ES2660 COMMUNICATING IN THE INFORMATION AGE

SMART TALKING STUDENTS ENABLING IDEAS TO TAKE FLIGHT

T12: 12 ANGRY MEN – LINGUISTIC FRAMES FOR ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS

TO DO, TODAY

- Recap of key learning points of productive academic conversations – Wild card practice #5

- Strategies for improving discussion skills

- Voicing an opinion and arguing a point effectively

- Leading a discussion

- Can you speak for just two minutes on your observations from the fishbowl discussion?

- "What makes the best sort of fish for a fishbowl discussion?"

JUGGLING THE ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONAL BALLS – RECAP

Academic conversations
- Increase knowledge
- Increase understanding
- Increase CT

IPC etiquette

Cultural values

CT

Language use & para-language

Content knowledge

Non verbal

Winning formula ORE opinion+ reasons+ evidence

THE PURPOSE OF ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS – RECAP

- To increase knowledge and understanding

- To improve language skills

- To increase confidence in speaking

- To achieve reasoned mutual understanding.

  - It is not about winning the argument, but it is the quality of the argument that is important.

CONSTRUCTIVE AND NON-CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSION FRAMES

- As in all group discussion, there is helpful/constructive behaviour and unhelpful/non-constructive behaviour

- Such behaviour is manifested in discussion frames, e.g.

  building, adding, elaborating vs blocking and stalling

12 ANGRY MEN

- … and one that makes a difference
- Take notes on the dialogue – what strikes you as positive or negative?

12 ANGRY MEN

From your notes, what constructive and non-constructive discussion phrases did you find?

IPC – INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

- Did you make any observations about what counts as constructive or non-constructive contributions?

- What have you noticed about the definition of etiquette or acceptable politeness?

HERE'S WHAT I HEARD

1. We'd like to get started"
   - Constructive, because it gets people to stop delaying without offending them or directly accusing them of delaying the group.
2. "Maybe we can all get out of here"
   - Non-constructive, because it signals that the speaker's main goal is to hurry the process rather than arrive at a fair decision.
3. "Boy oh boy there's always one"
   - Non-constructive, because it shows the speaker is making the disagreement a personal issue, putting down the dissenter instead of addressing the reason for dissent.
4. "You really think he's innocent?"
   - Constructive, because the speaker shows an interest in the dissenter's reasons.
5. "Would you like me to list them for you?"
   - Non-constructive, because it conveys sarcasm rather than honest debate
6. "Then what DO you want?"
   - Constructive, because it shows an attempt to dig below the surface, and to really engage with the reasons for dissent
7. "Well what's there to talk about?"
   - Non-constructive, because it dismisses the suggestion that more discussion is needed before arriving at a consensus. It shows impatience rather than curiosity
8. "I want to ask you something"
   - Constructive, because it shows a deepening curiosity and a willingness to hear the other person out
9. "I'm not trying to change your mind"
   - Constructive, because it provides a reassurance that directly addresses a fear that has been expressed

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ACADEMIC CONVERSATION SKILLS

- **Prepare**
  - Attend lectures
  - Read
  - Address gaps in understanding

- **Practise**
  - outside of class in informal settings
  - ask classmates about their opinions
  - listen and respond to what they say

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ACADEMIC CONVERSATION SKILLS

- **Participate**
  - **Entering the space**
    - Agree with what someone has said
    - Ask them to expand on their point
    - Prepare a question to ask
  - **Settling into the space**
    - Answer a question put to the group
    - Provide an example for a point under discussion
    - **Owning the space**
      - Disagree with a point

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ACADEMIC CONVERSATION SKILLS

- **Observe**

  How do people:

  - enter into the discussion
  - ask questions, disagree with/support the topic
  - make critical comments
  - politely disagree
  - signal a desire to speak?

