Lesson plan: Group Discussion

About Audio Notetaker

Speaking and listening is one of the main activities in a classroom. Assessment is difficult apart from playing back hours of mp3 files or relying on memory. Audio Notetaker not only records the activity but enables the user to annotate important passages, either within the Notes pan at the side of the audio or highlighting key audio bars to represent the skills that are being assessed.

What equipment do you need? Apart from the software, the basics require access to a recording device to either record ‘live’ into Audio Notetaker or to import later.

Aims

Students need to understand how to communicate effectively in a range of settings and these sample lesson plans show how using Audio Notetaker enables them to evaluate their own work and improve on it before the final presentation. Evaluation is based upon self and peer assessment using the criteria in the National Curriculum levels as well as the Student Sheets included in this pack.

Audio Notetaker in the curriculum

- Record and assess speaking and listening work, either with students to prepare for an assessment or to enable teachers to archive the final annotated results.
- Recording and annotating group discussions, tutorials or lessons. Copies can be accessed by students for revision later.
- Spoken Language Study – recording and annotating students’ own data eg interviews
- To enable students to listen carefully and take turns in group discussions. Identify which students tend to dominate, contribute or are reticent to contribute.
- Can help with special needs such as dyslexia as well as speech impediments.
- To record and annotate YouTube or PowerPoint presentations.
- Self and Peer assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Can be used to assess all the Assessment Focuses in National Framework for Speaking and listening.
- Useful in KS3 up to A2 / I.B. for Oral Assessments or data for English Language Studies at A Level.

- **AF1**: Talk in purposeful and imaginative ways to explore ideas and feelings
- **AF2**: Listen and respond to others
- **AF3**: Adapt and vary structures and vocabulary according to purpose
- **AF4**: Make a range of contributions when working in groups, shaping meanings through suggestions, comments and questioning, and drawing ideas together
- **AF5**: Create and sustain different roles
- **AF6**: Identify the variety and uses of spoken language
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Teaching Activities</th>
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|        | AF’s AF2: Listen and respond to others AF4: Make a range of contributions when working in groups |                                                                                             **Introduce Speaking and Listening module**  
Stress the importance of actually listening to what others say and building on it, as well as actively contributing to a task.  
Divide class into small groups (4-6) and give them a recording device. One of the groups will become ‘spies’ as each member will secretly observe another group, make notes on their performance on the Discussion Skill Grid by putting names where the target is achieved (see below) and record each student’s score.  
Put a controversial topic on the board and use a timer to limit how long they have to initiate and sustain a group discussion.  
Record this discussion.  
Class discussion on the actual topic.  
Reveal the Discussion Grid on the IWB then ask the observers to reveal their findings. Each skill earns a point (/10). |
| 1      | Structured attention to specific speaking and listening skills to develop their ability to listen to others |                                                                                             **Good / Bad Discussions modelled.**  
BT All Talk website has some excellent videos of good and poor examples of group discussions. YouTube might be useful.  
Show a poor discussion example and students should use their grids to be able to assess which skills, if any, are demonstrated.  
Repeat with the good example.  

**Assessing their performance using Audio Notetaker**  
Show them how the program works by annotating a short discussion piece. Establish a colour code to represent each group member, with black representing interruptions / talking over others.  
Give each group a laptop/computer. Annotate their file.  
Teacher to go round and discuss their findings.  
Students make a list of targets to improve their personal performance for their next task and practise before next lesson. |
### Group Discussion cont.

| 3 | To use good speaking and listening skills  
To address personal targets to gain a better score  
Peer assessment to check progress | **Group discussion with Peer Assessment**  
Teacher to choose a topical subject.  
Put 2 groups together and let them decide who is Group A and Group B. Group A go first and sit around the table with their paired Group B assessors in sight of them. Group discussion on the set topic with assessors grading their partner. They must not reveal their findings. Swap roles and repeat the exercise on another topic. Self assessment then compare with peer-assessor who should give evidence of where a specific skill achieved Plenary – what have you learned? Re-assess your personal targets. |
|---|---|
| 4 | To track their learning journey to demonstrate the skills acquired in the module | **Final Assessment to be recorded**  
Each group is to discuss how they got on in the previous lesson. What were the successes of the group? What progress has been made over the last few lessons?  
Annotate the discussion in Audio Notetaker using the agreed colour-coding and using the Notes pane to identify good practice by jotting down the best skills demonstrated by each member and their new score. Compare their performance with the first lesson using Audio Notetaker screenshots. Teacher to be shown the 2 screenshots and success is measured by reduction in black bars as well as scores  
Extension Task: Teacher could ask one group to perform with assessment by the teacher on turn-taking and remaining on-task using Audio Notetaker (see below for example) |
Differentiated Learning Outcomes | Check points (formative assessment) Achievement of learning will be monitored by…
--- | ---
All Will be able to appreciate the skills shown in the exemplar material | Class feedback
Most Will be able to use those skills to assess their peers; will use some of their targets to address weaknesses in their performance | Class feedback
Audio Notetaker annotations
Some Will meet all of their targets to address weaknesses in their performance; and/or will be able to coach their friends to perform better as a group. | Class feedback
Improved performance in group discussions (aim to achieve little or no ‘black’ blocks in Audio Notetaker.

Resources to prepare/book

- Recording devices
- Access to laptops / PCs or iPads
- PowerPoint Presentation or IWB to show skills and videos
- Access to the internet (BT / YouTube) if streaming live video clips
- Discussion Skills Grid Handouts for each student

Extension ideas: Finding their voice

Students who need extra coaching to speak aloud or in delivery may find using Audio Notetaker invaluable in finding their voice. They can either record themselves speaking and then annotate their successes and make targets by themselves or with the aid of a teacher or a trusted peer. Over the course of a few sessions, they gradually find that success builds upon success. See the Skill Bank for Delivering a Speech Effectively overleaf together with a screenshot of student work.
### Skill Bank for delivering a speech effectively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make eye contact</th>
<th>Strong, clear voice that can be heard</th>
<th>Complementing your speech with gestures</th>
<th>Varying the tone of your voice and avoiding monotony</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate ‘umms’ and ‘ahh’s</td>
<td>Not shuffling papers or moving around too much</td>
<td>Keep a relaxed and upright posture (chin up and shoulders back)</td>
<td>Speak with conviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause at dramatic moments</td>
<td>Energy, but not too much</td>
<td>Not too fast or too slow</td>
<td>Pronounce words properly</td>
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### Effective Discussion Skill Grid (adapted from BT's All Talk)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't waffle</td>
<td>Pay attention all the time</td>
<td>Encourage everyone to speak</td>
<td>Check your understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take turns to speak</td>
<td>Disagree without showing disrespect</td>
<td>Keep focussed on the topic</td>
<td>Be positive about other ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build on others’ ideas</td>
<td>Reach a decision</td>
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### Teacher Assessment of a group: Before / After intervention

![Image of teacher assessment tool]

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