



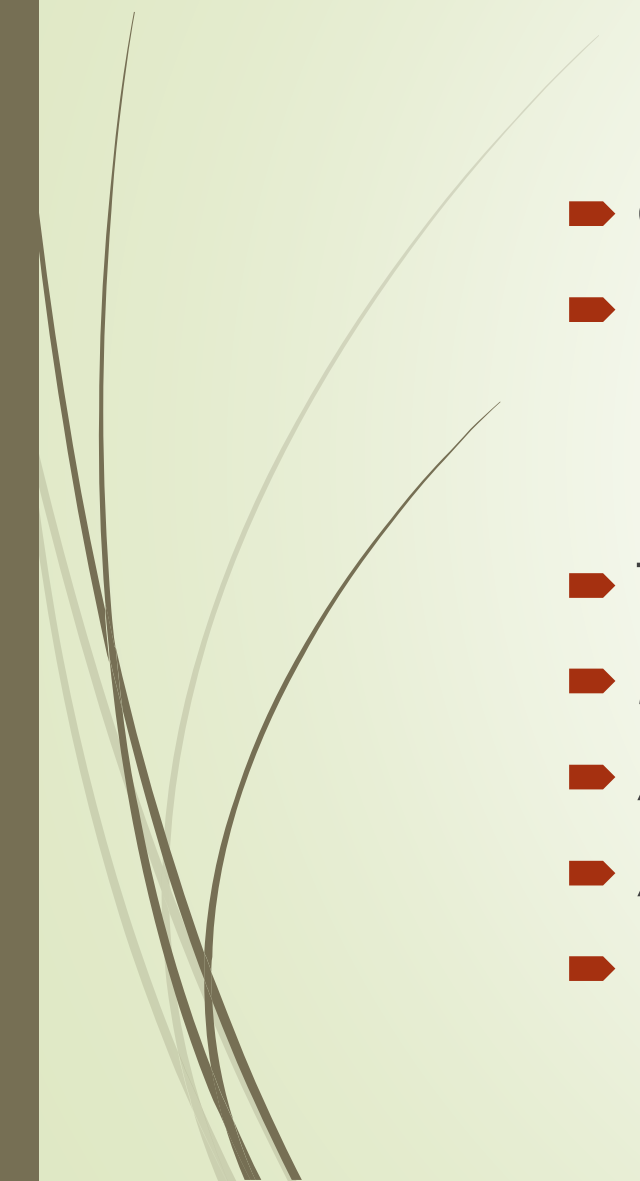
Meaningful Interaction in EFL Discussion Classes

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Presentation Content

- Classroom Context
 - Discussion Behaviours Encouraged by Skills
 - Different Viewpoints
 - Comparison
 - The Purpose of an EFL Classroom Discussion
 - Meaningful Interaction
 - Aligning Interactional Purpose
 - A Shared Discussion Template– Strategic Investment
 - Example Template
- 



Classroom Context

- ▶ Levels based on TOEIC scores
 - ▶ Level 1 – 680 to 990
 - ▶ Level 2 – 480 to 679
 - ▶ Level 3 – 280 to 479
 - ▶ Level 4 – Below 280

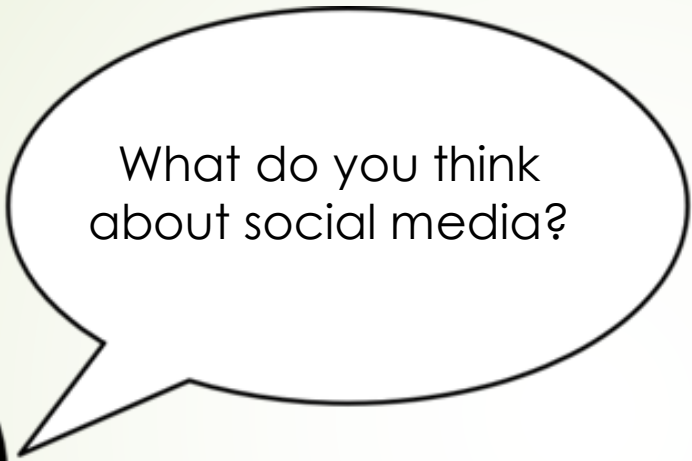
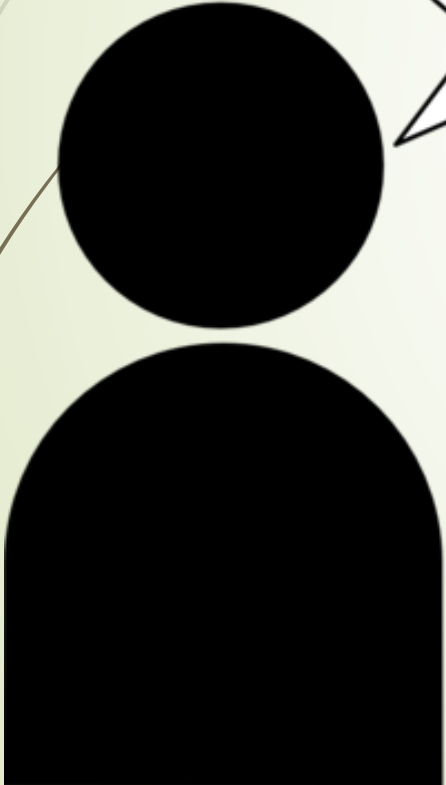
- ▶ Functional syllabus
- ▶ A learning strategy
- ▶ Use of a functional phrase has the potential to manifest a specific discussion behaviour
- ▶ Functional phrases are referred to as “Skills”

