Seminar Signposting Language

Time: 60+ minutes

Level: ★★★★☆[B1/B2/C1]

Lesson Plan

Aim: to develop the students’ awareness and ability to use signposting phrases in seminars.

1. Preparation: Print off the following documents:
   1. Seminar Phrases #1 for each student.
   2. Student Seminar Playing Cards #2 for each student.
      IMPORTANT: students work in small groups (4-6), therefore each student in each group must have a different colour set of cards. If you only have a black & white printer, print the first set of white cards and use different colour pens to create each set.

   3. 1 set of Seminar Speaking Cards #3

2. Seminar Phrase sheet
   - Elicit ‘signposting’ in a seminar.
   - Answer: Signpost Language is a range of fixed common phrases that are generally used in discussion to help orientate and focus the seminar.
   - Give an example of phrase such as: Giving an opinion: ‘From my perspective…’
   - Elicit some of the phrases from the Seminar Phrases #1 sheet.
   - Give out the Seminar Phrases #1 sheet and ask students to read through and highlight any of the phrases that are new or they don’t usually use.

3. Back to the board / hot seat
   - Put students into groups of 4/5. One student sits on a seat with their back to board. Teacher writes one of the phrases on the board. Students try to explain the phrase using synonyms / mime / examples. The first student who can recite the exact phrase wins. More Information: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/hot-seat-0
4. Seminar Speaking Game

- Hand out Student Seminar Playing Cards #2 to each student in each group.
- Give out one Seminar Speaking Card #3 to each group.
- Students sit around a table with their Seminar Phrases #1 Sheet and the Student Seminar Playing Cards #2 in front of them (see pic).

Objective

- For students to speak about a given topic (Seminar Speaking Cards #3) using prompt cards (Student Seminar Playing Cards #2) to activate the language on the Seminar Phrases #1 sheet.
- Students try to get rid of as many of their prompt cards (Student Seminar Playing Cards #2) as possible.
- Students discuss the topic for 5-10 minutes.
- IMPORTANT: most important part is the discussion of the topic – tell students not to just focus on getting rid of their cards.
- After 5-10 minutes STOP the discussion. Students collect their cards and count how many cards they managed to get rid of.
- Then repeat the activity again but give out a different seminar speaking card.

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Seminar Phrases Sheet #1

Giving Opinions
- In my opinion...
- From my perspective/ point of view...
- It's my sense that...
- In my mind...
- It seems to me / It appears to me...
- I am convinced that...
- I strongly/firmly believe
- There is no question/doubt that...

  Example: It's my sense that adopting the Euro will benefit Europe's economies in numerous ways.

Stating facts
- It's well known that....
- It's a fact that....
- I'm positive that....
- I'm absolutely sure that......

  Example: It's a fact that the Euro will make prices across Europe more transparent.

Interrupting
- Yes, but...
- May I just come in here,...

  Example: Yes, but it has already lost value against the U.S. dollar.

Pinpointing a problem
- It seems to me that...
- The real problem is...
- It's quite clear that...

  Example: The real problem is that not all countries in Europe are necessarily in favour of the EURO which means that only some economies will benefit.

Adding Information
- Yes, but...
- Let me add another point...
- Let me just add on what was just said...
- I agree with what X said, but I'd like to add something...
- Furthermore...

  Example: Furthermore, the EURO may not level the economic playing field between countries and different standards of living will continue to exist.
Checking that you have understood

- Please correct me if I'm wrong, but...
- Could I ask a few questions to check my understanding of your position?
- Could we go through that again?

  Example: Please correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't the EURO supposed to raise the standards in the less affluent European countries?

Proposing a solution

- What if _X_ were to...
- Supposing _X_ tried...
- Wouldn't a fair solution be...

  Example: Supposing all EU members adopted the Euro for a trial period with the option of abandoning the currency if economic matters failed to improve.

Demonstrating Understanding

- If I understood you correctly, you...
- So what you’re saying is...
- Just to clarify, you mean...
- I can understand your/that perspective in that...

  Example: I appreciate your point of view and I agree completely.

Focusing on difficulties

- The argument falls apart/is weakened...
- The main issue/problem as I see it...
- Where I have difficulty with your notion(s) is/are...

  Example: The main problem as I see it, is that not all European countries are starting from the same economic departure point.

Disagreeing

- I disagree/ completely disagree
- I’m afraid that I can’t quite agree
- I can see your point, but...
- I have some reservations about that point of view...

  Example: I disagree with your last point because the EURO will equalize commerce, trade and labour costs.

Seeing both sides

- On the one hand...
- One way of looking at it is...
- Yes, but the flip side of the issue is...
- You can’t ignore...

  Example: On the one hand adopting the EURO will bolster competition among European nations while on the other hand it will combat U.S., global market domination.
### Student Seminar Playing Cards #2

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Seminar practice

• **Population.** Discuss the problems that the future will face with increasing population.

Seminar practice

• **Education.** Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of more and more students going to university.
Seminar Speaking Cards #3

Seminar practice

• Energy. It is the responsibility of each citizen to reduce their energy consumption, not the government’s responsibility. Do you agree?

Seminar practice

• Technology: Some people believe that technology is making our lives worse. Discuss.
Seminar Speaking Cards #3

Seminar practice

• **Crime.** Video games should be banned as they lead to people acting violently. Do you agree?

Seminar practice

• **Environment.** Plastic water bottles should be banned as they are harmful to the environment. Do you agree?
• **Agriculture**: Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of genetically modifying plants.

• **Perspectives**: Discuss your home city/town from a commercial, environmental and historical perspective.
Seminar Speaking Cards #3

Seminar practice

• Urbanisation. Discuss the effects on human health from living in a big city.

Seminar practice

• Medical advancements: Our society is becoming too dependent on pharmaceutical medicine. To what extent do you agree?
Seminar Speaking Cards #3

Seminar practice

• Consumption. With regards to food, water, energy and goods, discuss the possible risks of consuming too much.

Seminar practice

• Consumption. The best way for newspapers to increase sales is to provide readers with entertaining stories. Do you agree?