



Handout 2

WAYS OF CONTRIBUTING TO DISCUSSIONS

You can contribute to the discussion by:

1. Giving an example to illustrate what someone else has said.
2. Agreeing, but adding some suggestions.
3. Comparing what has been said to something else you know about (perhaps something you have read).
4. Disagreeing—and giving your reasons.
5. Asking a question.
6. Introducing a new topic.

Generally the plan of action is like this:

- While you are listening to a speaker, try to link your own ideas to what is being said so that you are prepared to add your contribution.
- When the speaker is beginning to wind down, start to move forward in your chair—look as if you want to say something.
- Start to speak immediately the other person stops.

Whatever you say is valuable, and everyone's opinion should be respected. As an international student, your experience of other cultures and viewpoints is often very interesting to the group.

People may agree or disagree with your idea. Discussing ideas (even arguing) is often a productive way of developing new ideas. So, if someone disagrees with you, that's probably a good sign! It means you've given people something to think about!

(Extract from <http://www.canberra.edu.au/studyskills/learning/seminars>)