

RESPONDING TO STUDENT QUESTIONS

- A. Acknowledge all questions - nod head, move towards speaker, smile, "yes"
- B. Find out what the problem is - subject matter, or pronunciation, new terms
- C. Don't interrupt. Let student finish asking his/her question.
- D. Repeat and/or paraphrase questions and answers for class
- E. Don't panic!
- F. Check to make sure you've answered the student's question and that the student is no longer confused.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Phrases</u>	<u>Action Required</u>
1. If it's a good question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* I'm glad you asked that!</li> <li>* That's a good question!</li> <li>* That's an interesting question!</li> </ul>	Answer, explain, use examples.
2. If it's a good question but you're not ready for it yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Can we leave that for one moment?</li> <li>* I'll be coming to that soon.</li> <li>* Can we save that 'til later?</li> </ul>	Make sure you do cover the question. Then check with student who asked the question. "Is that O.K. now?" "Have I answered your question?"
3. If it's a good question but you don't want to explain the background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* For the moment, we only need to accept and learn this formula.</li> <li>* Just accept this for now e.g. 1 mole = <math>6.03 \times 10^{23}</math> molecules.</li> <li>* This is all you need to know for now.</li> <li>* Let's just assume _____ for now.</li> </ul>	Explain in a later class, or offer further explanation in office hours or after class, or suggest extra reading.

Responding to Student Questions (page 2)

There are really no bad questions, as all questions show you what the student is understanding but .....		
4. If the answer to the question seems really obvious, and the student is clearly being silly	* Oh, you know that's not right!	Use a little humor.
5. If the answer to a question seems really obvious, but the student is serious	* I think you may not have understood.	Explain and correct misunderstanding. DON'T be condescending!
6. If it's a totally irrelevant question	* That's not our topic today but.....	Offer extra reading or time in office hours or after class.
7. If it's an <u>important</u> point	* Does everyone have this problem?	If yes - repeat and explain in different words. If no - perhaps a brief explanation and then after class or in office hours.
8. If you only <u>hear</u> part of the question	* You didn't understand what? * Where is the problem?	Anticipate possible difficulties at each stage of your lecture. Where could a student possibly go wrong?
9. If you don't <u>hear</u> any of it	* I'm sorry, I didn't catch that. * Could you speak up so that we can all hear.	Use some of the above.
10. If you didn't <u>understand</u> part or all of the question	* Is it the _____ that's the problem. * I'm sorry, I didn't get that. * Could you rephrase the question?	Anticipate possible difficulties. Try to paraphrase possible difficulties.

Responding to Student Questions (page 3)

<p>11. If you don't know the answer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* I'm sorry I don't know, <u>let me check</u> for you.</li> <li>* My mind's gone blank for the moment. <u>I'll check or you can check.</u></li> <li>* You know, I just can't remember one I'll find out, ask me tomorrow.</li> </ul>	<p>It's O.K. <u>not to know</u>. <u>Don't</u> forget to bring up the answer the next day. <u>Don't</u> make up an answer!</p>
<p>12. If you don't get <u>anything</u> even after all attempts at <u>repetition</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* I'm just not understanding your question. Perhaps you could ask again after class and we could sort it out.</li> <li>* I'm not sure what you're asking.</li> <li>* Action go over each stage to find out where the problem is. Have another student explain.</li> </ul>	<p>Don't Panic. Ask another student if they have the same problem. Perhaps another student could rephrase it. Have them write it down as a last resort. Try to extricate yourself gracefully and go on.</p>
<p>13. If a student argues and it's a good point</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* We'll have to agree to differ.</li> <li>* Good point. Thank you.</li> </ul>	<p>Present both sides of the argument.</p>
<p>14. If the student insists that he/she is right, when he/she is not</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* I'm afraid that you'll have to accept this.</li> <li>* I understand why you might think that, but if you look in your text/at our problem here/at our example here, you'll see that .....</li> </ul>	<p>Try to explain.</p>