

Tips to Becoming More Active in Classroom Discussions

Do the homework: Come prepared

- prepare questions
- find a relevant, recent media story

Ask questions

1. Admit you don't know

- And be curious!

2. Seek clarification

- What do you mean?
- Can you clarify a bit more?
- In other words, you are saying....
- Can you spin that out for me?

3. Be skeptical – and tactful

- Ask for additional details, examples
- Says who? Seek sources
- Are you sure? How sure are you?

4. Express your opinion (and ambivalence is okay)

- Use Hedging language
- On one hand....
- It seems/appears/looks like/feels like

5. Demonstrate how many problems remain complicated

- Consider diverse perspectives
- Look at stakeholders
- Consider technology
- Help move beyond the "obvious" into the subtle

6. Share Evidence (It's okay to disagree – even with the professor!)

- Bring new information (experience: personal, national) to the table
- Do we know.....
- Is it possible....
- What if you are wrong?

7. Become who you are

- don't forget what you bring to table
- Culture counts
- I wonder I wonder if I wonder how I wonder who
- Help the USC class become a truly global classroom

Some Media Suggestions:

Radio:

- 89.3 FM
- 89.9 FM
- Science Fridays, Which Way L.A.? Marketplace Radio

Print Media:

Daily Trojan, The L.A. Times, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Economist, Time Magazine

Websites for Insights/Stories on American Culture:

- Storycorps.org ThisIbelieve.org
- TED.com ThisAmericanLife.org

Websites for news:

- HuffingtonPost.com
- DrudgeReport.com