**What kinds of questions facilitate productive talking and listening?**

In Chapter 4 of *Student-Faculty Pedagogical Partnerships in the Classroom and Curriculum: A How-To Guide for Faculty, Students, and Academic Developers in Higher Education*, we note that one of the most important dimensions of listening and engaging as pedagogical partners is asking good questions. In keeping with the premises of partnership we emphasize in the book, good questions are ones that are respectful rather than judgmental, genuine rather than assuming or looking for a particular response, and open and invite further exploration rather than close it down.

The following are the kinds of questions that all participants in pedagogical partnership—program directors, faculty partners, and student partners—can ask.

* **“I notice that you did/said/commented on X. Can you tell me about your reasoning behind that?”** Important about such a question is that it is framed as a neutral noticing and a request for explanation, not an assumption or judgmental analysis. Posed in a respectful tone and elaborated on with phrases such as “I’m really interested in understanding the thinking that went into that” or “That really made me think about the situation/assignment/approach in a new way,” such a question conveys engaged attention and receptivity to what the interlocutor has to say.
* **“If I were a student in this class doing that assignment/activity, I might feel…[fill in this blank]. Is that your goal, or were you hoping for a different experience for students?”** Important about such a framing and question is that they start with the speaker’s experience rather than the listener’s practice. In contrast to a frame such as, “That assignment/activity is…,” which can sound presumptuous and accusatory, this kind of framing starts with lived experience, and the question is, once again, genuine—not one with an answer the asker of the question already assumes to know.
* **“I am thinking about something you said in a previous conversation about your commitment to X. Does your current point/question/approach/concern connect in your mind to that?”** Important about this question is that it shows that the asker was listening before, remembers, and connects the current topic or situation to something the interlocutor has indicated that they value.
* **“That is a great question/statement/strategy that will challenge/enhance [fill in this blank]. How can they [students] relate that to [fill in the blank]?”** Important about this question is that it starts out acknowledging and affirming strengths, and then encourages the faculty member to consider how those strengths can connect to the larger theme or the current goal(s).
* **“In the class, I realized that I got a bit stuck on [fill in blank]. Do you think there are other ways to phrase this statement/comment/question in case others may have also been stuck on it as well?”** This question is based in a personal experience and reflection as opposed to asserting a universal quality. It offers a strategy (rephrasing, as opposed to repeating) that many students have found useful, and it at once affirms the importance of the question and suggests that it could be clarified.
* **“Based on some students reactions/responses, do you think we should revisit/ clarify/expand on this notion/ideology/concept?”** This question builds on a general observation focused on students and their reaction, reinforcing the importance of attending to student experience in their learning, and invites suggestions as to how to best address these common reactions/response together, thereby indicating that the student partner is there as a colleague.
* **“I wonder if we should re-direct our attention to this area because [statement]?”** This question is framed as a kind of musing, not a judgment or criticism; it is making a suggestion and stating the reason. Therefore, it invites other perspectives as to how to best redirect attention and why.

Questions such as these require the asker to consider where they are coming from—what previous experiences, assumptions, values, commitments, etc. might be informing the question—and to frame the question in a way that starts there rather than jumping to an interpretation or judgment of the other person (see Torosyan and Cook-Sather 2018). We discuss the importance of these qualities in the section called “*Should you facilitate a regular (weekly or bi-weekly) forum for reflection, dialogue, and support?”* in Chapter 5 as well.