TEACHING RATIONALE
(SPEAKING THROUGH DISCUSSION)

Speaking is the process of building and sharing meanings in verbal and non-verbal manners in a particular context. A speaking skill in second language learning and teaching requires students to acquire not only communicative competence (e.g., linguistic, socio-cultural, pragmatic, or strategic competences) but also interactional competence—the ability to negotiate intended meanings or messages dialogically. In doing so, a discussion activity was selected to teach speaking to intermediate ESL college students with a number of reasons. Among them are (1) it could promote meaning-based learning in which meaning is primary; (2) there is a communication problem to solve in which a dialogic negotiation for meaning takes place; (3) there is a close relationship to real-world activities because a discussion always takes place in human lives; (4) task completion has some priority—i.e., drawing a conclusion through a process of negotiation; and (5) the assessment of the task is related to a learning outcome—e.g., summarizing the discussion and reflecting on the activity.

This speaking class was structured into pre-discussion, during-discussion, and post-discussion, and each activity had different purposes. First, pre-discussion activities were primarily intended to provide comprehensible input to the students and activate student background knowledge. In doing so, two brief activities—language input and brainstorming—were offered. The language input provided the students with some key words and expressions for a during-discussion stage, and the brainstorming activity was aimed at encouraging the students to think critically about some banning-related issues. Thus, these two activities were geared to provide the students with a
warming-up activity and to help the students to be prepared for next activities: during- and post-discussion activities.

Second, a during-discussion activity was the core of the overall class. First of all, the teacher asked the students to form groups in which there were two groups. One group supported the idea about YouTube Ban, and another disagreed on this action. These different groups were built to promote interactive activity within the group and in the class as a whole. Further, the teacher got the students to discuss the issue in groups. This was intended to encourage the students to share ideas with one another, negotiate the messages, and finally draw some conclusions. Once a group-discussion session was done, the teacher had the two groups discuss the issue. This activity was expected to foster critical thinking and quick decision making, and the students were expected to learn how to express ideas, do turn-taking and recast, and justify their ideas in polite ways while disagreeing with the others. In other words, in-class or group discussions were aimed to encourage the students to ask questions, paraphrase ideas, express support, check for clarification and comprehension, and negotiate the meanings dialogically. More importantly, the students were expected to participate in the class interactively and equally.

Last, a post-discussion activity was primarily intended for a reinforcement of what the students had discussed. The teacher had the students summarize the results of the discussion. In addition, the teacher commented on students’ overall performance, and the teacher asked the students to write a reflection journal to provide them the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned from the class and to empower them to be reflective students. In short, the teacher provided students with learning experience both inside and outside the classrooms.

To summarize, by employing three steps—pre-discussion, while-discussion, and post-discussion, the teacher could maximize teaching-learning process and achieve the goals of the speaking class through discussion activities.
A LESSON PLAN
TEACHING SPEAKING THROUGH GROUP DISCUSSION

Date : March 9, 2008
Time : 20 Minutes
Class : Mixed Ability (ESL College Students from Different Majors)
Level of Proficiency : Intermediate
Subject : English Language
Language Focus : Expressing agreement and disagreement
Topic : YouTube Ban
Goal : The students will be able to argue for and against the issue given.
Objectives : - The students will be able to express opinions or provide justifications.
- The students will be able to ask and give information.
- The students will be able to do turn-taking
- The students will be able to do recasts.

Materials & Media : - Online materials
- Student worksheets
- Blackboard

Procedures :
Pre-Discussion (5 Minutes)
- Introduce the students some related vocabularies for discussion
- Have the students brainstorm ideas about the issue given.
- Introduce the issue to the students

During-Discussion (10 Minutes)
- Distribute short passage for the discussion input
- Get the students to read the text by using scanning and skimming strategies
- Ask the students to form the group. In this case, the class will be divided into two groups. One is expected to argue for the ideas in the text, and another is expected to argue against the ideas.
- Have the students discuss the issue in group, and discuss it with the class.

Post-Discussion (5 Minutes)
- Give comments to students’ overall performance
- Get the students to list or to summarize what the main results of the discussion
- Tell the students to write a reflection journal
A Report on Teaching Demonstration

STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

A. Language Input

\textit{Vocabularies}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Internet service provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offensive</td>
<td>causing anger, resentment, or moral outrage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>debate</td>
<td>a formal exchange of opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defense</td>
<td>a method of protection (of an idea)</td>
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</table>

\textit{Expressions}

- “I hear what you are saying, but I think that…”
- “I think your ideas are valid, but I think…”
- “Can you explain what you mean when you say ___?”
- “Tell me more about your feelings on ___.”

B. Brainstorming

List two topics or issues that should be banned or blocked on website, and give good justifications for your selections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics or Issues</th>
<th>Reasons or Justifications for Banning</th>
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<tbody>
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A. Discussion Input

Read the following passage.

Pakistan blocks YouTube website
24 February 2008

Pakistan has blocked access to the popular YouTube website because of content deemed offensive to Islam. Its telecommunications authority ordered internet service providers to block the site until further notice. Reports said the content included Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad that have outraged many. But one report said a trailer for a forthcoming film by Dutch lawmaker Geert Wilders, which portrays Islam in a negative light, was behind the ban.

"They asked us to ban it immediately and the order says the ban will continue until further notice," said Wahaj-us-Siraj, convener of the Association of Pakistan Internet Service Providers. "Users are quite upset. They're screaming at ISPs which can't do anything. "The government has valid reason for that, but they have to find a better way of doing it. If we continue blocking popular websites, people will stop using the internet." Other countries that have temporarily blocked access to YouTube include Turkey and Thailand.

Source:

B. Group Discussion

Discuss the issue in the text with your group members. You need to discuss it on the basis of your position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Reasons/Justifications</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argue for</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Argue against</td>
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C. Class Discussion

Discuss the issue with the class. In this task, you need to defend your position with your justifications as you worked in your group.
STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

A. Teacher Commentary on the Discussion

B. Discussion Summary (Homework 1)

*Each of the groups needs to summarize some main ideas in the discussion. You will need to submit the summary to the teacher next class period.*

C. Student Reflection Journal (Homework 2)

*Write a reflection journal on what you have learned from today's class in a length of approximately 150-200 words*