Ensuring Productive Discussion

Bill Roberson and Tine Reimers
University at Albany, State University of New York

Thursday, January 31
9:30–11:30 a.m.
Milton Hall Room 50

Nothing is more frustrating than carefully choosing and then poring over materials for a class discussion only to find that your students apparently have nothing to say about it. Because we already have a deep investment in our content, it’s easy to forget that our students need to be “primed” and their encounter with content needs to be carefully “designed” if we want to ensure a truly productive and intellectually provocative discussion. This practical workshop will demonstrate several techniques for designing activities that are proven to encourage student engagement and improve the intellectual outcomes of class discussions.

Bill Roberson, Ph.D. Since entering academe in 1987 as a faculty member and later as a faculty development professional, Bill Roberson has been in pursuit of teaching excellence—for for individual instructors, for academic programs, for institutions, and for himself. His primary area of interest is the design of courses, activities and assignments that ensure intellectual engagement of students and the development of their ability to think critically. His career in university faculty development includes positions at UNC-Chapel Hill, Indiana University and the University of Texas at El Paso. He served as founding executive director of the Instructional Support Services division of the University of Texas-El Paso and came to New York in 2006 to establish the Institute for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Leadership at the University at Albany, State University of New York.

Tine Reimers, Ph.D., has been a university teacher in settings ranging from large Research I institutions to small colleges, including international appointments in France and Japan, as well as institutions in multiple regions in the US. Her 20 years of classroom experience, overlapping with 15 years in faculty and instructional development, have helped her build a thorough understanding of the strategies best suited for effective learning in higher education. After positions at UNC-Chapel Hill and Indiana University, she went on to direct the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning at UT-El Paso for 6 years, before serving as founding Executive Director of the NSF ADVANCE program at Cornell University. She was most recently hired as Director of Faculty Development at the University at Albany, State University of New York.