**Changing the Nature of Discussion**

Discussions are more authentic when students build on each other’s responses, instead of relying on the teacher to interject after each response. In this format, the teacher poses a thoughtful question, one student forms a response, another student questions or builds on the response, another student questions or builds further, and so on. Students have to be taught how to approach and develop this type of discussion.

Envision the following characteristics in your classroom and consider how you can teach students to behave in these ways.

**1. During a discussion, students use the skills of active listening with their peers:**

* **Paraphrasing –** students repeat what their peer answered, using their own words.
* **Clarifying –** Students ask a peer for more information about their response.
* **Mediating –** Students ask questions of a peer, inviting them to consider new information.

What I will teach my students to empower them to behave in these ways:

**2. Students use their body language congruently: they turn to look at the student to whom they are responding instead of facing the teacher.**

What I will teach my students to empower them to behave in this way:

**3. Students disagree with points of view in ways that are respectful, content-focused, and appropriate to the discussion.**

What I will teach my students to empower them to behave in this way:

**4. Students monitor the discussion, noting who has and has not participated, and use appropriate questions to involve quieter students in the conversation.**

What I will teach my students to empower them to behave in this way:

Edited version from Implementing the Framework for Teaching, 2009.