



AN EFFECTIVE DISCUSSION LEADER:

- **Is well prepared and organized:** Be well informed about the literature, address specific parts of the reading, and discuss different points of view. Present information logically and clearly.
- **Outlines the agenda:** Begin the class with a basic overview and the objectives of the discussion. End with a brief summary of specific points discussed.
- **Develops thoughtful questions:** Make the class think beyond the assignment. Be aware of controversial questions and be prepared for debate. Be able to play devil's advocate, if appropriate. Be willing to admit that you do not know an answer or do not have a response.
- **Peaks classmates' interests and highlights the relevance:** Refer to previous discussions or readings when leading into a new idea. Include outside examples and/or unusual or interesting facts.
- **Keeps the discussion focused on the topic.**
- **Is Flexible:** Stay organized during the discussion, yet be flexible enough to accommodate unplanned relevant topics that may come up. Encourage questions and anticipate a range of responses. Do not impose your own opinion.
- **Encourages participation:** Monitor how much you and others talk, ask questions and wait for responses. Remember this is leading a discussion and not a solo presentation. Try to say something positive or responsive after a speaker's comments.
- **Interacts rather than reads:** Do not read off PowerPoint slides or notes. Use note-cards with key ideas to focus the discussion and questions. Being too rehearsed can often make other students uncomfortable. Remember to talk to classmates and not at them.
- **Is confident:** Make good eye contact. Be relaxed and open to ideas and responses. Do not be afraid of moments of silence.
- **Is enthusiastic:** Classmates will only be as excited and interested about a given topic as the leader.