

# Top Tips for Facilitating Seminars

- 1. Plan the seminar.** Identify what it is that you are hoping the students will achieve. Think about how the material relates to the previous lecture but don't repeat the lecture; you need to extend the learning.
- 2. Build students' interconnectivity.** In the first seminar facilitate speed meeting (like speed dating) to enable the students to get to know each other. This will help prevent the formation of student cliques and will mediate students' social safety with each other.
- 3. Manage the classroom furniture.** Don't be afraid to ask students to move the furniture (two rows of chairs facing each other for speed meeting; group tables for discussions (4-6 students); horseshoe configuration for full group discussion).
- 4. Share with students the importance of compassion in co-learning.** Compassion is defined as the noticing or anticipating of disadvantage to others, and taking action to reduce that. If students are compassionate they will welcome, and support, seminar contributions from each other through their verbal and non-verbal communication. Students should consider a) what am I doing to enhance other peoples' learning? and b) what are others doing to enhance my learning?
- 5. Ensure ground rules encompass inclusive behaviours.** If not identified by students, you could suggest rules such as: include everyone in their eye contact when they speak; reduce their own and others' tendency to monopolise discussions or withhold contributions; actively question ideas and assumptions.
- 6. Empower students to run the discussions.** Check that the students understand the task requirements and once they have started the task don't be tempted to immediately join group discussions. Instead, spend some time observing and supporting inclusive behaviours.
- 7. Encourage critical thinking.** Challenge students to identify key points of the article/case study and consider variables that have not been addressed. The students might like to consider what they would ask the author if she/he were present. Ask them to identify links or connections to their previous knowledge and lecture material as well as to other articles/cases.
- 8. Communicate high expectations.** Not only should the tutor have high expectations of the students (e.g. doing the preparatory work; abiding by ground rules), they should also endorse and validate the students' high expectations of each other.
- 9. Check for understanding.** Using questions will help you check for understanding [example questions could be *guiding* (have you thought of...?) *challenging* (how does that work...?) *opposing* (an alternative scenario might be...?) *stretching* (what might the pitfalls be...? have you thought about time/cost/social/political/ethical factors?)]
- 10. Consider assessing compassionate behaviours.** There is a theoretical and evidence base for assessing compassionate behaviours specific to the seminar. Exemplar criteria are available.



**Examine the student learning experience: the perspective of student staff**

**1. What is the most important thing you have learned from this seminar?**

**2. How do you feel about your own contribution to the seminar?**

**3. How do you feel about the contribution of your fellow students?**

**4. How do you feel about the seminar overall?**

**5. What advice would you give to a student who is new to seminars?**

**6. What advice would you give to a tutor who is new to facilitating seminars?**

**7. What advice would you give to a student who is struggling in seminars?**

**8. What advice would you give to a tutor who is struggling to facilitate seminars?**

**9. What advice would you give to a student who is not participating in seminars?**

**10. What advice would you give to a tutor who is not getting the most out of seminars?**



Criteria	Excellent (5*)	Good (4*)	Satisfactory (3*)	Needs Improvement (2*)	Unsatisfactory (1*)
<b>1. Preparation</b>	Prepared well in advance, with a clear understanding of the topic and the seminar's objectives.	Prepared in advance, with a clear understanding of the topic and the seminar's objectives.	Prepared in advance, with a clear understanding of the topic and the seminar's objectives.	Prepared in advance, with a clear understanding of the topic and the seminar's objectives.	Prepared in advance, with a clear understanding of the topic and the seminar's objectives.
<b>2. Contribution</b>	Contributed significantly to the seminar, with original ideas and insights.	Contributed to the seminar, with original ideas and insights.	Contributed to the seminar, with original ideas and insights.	Contributed to the seminar, with original ideas and insights.	Contributed to the seminar, with original ideas and insights.
<b>3. Engagement</b>	Engaged actively with the seminar, listening to others and responding to their contributions.	Engaged actively with the seminar, listening to others and responding to their contributions.	Engaged actively with the seminar, listening to others and responding to their contributions.	Engaged actively with the seminar, listening to others and responding to their contributions.	Engaged actively with the seminar, listening to others and responding to their contributions.
<b>4. Collaboration</b>	Collaborated effectively with others, working together to solve problems and reach consensus.	Collaborated effectively with others, working together to solve problems and reach consensus.	Collaborated effectively with others, working together to solve problems and reach consensus.	Collaborated effectively with others, working together to solve problems and reach consensus.	Collaborated effectively with others, working together to solve problems and reach consensus.
<b>5. Reflection</b>	Reflected on the seminar experience, identifying what was learned and how it will be applied.	Reflected on the seminar experience, identifying what was learned and how it will be applied.	Reflected on the seminar experience, identifying what was learned and how it will be applied.	Reflected on the seminar experience, identifying what was learned and how it will be applied.	Reflected on the seminar experience, identifying what was learned and how it will be applied.