- **Listen** actively and attentively:
  - identify main ideas
  - evaluate relevance of contributions
  - be receptive to new perspectives and how they relate to prior knowledge
  - mentally paraphrase
  - ask yourself questions
  - take notes about things you could respond to

VOICING AN OPINION (O-R-E)

- Have a valid **opinion**
  - I believe that…
  - I think that…
  - From what I understand…
  - As I understand it…

- A **reason** why
  - This is due to…
  - Because …
  - What I mean by this is …

- **Evidence**
  - This can be seen by…
  - For instance/example…
  - An example can be seen…
  - (Author) states that/suggests…
  - Statistics from (source)indicate…

HIERARCHY OF DISAGREEMENT https://bigthink.com/paul-ratner/how-to-disagree-well-7-of-the-best-and-worst-ways-to-argue
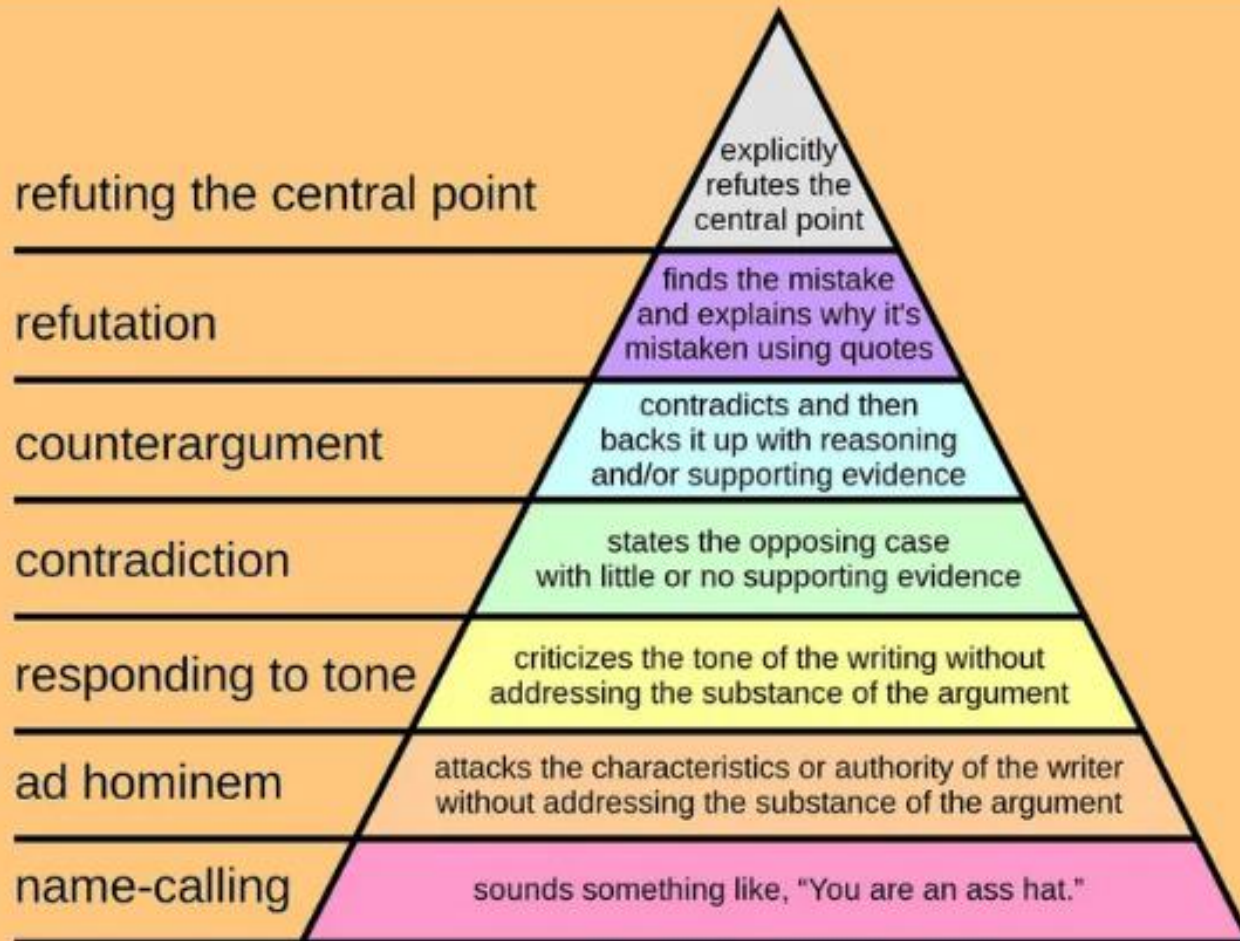
Source: Paul Graham (2008), aka "the hacker philosopher". Read: https://bigthink.com/paul-ratner/how-to-disagree-well-7-of-the-best-and-worst-ways-to-argue

