On the following slides are a few resources and suggestions I've used with students. Perhaps an activity could be developed over crafting a good introduction for your self in small groups, then introducing themselves to the larger group. This is an adaptation of an elevator pitch activity.

I have found that developing a better introduction for myself is really helpful in engaging a conversation, even if brief!

Introduce Yourself

A formula for how to “Introduce Yourself” to make a memorable impression and (hopefully) engage in further conversation

- **A greeting, and your name**

  Hello, I'm _____

- **Past**
  Briefly, your background, where you're originally from, or previous university – especially if it's relevant to the situation or if it will help you connect to the person you're talking to

- **Present**
  Your current position or program

- **What you're doing in your current position or grad program (your research, teaching, Extension, etc.) 1-2 sentences**

  – Briefly describe the situation (or problem), why it's important, what you are doing to address the issue, and the impact (how/why you're changing the situation).
  In other words . . . So what? Who cares?

Adapt your introduction to the situation (you can prepare different versions ahead of time)

Try to include something interesting, memorable, distinctive (think . . . conversation starter)

You will notice that people will be more apt to engage you in conversation if you start off with a good introduction

Remember to describe the impact of your work – “so what?” Here are some ideas:

What happened as a result of the work described?

What knowledge was gained?

What skills were increased?

What practices/behavior changed?

How much money was saved or produced? (economic impact)

Were policies changed as a result?

What were the end results (quantitative and qualitative)?

What was the scope of the impact (campus, regional, statewide, national, international)?

Be credible

- Make eye contact
- Use good posture
- Project enthusiasm, be aware of your body language, be interested
- Convey confidence in your voice, actions

References

Communication: Two minutes to impress
Roberta Kwok
Nature 494, 137-138 (2013)
doi:10.1z038/nj7435-137a
http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/science/articles/10.1038/nj7435-137a

Eric Pye
https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140813183345-15462-4-steps-to-a-perfect-elevator-pitch

On the following slide I've included a list of tips for developing conversational skills, adapted from Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms, 2nd ed., S.D. Brookfield and S. Preskill, 2005, Jossey-Bass

Developing Conversational Skills in Group Discussion

- Ask a question or make a comment that indicates you are interested in what the other person has said.
- Encourage someone to elaborate on something that he/she has said.
- Make a link between two comments or ideas.
- Make a comment if something that another person said was interesting or useful; explain or be specific.
- Build upon what someone else has said. Explain why you are building upon the person's comments.
- Summarize a common theme that takes into account several people's contributions.
- Ask a cause and effect question: "If this were to occur, what do you think would happen to ____?"
- If someone said something that helps you understand a point, comment on how this helped you.
- Offer another viewpoint. If you disagree with someone, do so in a considerate and respectful way; offer a good reason(s).

Adapated in part from: Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms, 2nd ed., S.D. Brookfield and S. Preskill, 2005, Jossey-Bass