



# Speaking Homework with VoiceThread

**Angelos Bollas** @ TESOL Italy Annual Convention

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“If **communication practice** is one of the most important components of the language learning/teaching practice, it is one of **the most problematical**. It is much more difficult to get learners to express themselves freely than it is to extract right answers in a controlled exercise.”

Ur (1981: 2)

“Few if any people achieve fluency in a foreign language solely within the confines of the classroom.”

(Brown, 2007:1)

# Ideal Scenario

“[For students to improve on their fluency, **teachers**] must be willing to **let go** of some of the control in [their] classrooms; ...[they] must be willing to set up situations in which fluency can develop, and then encourage the students to actually communicate.”

(Brown, 2003: 7)

# Noticing

language features must be consciously attended to in order to be truly acquired by the language learner.

(See Schmidt, 1990)

This, in turn, “function[s] as a facilitator, helping learners to notice features in the input which they would otherwise miss and also to compare what they notice with what they produce.”

(Ellis, 1994: 362)

Speaking Homework is an ideal opportunity for learners to practice using the language in an EFL context (i.e. where English is NOT used in everyday life)

(see Barker, 2005; Schneider, 2001)

# Characteristics of Speaking Homework:

- Low-stress,
- Low-stakes,
- NNEST – NNEST,
  - Lower SS anxiety
  - Lower affective filter
  - Progress towards fluency

(see Krashen, 1982)



# Other characteristics of Speaking Homework:

- Out-of-class setting
  - allows learners to focus less on accuracy, leaving them free to concentrate on improving fluency

(Littlewood, 1984)

# Long-term goal

- Oral interaction in English
  - Self-selected topics
  - Relevant to SS own interests
  - On a regular basis
- Confidence building, motivating language experience

(Bassano, 1986)

# Students' report that...

“they no longer feel such anxiety about using the language and are able to give a much better account of themselves when the opportunity arises.”

(Barker, 2005: 83)



# Ideas for Speaking Homework

Students act out the dialogue(s)/monologue(s) they were taught in class.

→ Students practice associating letters to sounds; accuracy in pronunciation and intonation patterns.

# Ideas for Speaking Homework

Prediction tasks:

Upload the pictures/title of the text(s) you are about to use in following class and ask them to predict the content.

→ Fluency; Responding and Initiating

# Ideas for Speaking Homework

## Online Debate Club:

Assign different topics to different pairs/groups and ask SS to provide arguments for or against.

→ Fluency; Appropriacy; Turn-Taking; Repair and Repetition; Discourse Markers

# Ideas for Speaking Homework

## Summary:

Upload a situation and some characteristics relevant to it in bullet-point format. Ask SS to summarise the information.

→ Fluency; Accuracy; Relevant Length; Repair and Repetition; Linguistic Range

# Ideas for Speaking Homework

## Role Plays:

Upload a text and give each SS a cue card with a specific characteristic (e.g. Read the lines as if you are a parent and you've realised your 16-year old is not at home and it's almost midnight)

→ Intonation Patterns; Fluency; Functions

# Ideas for Speaking Homework

## Storytelling:

Depending on level, support them as much as you feel is necessary. The goal is for them to (re)tell a story.

→ Fluency, Accuracy and Range (both word choice, grammar, pronunciation, intonation, etc.), Relevant Length, Discourse Markers

# Ideas for Speaking Homework

Reporter for a day:

Send your students out on a mission to explore a topic or interview people. Let them record their experience and present their findings.

→ Extended Speech, Fluency, Accuracy and Range, Functions

# Ideas for Speaking Homework

## Podcasts/Interviews:

Assign one umbrella topic to whole class and ask them to interview people (friends, relatives, teachers, etc.) about an aspect of the topic.

→ Turn Taking, Discourse Markers, Responding and Initiating, Fluency, Accuracy and Range

# Ideas for Speaking Homework

## Oral (Learning) Diary:

Ask them to keep a day-to-day diary, only not in writing but speaking.

→ Fluency; Accuracy; Relevant Length; Repair and Repetition; Linguistic Range

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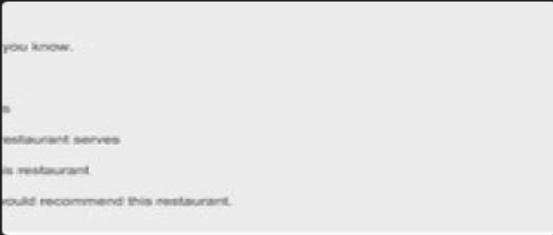
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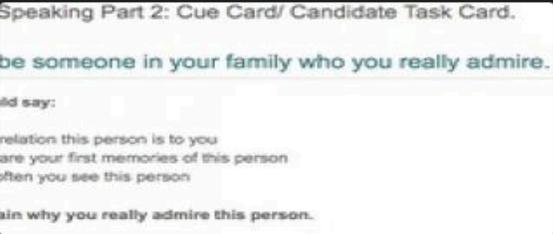
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Another Task 2 (IELTS)

  
IELTS Speaking Part 2

  
Speaking Part 2: Cue Card/ Candidate Task Card.  
be someone in your family who you really admire.  
ld say:  
relation this person is to you  
are your first memories of this person  
often you see this person  
ain why you really admire this person.

  
IELTS  
International English Language Testing System  
Speaking test

Help ?

About

d) (Slide 1 of 1)

 **Angelos Bolas** 



0:00 / 0:00

## Describe a foreign country you have never been to

You should say:

- 1) Where is the country?
- 2) When will you go there?
- 3) Why would you like to go there?



VL

VL



0:10 / 10:54





Is this enough?





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# Thank you!



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See you in Glasgow @  
IATEFL 2017 Annual Conference

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