HOW TO DISAGREE EFFECTIVELY

- Acknowledge speaker's ideas
  - I can see your point. However…
  - That's a good point, but…
  - I see what you're getting at/ where you're coming from, but…
  - I see what you mean. However…

- Explain why you disagree
  - That's not always the case because…
  - That's not necessarily true because…
  - This idea isn't supported by statistics/evidence.
  - I thought the author meant that…

HOW TO DISAGREE EFFECTIVELY

- Offer your opinion with reason and support

  - From what I've read…

  - The statistics seem to indicate that…

  - I think that what (author) may actually be suggesting is…

  - Other studies by (author) show that…

DISCUSSION ETIQUETTE

DO

- Respect contribution of other speakers
- Listen well to other ideas
- Acknowledge points of interest
- Disagree politely
- Respect differing views
- Think before you speak
- Stick to the discussion topic
- Be aware of body language
- Speak clearly

DISCUSSION ETIQUETTE

DON'T

- Take offence if someone disagrees with you
- Intimidate, insult or ridicule
- Dismiss or trivialize
- Sound angry or aggressive
- Dominate the discussion
- Draw too much on anecdote
- Interrupt

ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS – 5 BASIC BUILDING SKILLS

- Elaborating and clarifying

- Supporting ideas with examples

- Paraphrasing

- Synthesizing

- Building on/challenging ideas

ES2660 PANEL DISCUSSION

SEMI-FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT – COUNTED IN CLASS PARTICIPATION (5% OUT OF 15%)

PANEL DISCUSSION (WEEK 8)

Umbrella topic: IT solutions to human problems

- **Team A topic**
- Your choice (team members should all agree on the problem, the tech solution may be different)

- **Team B topic**
- Your choice (team members should all agree on the problem, the tech solution may be different)

- **Team C topic**
- Your choice (team members should all agree on the problem, the tech solution may be different)

- **Team D topic**
- Your choice (team members should all agree on the problem, the tech solution may be different)

Oxford Essays (week 11) should identify the relationship between specific problems and solutions where there is an IT solution to a human problem.

Be curious, think of a good question to answer, embrace controversy.

