REDIRECTION OF STUDENT QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

DEFINITION:
Redirection occurs when an instructor turns a student-initiated question and or comment back to the student or to the class.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE:
Redirection is a recommended strategy when you are interested in promoting inter-student discussion or when you want students to assume more responsibility for their own learning.

By redirecting student questions or comments you are providing students with an opportunity to practice building skills that you expect them to develop during the course and that they may be asked to demonstrate on examinations (e.g. problem-solving skills, analysis, application, synthesis, or evaluation skills).

In most classrooms and often in discussion groups, the flow of interaction tends to be between individual students and the instructor. By encouraging students to respond directly to one another, a situation is created in which students may increase their learning by responding to one another, evaluating their own ideas via feedback from their peers, citing assigned readings, and synthesizing discussion points.

In disciplines such as math, economics, or physics, redirection can be used to encourage a maximum of student participation. Instead of confirming or correcting one student’s solution to a problem, choice of formula, etc., you can redirect that solution or choice to the class or an individual student for comment. This provides students with the following opportunities: to examine one another’s thinking; applying their knowledge of course content; and to take more responsibility for their own learning.

This technique also provides you with the opportunity to pinpoint and correct common misconceptions in student’s thinking.

WAYS TO IMPLEMENT REDIRECTION:
Redirection can be implemented in one of two ways:

Verbally, you can redirect by simply asking students to respond to one another’s comments and questions. For example, “How would you answer Audrey’s questions?” or “What could you add to Steve’s response?”
Once students are familiar with your use of redirection, you can also redirect non-verbally by shifting eye contact or using a hand gesture that offers a student’s question or comment to another student or to the rest of the class for comment.

Eventually students will direct their comments to one another as a matter of course, and their increased interactions may help establish scholarly peer relations within the classroom setting.

**BENEFITS OF USING REDIRECTION:**

When you use redirection within a discussion group setting, you can direct and facilitate the discussion without dominating it. By redirecting certain comments and not others, you can focus the discussion along the lines of thinking that you want students to explore. By redirecting student comments to other students who disagree, you can promote debate and get students to examine conflicting ideologies, controversial data, or varying perspectives.

**ORIENTING STUDENTS TO CHANGE:**

Because most students are not used to being encouraged to speak to one another directly in the classroom setting, they may be initially disoriented by your attempts at redirection. In fact, they may imagine that you are simply evading their comments or questions. If is therefore suggested that you tell students you are going to be experimenting with a technique designed to promote more discussion between them. Once they know your expectations and reasons for them, they will be more willing to and better able to meet those expectations.

**References:**
