

LT 9 (pp.211-234) answers

1. What is needed for a good discussion to happen? (p.211)

- ⊙ The topic needs to be relevant and interesting.
- ⊙ Students must either already know about or are provided with information to give substance to the topic.
- ⊙ Students need to feel motivated to talk about the topic.
- ⊙ Students should really want to say something about the topic (and not feel anxious about doing so).

2. How can teachers organize their speaking lessons better? (pp.211-212)

- ⊙ Topic (e.g. *banning smoking* or *globalization*) and cues (e.g. short newspaper article or provocative question) – help spark conversation
- ⊙ Structuring talk – make sure that all learners get a chance to participate, try to prevent it from getting boring, and occasionally add to the discussion to keep it interesting
- ⊙ Avoiding the talk-talk loop – don't talk and talk because there is no response from the learners > instead, ask one clear question, keep quiet, and patiently wait out silences
- ⊙ Open questions – use open questions (e.g. *who, what, when, where, why*, how that require a longer answer) rather than closed questions (verb-subject questions that require nothing more than a *yes* or *no* answer) to get more out of your students
- ⊙ Playing devil's advocate – deliberately take an opposing or contrasting viewpoint in order to spur on conversation

3. What are a few ways to get a good discussion going? (pp.214-215)

- ⊙ Frame the discussion well (lead in at the beginning and close at the end)
- ⊙ Preparation time (a little quiet time before talking)
- ⊙ Don't interrupt the flow (keep things moving along)
- ⊙ Specific problems are more productive than general issues (more challenging, interesting, and realistic)
- ⊙ Role cards (easier to speak in someone else's character)
- ⊙ Buzz groups (divide class into sets of 4-5 students)
- ⊙ Break the rules (go straight into a discussion)

4. What are some common communicative activities? (pp.218-219)

- ⊙ Picture difference tasks (i.e. find the differences between two pictures – A and B)
- ⊙ Group planning tasks (e.g. planning a holiday)
- ⊙ Ranking tasks (e.g. *What are the best movies of all time?*)
- ⊙ Pyramid discussions (individual reflection > pairs > groups > whole class)
- ⊙ Board games (e.g. *Monopoly, Scrabble, or Boogie* – or create your own > good language value)
- ⊙ Puzzles and problems (consider individually and solve together)

5. What is role play? What are some guidelines for running a role play? (pp.220-222)

Learners are usually given some information about a role (e.g. a person or a job title), which are printed on role cards, and then take a little preparation time and later meet up with other students to act out small scenes using their own ideas, as well as any ideas and information from the role cards. Role cards often contain background information about the role and points relevant to the task. A good set of role cards is often designed so that the participants will have distinctly different points of view and natural disagreements. Role cards can be designed to offer students opportunities to practice specific pieces of language. Below are some guidelines for running a role play:

- ⊙ Make sure students understand the idea of role-play.
- ⊙ Make sure the context or situation is clear.
- ⊙ Make sure students understand the information on their cards.
- ⊙ Give students time to prepare before they start.
- ⊙ Ask students to improvise once the activity starts – relying less and less on their cards.

6. What is real play? What is the most useful tool for real play? (pp.222-223)

Real play consists of situations wherein one or more characters are drawn not from cards but from a participant's own life and world, which allows learners to practice language they need in their own life. The most useful tool for real play is a blank framework – a card that allows learners to create their own real play role card. [*There is an example on page 223.]

7. What is a simulation? (p.224)

Simulation is a large-scale role play in which role cards are normally used, but there is often quite a lot of other printed and recorded background information as well (e.g. newspaper articles, graphs, memos, etc.) that may come at the start of the simulation or appear while the simulation is unfolding, causing all participants to take note of the new data and possibly readjust their positions. The intention is to create a much more complete, complex world (e.g. a business company, television studio, government body, etc.).

8. Accuracy or fluency – which one should we focus on? How do you run a fluency activity? What are some ideas for correction work after a fluency activity? (pp.224-226)

It depends on what the aim/learning outcome of your activity/task or lesson is – sometimes it's accuracy, sometimes it's fluency, and sometimes it's both accuracy and fluency. In order to run a fluency activity successfully, wherein your main aim/learning outcome is to get the students to speak, try to reduce your own contributions. The less you speak, the more space you can give to the students. Make contributions before and after the activity, and monitor discretely or vanish during it. Ideas for correction work after a fluency activity include:

- ⊙ Writing up a number of sentences used during the activity and discuss them with the students.
- ⊙ Write a number of sentences on the board and then ask the students to come up to the board and correct the sentences – or type the sentences, print them out, and have students correct alone or in pairs/groups.
- ⊙ Invent and write out a story that includes a number of errors you overheard during the activity, and then hand out the story the next day and ask the students to find the errors and correct them.
- ⊙ Have students identify sentences that contain errors from two lists, correct the errors, and be able to explain their corrections.

9. What does scaffolding mean? What are some scaffolding techniques? (p.227)

Scaffolding is an instructional technique whereby the teacher models the desired learning strategy or task, then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. It is a form of need-based support that makes it easier for a student to achieve a specific task. Some scaffolding techniques include:

- ⊙ Showing interest and agreeing (nodding, “uh-huh,” eye contact, “yes,” etc.)
- ⊙ Concisely asking for clarification of unclear information (e.g. repeating an unclear word)
- ⊙ Encouragement echo (repeating the last word to encourage the speaker to continue)
- ⊙ Echoing meaning (picking on a key element of meaning and saying it back to the speaker)
- ⊙ Asking conversation-oiling questions (ones that mainly recap already stated information – “Is it?” “Do you?”)
- ⊙ Asking brief questions that encourage the speaker to extend the story (“And then . . .”)
- ⊙ Unobtrusively saying the correct form of an incorrect word (only if it makes a positive contribution to the communication)
- ⊙ Giving the correct pronunciation of words in replies without drawing any particular attention to it
- ⊙ Unobtrusively giving a word or phrase that the speaker is looking for

10. What is a genre? Why is it important? (pp.228-231)

It's a variety of speech that you would expect to find in a particular place, with particular people, in a particular context, to achieve a particular result, using a particular channel (e.g. face to face, by phone), etc. It's characterized by specific choices about style, manner, tone, quantity, volume, directness, choice of words, formality, type of content, etc. Language learners need to learn not just words, grammar, pronunciation, etc., but also about appropriate ways of speaking in different situations. As teachers, we must think about the range of speaking acts that learners may be faced with and give them chances to practice selecting appropriate genres and planning appropriate language needed for a variety of different speaking situations and audiences.