PANEL DISCUSSION TEAMS WILL SPEAK ON WEEK BEGINNING…
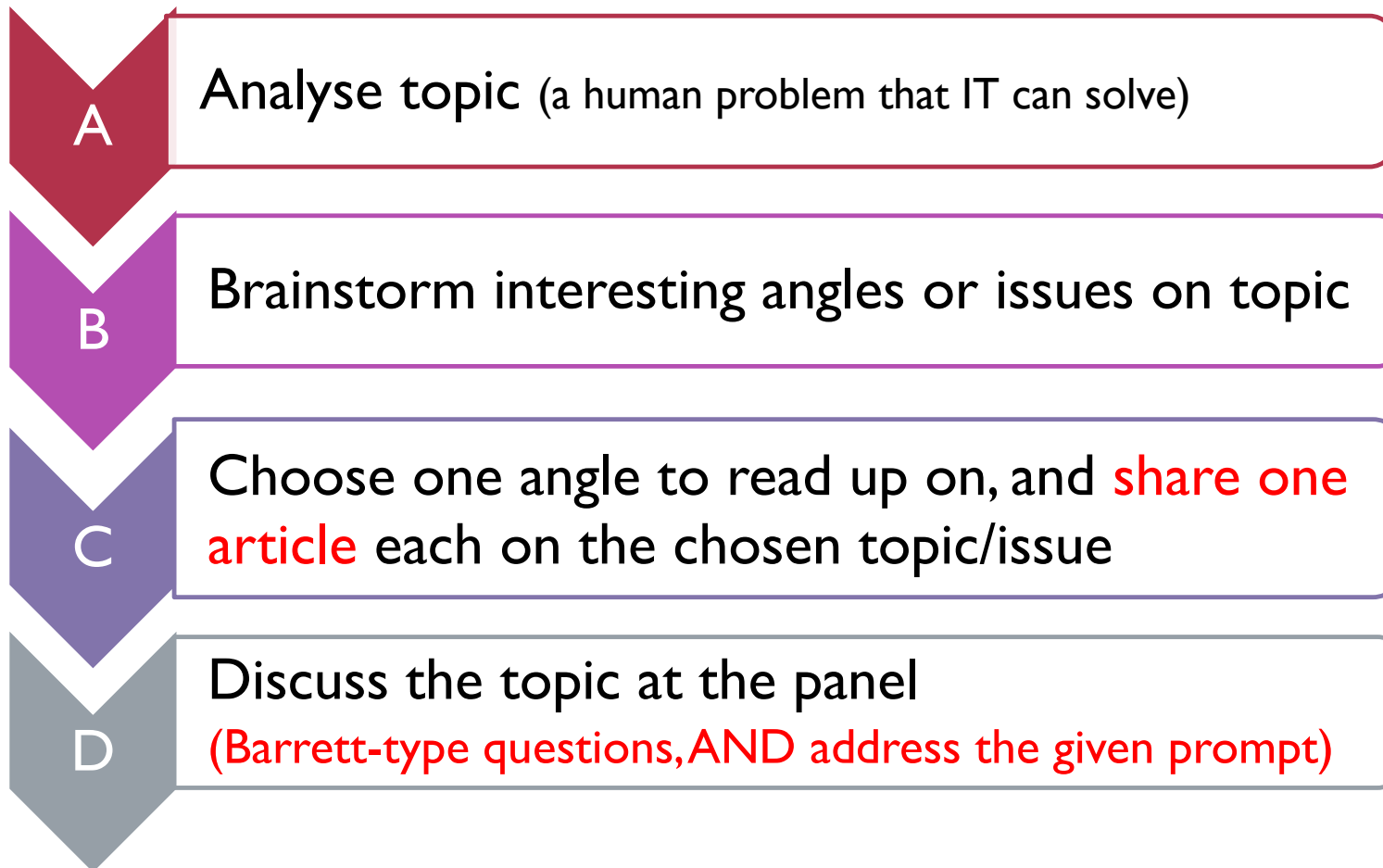
Team D **Monday, 7 October/Tuesday, 8 October**	**Team C** **Monday, 7 October/Tuesday, 8 October**
Team B Thursday, 10 October/Friday, 11 October	Team A Thursday, 10 October /Friday, 11 October
Whole Class present for all panel discussions, teams not discussing will be audience and ask questions and give feedback on discussion strategies used.	

PANEL DISCUSSION – EASY AS ABCD

A — Analyse topic (a human problem that IT can solve)

B — Brainstorm interesting angles or issues on topic

C — Choose one angle to read up on, and share one article each on the chosen topic/issue

