several rehearsals for the discussion in which you lead the entire class. This repeated practice underscores the fact that discussion questions must be probing questions that are worth going over several times.
- In a blended or online course, have students keep blogs in which they reflect on what they've learned and/or on the process of learning a concept or skill in your class. Blogs have the advantage of being completed outside of class time, where you really want them reflecting on their learning, as well as of some other advantages: you can comment on them and push the reflection to an even deeper level, and they can be kept all semester, so both you and your students can look back to earlier lessons and deepen the connections between different moments of reflection and learning.

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