Categories of Skills for Discussion Questions

(Based On Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives)

CATEGORY	KEY WORD	TYPICAL QUESTION WORD
Knowledge (any question regardless of complexity, that can be answered through simple recall of previously learned material) e.g. "What reasons did Columbus give for wanting to sail west to find a new world?"	Remember	a. Name b. List; Tell c. Define d. Who? When? What? e. Yes or No questions: e.g. "Did . . .? "Was . . .? "Is . . .? f. How many? How much? g. Recall or identify terminology h. What did the book say?
Comprehension Questions (questions that can be answered by merely restating or re-organizing material in a rather literal manner to show that the participant understands the essential meaning) e. g. "Give the ideas in your own words."	Understand	a. Give an example. b. What is the most important idea? c. What will probably happen? d. What caused this? e. Compare. (What things are different?) f. Why did you say that?
Application (questions that involve problem solving in new situations with minimum identification or prompting of the appropriate rules, principles, or concepts) e.g. "Suppose you wanted to write an essay on 'love'. Where would you look for information?"	Solve the problem	a. Solve b. How could you find an answer to . . .? c. Apply the generalization to . . .?

CATEGORY	KEY WORD	TYPICAL QUESTION WORD
<u>Analysis</u> (questions that require the participant to break an idea into its component parts for logical analysis: Assumptions, facts, opinions, logical conclusions, etc.) e.g. "Analyze the reasons the President of the United States gave to support his/her conclusions."	Logical order	a. What reasons does he give for his/her conclusions? b. What method is s/he using to convince you? c. What does the author seem to believe? d. What words indicate bias or emotion? e. Does the evidence given support the conclusion?
<u>Synthesis</u> (questions that require the participant to combine his/her ideas into a statement, plan, product, etc. that is new for him/her.) e.g. "Please diagram for us your own model of the communication process."	Create	a. Create a plan . . . b. Develop a model . . . c. Combine these parts . . .
<u>Evaluation</u> (questions that require the participant to make a judgment about something using some criteria or standard for making his judgment.) e.g. "How do you think Bill did as a discussion leader?"	Judge	a. Evaluate that idea in terms of . . . b. For what reasons do you favor . . .? c. Which policy do you think would result in the greatest good for the greatest number?

Techniques for sharpening your questioning skills:

1. Understand and communicate the purpose behind each question.
2. Use precise wording.
3. Use questions and dialogues as a method of intellectual investigation.
4. Wait patiently for participant responses, and learn how to rephrase a question rather than discard it.
5. Draw a participant's response out through verbal encouragement and non-verbal feedback—smiles, hand and head movements or other positive body positions.