Encouraging participation

Prompting students
Well, what I reckon is first of all they're shy and it's all about breaking the ice. Like if the tutor can do that by breaking the ice, by humour or by asking a question, but somehow just getting them out of their comfort zone and out of their shell because generally they want to talk but somehow they want someone to prompt them or somehow make sure that someone is willing to press their button at the right time so that they're willing to deliver when the tutor asks a certain question. But as it goes on, like second to third tute, fourth or fifth, as it goes on all the students start interacting and then it's perfect with what we call a brainstorming session and everyone is coming up with their own fabulous ideas and hence there's a better output.

Use students' names
For example in one of my tuts, the lecturer knows all the students' names. We go on, we say hello, she marks the roll. And then whenever we have discussions, she can ask certain points of view from certain people around the classroom. So that helps to stimulate the class a little bit more and helps to stimulate learning for everybody as opposed to just reading out the answers or picking someone randomly and them having to say their answers. I think names, it's a small thing, but I think an important thing as well.

Get to know each other
I think at the beginning of semester every tutor should get their students to turn around and talk to everyone - do it for a few classes so everyone kind of becomes friends. And that just really lightens up the mood and encourages people to relax in class.

Keeping them up to date
I think keeping up to date with the information, that was right, keeping up to date with the information so we actually know what's happening in the exam, when our assignments are being marked and they may seem like such petty things but they do matter to students who like to be kept up to date and we like our tutors to be kept up to date and we like to know what's going on in our unit because they're our first point of contact to make sure they are up to date.
Approachibility

A [good] tutor is definitely someone that can get students to talk, I suppose. It's going to be hard because most of the students will be intimidated by the fact that they may get answers wrong, they may appear stupid, they may - they don't want to embarrass themselves in front of their classmates or even people they don't know. So a tutor would be - a good tutor would be able to help them to overcome that fear by different ways. For example, they can just in the tutorials or something, in examples they give out in the tutorials maybe they can include student's name to amuse them, make them feel related. In that way students would be more - find them more approachable, easier to talk to.

Friendliness

I guess like if you know their name it kind of makes it closer and - yeah, it forms kind of this closer relationship with your tutor and it's easier to talk too. Rather than not knowing a tutor, sometimes yeah, you don't really talk to them and stuff. So it's good to know your tutor and sometimes I think it's important for them to interact, maybe like, what did you do over the weekend. And just ask and get to know each other, I think that's good, yeah.

Interactivity encourages students to participate

I found that sometimes the methods that are effective are if the subject has a class participation component where it actually contributes to some marks of the assessment. That encourages people to actually do the preparation and therefore come more prepared to a class than as opposed to when it's not and they just have to turn up. And you'll find generally when there are marks attached to it, students will prepare due to the fear of losing marks and also it's an easy way to gain marks as well. So I found when the subjects I've done have participation the students are more willing to prepare so I think it's a good idea if there's more participation classes.

Sense of humour
Well this actually happened in a law tutorial of mine and what the tutor did was he actually, his first three tutorials, he started cracking some jokes and they weren't necessarily law-related they were just meant to liven the mood and just make our conversation flow more freely and it tended to work, I notice, and I think that this is an excellent technique that tutors can do to encourage students to speak up and feel more comfortable. It's all about making the student feel more comfortable, that's what I feel.

Don't be dismissive

Make us feel comfortable and let us know that it is okay to make a mistake. Sometimes with the tutors, if we do make a mistake, they just go yes, that's a really stupid answer, we'll just shut you down completely. So if you make us feel comfortable to talk, even if we don't finish right, then eventually we will talk more and participate more.

Let students explain in their own words

Maybe ask more questions and try and get them motivated into discussing the topic. Teach them things and get them to portray what they just taught back to the class or back to the tutor. But they shouldn't be too pushy, simply because otherwise a lot of students know from what I've seen, will stop attending, because otherwise they'll feel intimidated within the class, as they feel they're being picked on.

Tutorial and lecture synchronization

For me, if I were a tutor what I would do if I go into a class, before I go to the tutorial I would talk my lecturing charge first, for my subject, I would ask him exactly where we're at, which topic are we on which area of that specific topic do you want me to expand on that people don't really get. For example, for one specific point most students don't really get because it's hard, it takes time to get around it, then the tutor can take time to explain in the tutorial more in depth, and that helps the
students. Afterwards, then he can go into the questions to strengthen the knowledge that we've learnt during that week.

**Presentations**

And it's good to have some activities. Like you can have a group presentation during the whole semester, so each class, they've got some group and do the presentation so the whole class won't be so bored. And sometimes you should push the student to talk. You can use some name tags just to help you to know which student, you can call the student's name and ask them to answer the questions.

**Make participation expectations explicit**

It should actually start at the beginning of the tutorials, where they explain the expectations on the students to speak up and participate. Maybe give them some participation points, because that always really helps.

**Welcome all responses**

So I guess to enhance participation you could have a more friendly group where you communicate to the student that this is only a tutorial, I'm not going to mark you based on whether you're right or wrong, but whether you're speaking. Because a lot of units have participation marks and you tend to think that it's whether you are saying the right thing or wrong thing but actually in reality a lot of tutors tell us, we're just looking for people who are participative, you know. As long as you're participating, trying to actively find the answer, that's what we're looking for. So I guess with these things the tutor makes it clearer, it will help.

**Grouping students**

I think one of my lecture for actuarial studies he's really good at teaching what he does is like he'd group - like for actuarial studies we have small classes, for example we have 80 students in one lecture only. So what he does is he gives out a piece of paper with most recent news or information
from the newspaper or on the internet that he browses through, and what he does is before the class, he numbers every single one of them at the back of the page without the students knowing and then hands them out randomly. I think he rates from one to 18 or something and then every student gets a different number and then randomly switches them into number one, that's that group. It's really good in the sense that you get to know that person, not friends, but your classmates that you don't know and get to that person first and then start discussing that question belonging to your group and then you elect one person to come up with the answer. That's a really good way of interacting and really good way of learning. Knowledge spills over between students, that is really important.

Accommodate international students

They [tutors/lecturers] need to - you know in Macquarie they have a lot of overseas students, so I think they need to be aware of this. For me, I am an overseas student, so my first year was really tough because they speak too fast and I can't even like catch them. So I did pretty bad in my first year, but I'm getting better now, so that's fine for me. So especially for the first year lecturer, they need to know the standards of the overseas students, they're not familiar with the accent and stuff. So yes, they need to speak a bit slower.