

Lead-ins, pivots, and segues.

You've written your questions and asked your first one. The Turn-and-Talk went well, along with the group discussion afterwards. But now ...

What do you do when your next question does not naturally flow from the discussion?

You may need a lead in, pivot or segue. Some of these can be used over and over.

“Earlier we talked about xxxx, let's talk about the related question yyyy.”

“Previously we discussed aaaa, let's talk about a follow-up to that bbbb.”

“Before our last discussion we talked about ssss, let's talk about a contrasting idea tttt.”

However, sometimes the new question requires people to stop a moment to recalibrate their thinking. Then you need a longer pivot.

- Introduce the issue
- Give a short analysis, or read a quotation about it.
- Restate the question.
- Transition to Turn-and-Talk

This whole process should take only one or two minutes. No more.

Here is an example from my talk on transformation.

I mentioned that key questions can be asked about building a sense of community among alumni in a transforming society. Let's explore that some more. But first I'd like to read something written by Prof. Monica Wilson in 1969, when I was finishing college.

“A sense of community, of mutual aid and responsibility, is harder to achieve in a large-scale society than in a small-scale one, and the small-scale society is constricting in a way in which those who have not lived in it scarcely realize. The problem is to combine the warmth of a small community with the freedom of the large society.”

What does this suggest about the work of alumni relations in building a sense of community among alumni? Turn to your right-hand partner and share your thoughts. Go!

Look at your questions. Decide which are likely to need lead-ins or pivots. Create the pivots and write them down along with the question. (For some this will be on index cards.)

Sometimes the discussion will provide the pivot for you. Then you can go right to the question without needing the pivot. Great! But you know that you always have the lead-in there if you need it.

These segues provide an additional benefit. They break up the presentation and make it feel more extemporaneous.