D — Discuss the topic at the panel
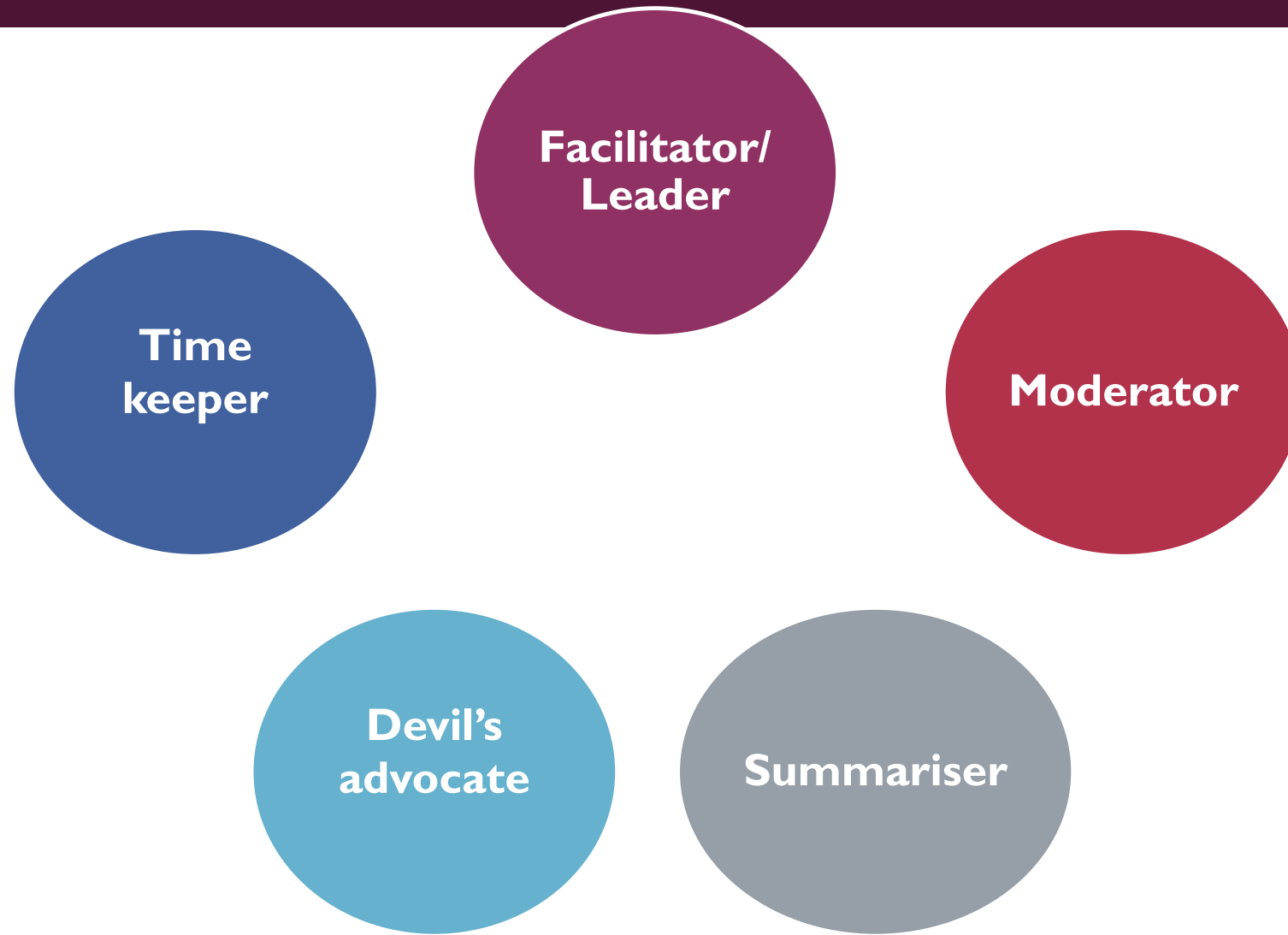(Barrett-type questions, AND address the given prompt)

RULES

- Panelists to talk to each other and the audience for 25-30 mins.

- Audience to listen with no interruptions/interjections/comments until Q and A from audience.

