

Introduction to Sustainability

Classroom Discussion Guide

NATURE OF COLLEGE

There are many different ways to craft and be involved in a classroom discussion. This document is meant to guide your preparation and participation in the discussion process.

Preparation:

In consultation with your discussion partners develop a couple of discussion questions to send to the class that will require 20 minutes of discussion time. The *Reader's Guide* for *The Nature of College* is a good resource for questions and you may adopt (and perhaps modify) any of these questions. You should also identify terms that might need defining or clarifying during the discussion. At least **24 hours prior** to the class meeting, email your questions and terms to the listserv so that your classmates can come prepared.

Others are welcome to bring additional questions to the discussion. The leaders will note these questions at the start of the discussion.

Class Discussion:

To facilitate the class discussion there are four main roles:

1. **Leaders:** Write your questions and terms on the board. Identify any additional questions the class is interested in discussing.
2. **Timekeeper:** Group and prioritize the questions on the board. Determine how much time is going to be given to each topic and then make sure the class moves onto each item within the allotted time during the discussion process. It is okay to spend more time on fewer topics (skipping some) so long as this is done with class input. These changes are typically made in the middle of the discussion.
3. **Gatekeeper:** During the discussion make sure everyone is involved. Be aware when some students are dominating the discussion. Make sure to involve everyone. Some people are quick to talk while others need more time to think and develop their ideas. Some discussions flow easily while others need more active control – like passing around an object that enables the holder to speak. Your task is to make sure everyone is able to contribute ideas.
4. **Evaluator:** Wrap up and summarize the discussion topic(s) as well as the quality of the actual discussion. If needed, identify changes to be made in future discussions.

Roles:

The discussion leaders will decide who will be the Timekeeper, Gatekeeper and Evaluator. If you have less than three people in your discussion group you may involve/choose class members. The course instructor will take the role of External Evaluator.