

## **Some tips on class discussions**

Facilitating a discussion can be intimidating. It feels like you're solely responsible for if it goes well or not - but it's ok! Everyone in the class all have a responsibility to help create the discussion together. You're all collaborating.

### **-Guide the discussion, don't dominate it**

As the facilitator it's your job to keep people focused and make sure the discussion is going in a good direction. This doesn't mean you have to talk all the time! Phew. This applies to participating in any class discussion!

### **-Reflect back what other people are saying to help the flow**

Starting a response with something like "What I'm hearing people say is..." can be helpful in focusing the discussing and bringing ideas together. As the facilitator you can bring points together and use it to form new questions.

### **-Leave questions open enough for a variety of responses**

It shouldn't just be about guessing what you're thinking, but about helping others to think in new ways and see the insights you see. Use evidence to support your points, and be open to people disagreeing. Hearing different points of view helps you think better, so be open to it.

### **-Silences are ok!**

Sometimes silences are awkward and it can feel like no one is going to talk. Other times it may just be because people are thinking. Read the vibes of the room! Check body language, make eye contact - assess whether you need to ask a guiding question to start discussion or if you need to step back and let people form thoughts.

### **-Be aware of how much others are talking**

Is there someone who's made a lot of good points and are about to talk for the third time in a row? Is there someone who's been quiet the whole time? There are lots of reasons why people feel comfortable or uncomfortable talking, not just preparation. As a facilitator you can help more people participate by calling on people or giving time for people who haven't talked to enter in the discussion. Sometimes it's easier to talk when another student's facilitating the discussion than when the teacher is.

### **-Actively listen**

Make eye contact when others are talking, look at others when you are talking. Show that you're engaged in what they're saying and chances are they'll be more engaged too! As a speaker you have a lot of control over the energy of the room, so when you're excited about something it's easy for other people to be excited. When you're bored it's easy for other people to be bored.

***<http://hamp.it/tspmoodle>  
[www.facebook.com/TransformativeSpeakingProgram](http://www.facebook.com/TransformativeSpeakingProgram)***

***Transformative Speaking Program 2015***