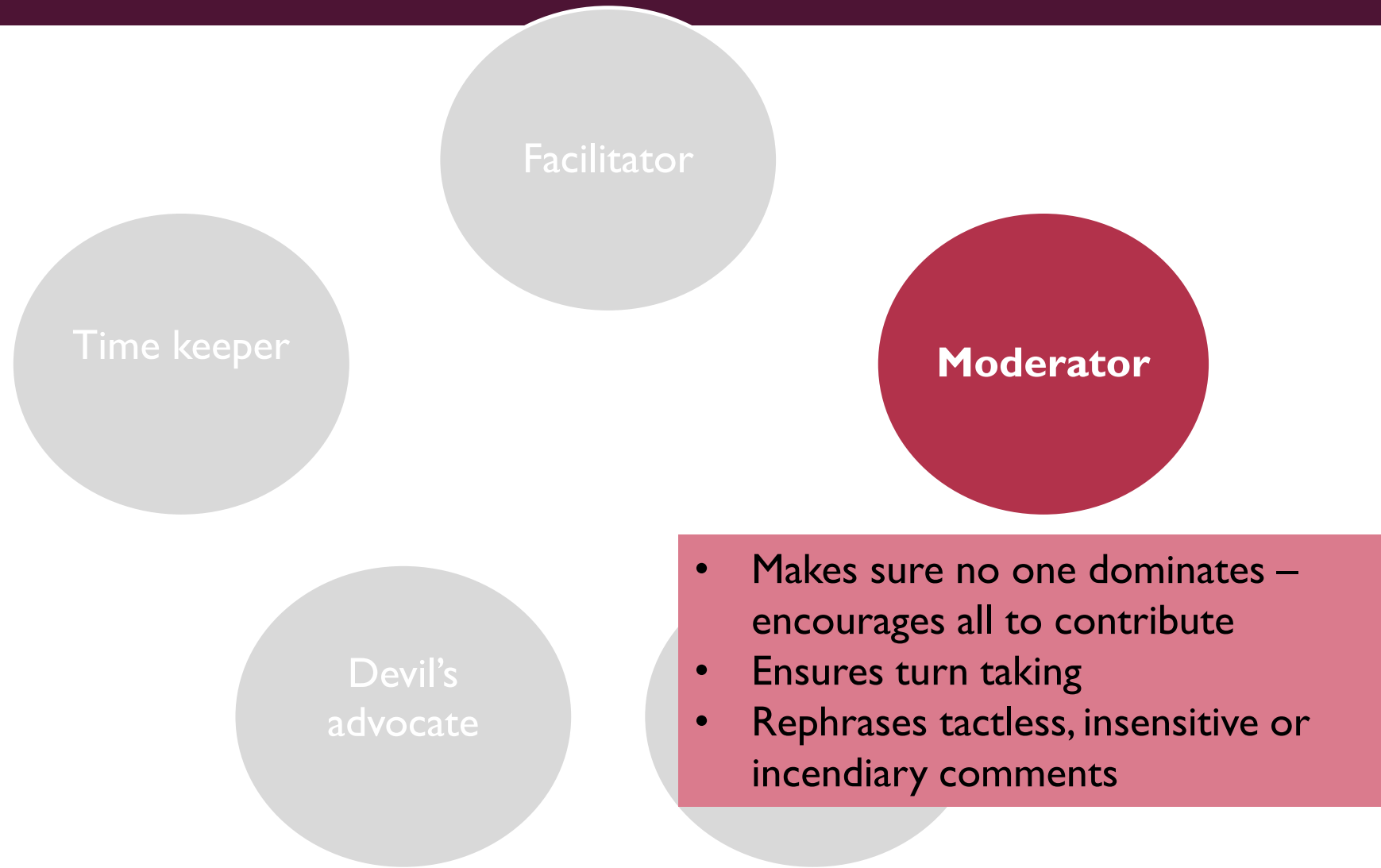- Q and A (10-15 mins) – evenly distributed among panelists

ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS AND DISCUSSION ROLES

Facilitator/ Leader

Time keeper

Moderator

Devil's advocate

Summariser

ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS AND DISCUSSION ROLES

Facilitator/ Leader

Time keeper

oderator

- Introduce yourself and state the purpose of the discussion
- Ask questions to stimulate the discussion
- Ensure relevance

Devil's advocate

Summariser

ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS AND DISCUSSION ROLES

Facilitator

Time keeper

Moderator

Devil's advocate

- Makes sure no one dominates – encourages all to contribute
- Ensures turn taking
- Rephrases tactless, insensitive or incendiary comments

ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS AND DISCUSSION ROLES
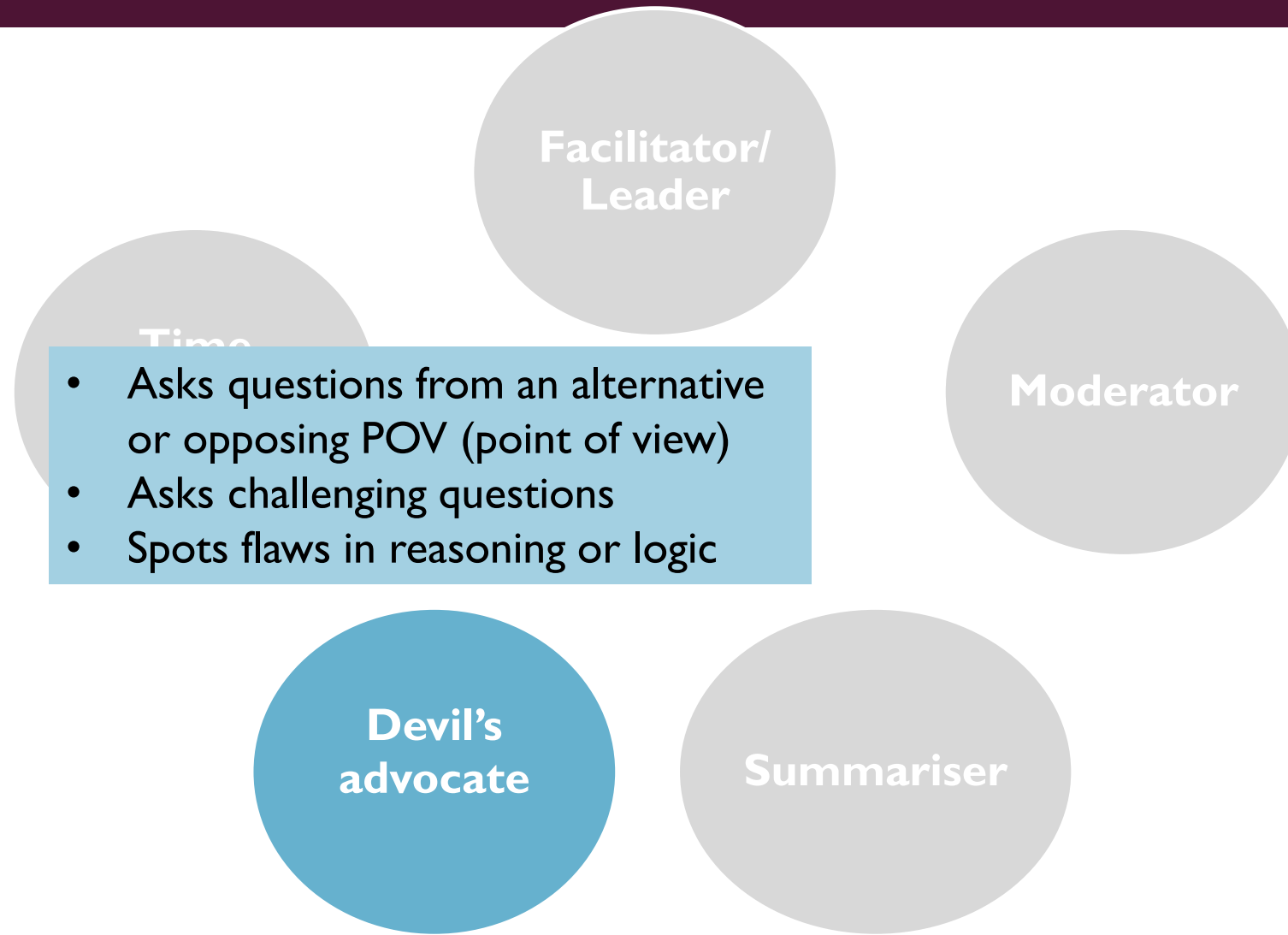
Facilitator/ Leader

