

"It's My Turn": Speaking Up in Class Discussion

Laura W. Doto, M.A.
University of Chicago

Workshop Outline and Agenda

The **objective** of this workshop is to educate students about the various roles they play during a classroom discussion, to allow them an opportunity to practice a specific role, and to boost their confidence as they anticipate their next class discussion.

The **audience** for this workshop is College students and/or beginning graduate students. This workshop can also be easily modified for non-native English language students (ESL) by focusing on the culture of the American classroom and expectations for discussion-oriented learning.

Method: Discuss value of class discussion as a learning tool; Introduce roles of active listener, facilitator, clarifier, and reporter; Introduce group activity and discussion topic; Allow for discussion (10-15 minutes); Regroup and assess solutions and group roles.

The following is the outline of the flow of workshop, including ideas and definitions for learning objectives and roles, respectively.

I. Introductions

- A. Introduce yourself and allow the participants to introduce themselves
- B. Articulate the goals of the workshop:
 - to educate about the various roles we play during a classroom discussion
 - to allow an opportunity to practice a specific role
 - to boost confidence as we anticipate the next class discussion
- C. Inquire about some of the specific concerns that students have?

The [Workshop Agenda](#) is also available as an overhead / handout.

II. Purpose of classroom discussion

- A. Opportunity to clarify ideas
- B. Enhance familiarity with subject
- C. Develop and evaluate ideas
- D. Opportunity to demonstrate and explore your ideas with instructor, classmates and yourself

III. The roles we play in a discussion (all at once)

A. **Participant/Active listener** - contribute to group discussion and take an active role in informing and assessing possible solutions to the scenario.

B. **Facilitator**: Helps the group to stay on topic by directing group discussion to ensure that the topic is addressed and all participants have the opportunity to contribute.

C. **Clarifier**: Serves as a reflective listener working to clarify any points that are not clear or that appear disjointed and to ensure all participants understand the ideas expressed by other group members.

D. **Reporter**: records relevant ideas and responses and may present these at a later date in a variety of formats (paper, exam, conversation, presentation).

IV. Preparing for these roles (like paper writing)

A. Read

B. Question

C. Note-take and write -- record questions or ideas

D. Review material immediately prior to discussion

V. Group discussion (activity) - assign roles and resolve problem

- Participants are divided into teams of four where each member of the group is assigned one of three role (see handouts):
 - [Facilitator Role](#)
 - [Clarifier Role](#)
 - [Reporter Role](#)
- All participants are expected to also play an Active Listener / Participant Role.
- The handouts are best divided by color-coding the roles to ensure that each group contains at least one each of the four roles ? I often assign two clarifiers to a group since everyone is assigned the role of participant/active listener.
 - A. Brainstorm ideas for entering conversation
 - B. Discuss responses to these ideas - what works for one, may not for another
 - C. Make recommendations to larger group

VI. Large group recommendations list

- Once regrouped, invite the reporter from each group to articulate the recommendations made for the scenario presented.

VII. Wrap-up

A. What suggestion will you take back to the classroom?

B. Feedback Survey (workshop evaluation)

Additional Handouts:

- [Oral Presentation and Discussion Techniques](#)
 - [Critical Inquiry](#)
 - [Resource List](#)
-

[Laura Doto](#) is an Educational Counselor at the University of Chicago's Academic Skills Assessment Program.

Copyright © 1999 Laura W. Doto. Permission is granted to copy and use this material for educational and non-profit purposes only. This copyright statement and acknowledgement of authorship should remain intact on materials you copy from this website.