



Modes of Discourse

Recognizing how the characteristics of debate, discussion, and dialogue differ is key to knowing what types of questions are best used to achieve the goals for discourse. The use of A.C.T.S. is recommended to achieve positive *dialogue* experiences more effectively.

Debate	Discussion	Dialogue
Listen to others in order to form counterarguments	Listen to others to find places of disagreement or to gather rational pieces of an argument	Listen to others without judgment and with a view to understand
Competitive - a focus on who is RIGHT. Someone wins, someone loses.	Conceptual – develop academic analysis, such as in classroom discussions.	Collaborative – seek a sense of community understanding
Disregard the importance of the relationship	Retain relationships, but do not build trust.	Build relationships for working together better in the future.

Adapted from the *Sustained Dialogue Moderator Manual*