How to Lead a Shared-Inquiry Discussion

1. Lead slowly.
2. Listen carefully to students’ comments. Listen to what students mean as well as what they say.
3. If you have trouble remembering the threads of the discussion or who said what, take notes or make a chart that looks like the students’ seating arrangement.
4. Encourage students to share ideas with each other, not just with you.
5. Articulate the links between students’ ideas as well as the links between their ideas and the divergent question being discussed.
6. Do not be content with short answers. Say to the student, “Tell us more.”
7. Turn to the text for evidence to support what a student says.
8. Be open to challenges that students might raise to assumptions you might make in your questions.
9. Make sure that all students contribute.
10. Ask follow-up questions frequently.
11. Do not state your own opinion.
12. Ask divergent questions, not leading questions (see #11).
13. Use reflective listening techniques.
14. Remember that your role as a discussion leader is to be a fellow inquirer, not an instructor.