Time keeper

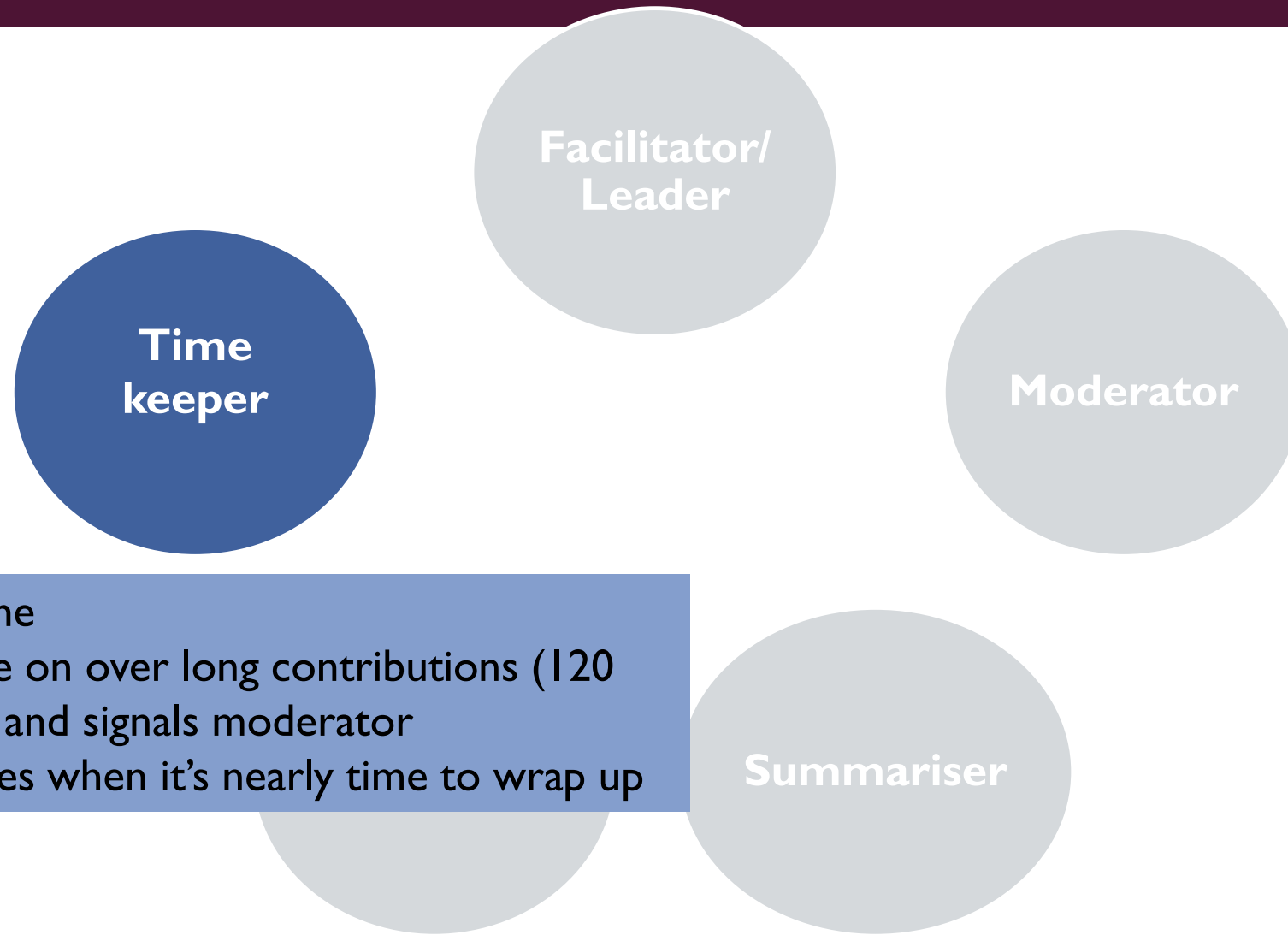- Recaps each main point before the discussion moves on
- Concludes at the end

Devil's advocate

Summariser

ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS AND DISCUSSION ROLES

Facilitator/ Leader

Time

Moderator

- Asks questions from an alternative or opposing POV (point of view)
- Asks challenging questions
- Spots flaws in reasoning or logic

Devil's advocate

Summariser

ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS AND DISCUSSION ROLES

Facilitator/ Leader

Moderator

Time keeper

- Keeps time
- Calls time on over long contributions (120 seconds) and signals moderator
- Announces when it's nearly time to wrap up

Summariser

PREPARE QUESTIONS

BUILDING CLARIFYING ELABORATING PROBING CHALLENGING

POINTS OF VIEW

- Take a stand

- Choose a role: government/private sector/professional body/social influencer/social activist/

- Helps with material selection, delineating a POV/stand/thesis/argument

REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Discussion frames section adapted from https://student.unsw.edu.au/discussion-skills by Dr. Shobha Avadhani, used with kind permission.

- Further reading:

  - Ballard, B. and Clanchy, J., *Study Abroad*, Longman, 1984.

  - Hollett et al., *In at the Deep End*, Oxford University Press, 1989

  - Oxford Wallace, M., *Study Skills in English*, 1980. 1 May 2002.

  - Zwiers, J. and Crawford, M. , *Academic Conversation: Classroom talk that facilitates classroom talk and content understanding*, Stenhouse, 2011.