Teacher’s Notes

Aim: to develop the students’ ability to discuss contemporary problems / situations and to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of their solutions.


Speaking Tasks (analysis & Evaluation)

1. Basic overview
   i. Put students in small groups (groups of 4s or 5s).
   ii. Hand out seminar phrases (if needed) to aid the fluency of the discussion. [Link]
   iii. Explain to the students that they are going to have a discussion and try to come to an agreement on a suitable solution(s).
   iv. Give out a task card to each group (good idea! give out the same topic card to each group for a more focused discussion and feedback session).
   v. Give the students 20-30 minutes.
   vi. Students discuss the key information on the card and one person takes notes.
   vii. Optional: After they have finished their discussion they prepare a short presentation on their observations / findings from the discussion.
   viii. Optional: All the students give a short presentation to their class on their findings and possible solutions.
   ix. Repeat with a different task.

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Speaking Tasks

Halls of Residence

The university is building a new halls of residence and wants to collect important feedback from the students so that the architects can plan a modern building that fulfils most of the students’ needs and wants.

In your group discuss:

1) What you like and dislike about your present accommodation.
2) What should be included in the design of a new building.
3) Evaluate these new ideas (positives & negatives).
   - Take notes and be prepared to present your ideas to the class

A Greener University

The university is committed to being more environmentally friendly and proactive in reducing its Climate Change. These that the university has highlighted as issues that it would like to address:

- Too many students using the lift (elevator) in the main building.
- Students not recycling.
- Teachers using too much paper.
- Cigarette ends on the floor outside the main entrance.

In your group discuss:

1) How each one of the problems could be improved.
2) Evaluate (positives & negatives) the effectiveness of your solutions.
   - Take notes and be prepared to present your ideas to class
Speaking English

Many of the international students are complaining that they do not have enough opportunity to speak English. In fact, many international students are spending most of their free time in the same language. This is preventing communication and reducing confidence.

In your group discuss:

1) Is this true for you? Or anyone you know? Do you know any native speakers?
2) How can students here?
3) What should improve English speaking?
4) Evaluate these solutions and make a decision on the most plausible strategies.

- Take notes and be prepared to present your ideas to class

Plagiarism: contract cheating

The university has recently become aware that international students (the number is unknown) are using websites. These websites offer to write original essays (100% plagiarism free) for a fixed price. Students sources and the essay in five days.

In your group discuss:

1) Have you heard of this before? Why do students use this system?
2) What are the these services?
3) How using such websites?
4) How can the university stop this? What should be such an academic crime?
5) Evaluate (positives / negatives) of your solutions.

- Take notes and be prepared to present your ideas to class
Traffic congestion

There is too much traffic on to campus in the rush hours of 8:00 – 9:30 & 16:30 – 18:00. As a result this has led to increased waiting times and extended waiting times. Implemented a number of key incentives but these seem to be failing.

- Car sharing initiatives.
- Improved bus schemes.
- City Centre congestion charge & increased parking charges.
- Increased routes.

In your group discuss:

1) What you understand about the council’s solutions (above).
2) Evaluate (positives /negatives) of each solution.
3) What should be the centre?
4) Provide at least two solutions.

Homelessness

The number of homeless people in [insert location]. Many of the homeless are homeless a number of reasons. The local council is asking students to give their opinions and offer possible solutions to how [insert location] could be reduced.

In your group discuss:

1) How you what you do when you see a homeless person.
2) What are the key reasons why someone is homeless.
3) Looking at these reasons for each specific case.
4) Evaluate (positive & negatives) your possible solutions.

• Take notes and be prepared to present your ideas to class