Concepts addressed in this course: *Major categories, advantages, and appropriate uses of instructional strategies: whole-group discussion*

**Students should refer to:**
[http://www.learner.org/channel/libraries/makingmeaning/makingmeaning/support/discuss.pdf](http://www.learner.org/channel/libraries/makingmeaning/makingmeaning/support/discuss.pdf) (used as lecture reference)

**Specifically, students should review:**

I. Building the Foundation of Discussion  
   a. Experiences  
   b. Related reading  
   c. Reflective Writing Experiences  
      i. Provides an alternative to discussing ideas initially  
      ii. Develops more secure sense – confidence  
      iii. Children who speak less often in groups may tend to do so more if also given the opportunity to write first

II. Developing a Group Discussion  
   a. Considering elements of experience & lesson to focus upon  
   b. Reflecting on related experiences that could be planned in order to enhance later discussions – what else to the students need to know about or experience?  
   c. Reflecting upon supporting the discussion – how else may you, as the teacher, support the discussion?

III. Facilitating Group Discussions  
   a. Active listening  
   b. Reflective listening  
   c. Asking questions of particular individuals to get started  
   d. Allowing for silent think time for individuals to collect thoughts in order to speak  
   e. Balancing discussion – encouraging all to participate, yet not dominating the conversation  
   f. Using follow up questions to extend or clarify, modeling developed explanations  
      i. What do you mean by that?  
      ii. How could to say that same idea in a different way?  
      iii. Could explain it a little more?  
   g. Connecting discussion to prior experiences  
   h. Cueing into nonverbal cues and making them verbal  
   i. Identify two or three issues that students should address  
      i. Develop interpretive or evaluative questions  
      ii. Introduce issues  
   j. For older children – have a discussion about discussions  
      i. Speak loud and clearly to be heard  
      ii. Everyone can contribute – but try not to dominate  
      iii. Ask genuine questions
iv. Try to connect comments to earlier parts of discussion
v. Stick to the topic
vi. Clarify ideas or ask for clarification when necessary.

Helpful websites include:

http://www.ncrel.org/info/notes/fall03/phase2.htm