Conversational Roles

Expressing one’s point of view is not the only way to productively contribute to a class discussion. Selecting students randomly to fill the following roles may create more balance in the conversation and help students to reflect on the behaviors of other participants.

**Theme proposer** (introduce the topic or major questions for discussion)

**Reflective analyst** (record conversation’s development, report every 20 minutes or so)

**Scrounger** (listen for and report helpful resources, suggestions, tips that emerge for dealing with a particular discussion issue)

**Devil’s Advocate** (note when an uncritical consensus prevails and challenge it)

**Detective** (call out biases)

**Textual Focuser** (require participants to support their claims with text/evidence)

**Theme Spotter** (identify what has not been made explicit)

**Umpire** (ensure civility, following ground rules)