Discussion Behaviours Encouraged by Skills – Different Viewpoints

Discussion Skill	Skill phrases	Communicative potential of skill use
Different Viewpoints	<p><u>Asking for Different Viewpoints (Listener side)</u> How about from (X's) point of view? How about from the point of view of (X)?</p> <p><u>Giving Different Viewpoints (Speaker side)</u> From (X's) point of view,... From the point of view of (X),....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The group examines the topic of discussion in more depth (rather than simply discussing their own personal viewpoints)• Opinions can be further supported• Opinions can be reconsidered by the group• Critical thinking



Topic - Social Media



What do you think about social media?



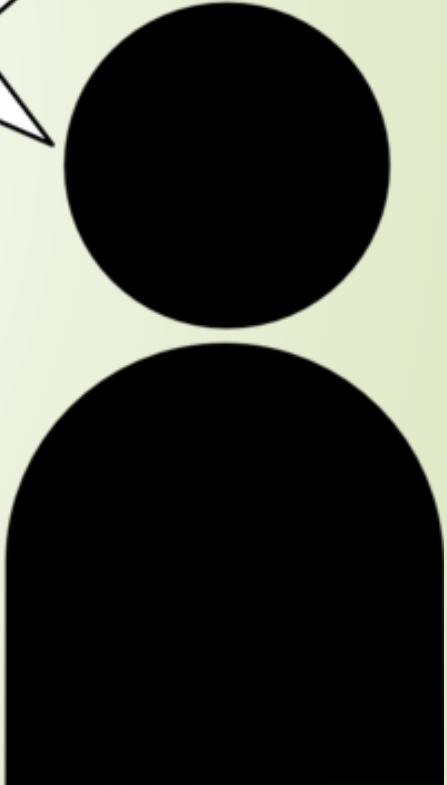

In my opinion, it's good.



Topic - Social Media



Why do you think so?



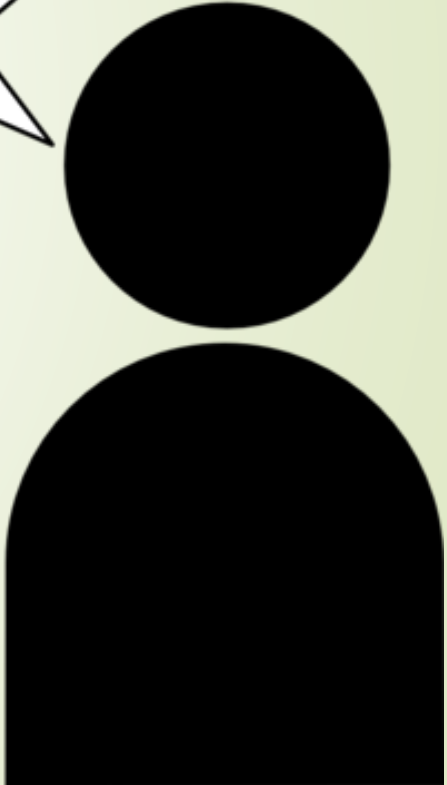
Because I like talking to my friends.



Topic - Social Media: Different Viewpoint



How about from a
company's point of
view?



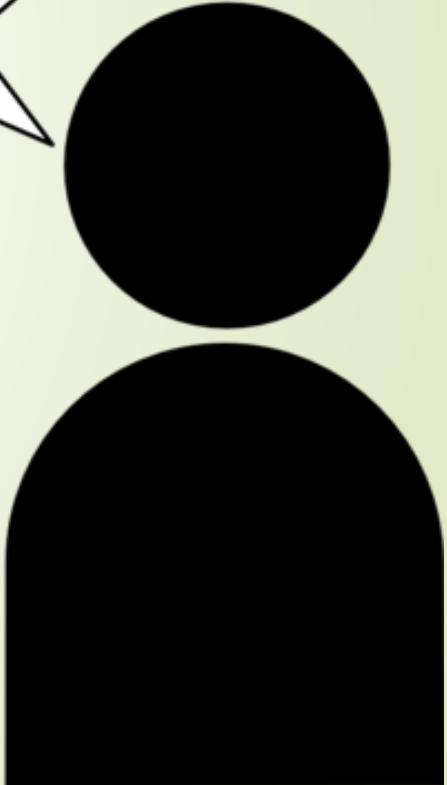
From a company's
point of view, I think
social media can be
very useful!



Topic - Social Media: Different Viewpoint



Why do you think so?



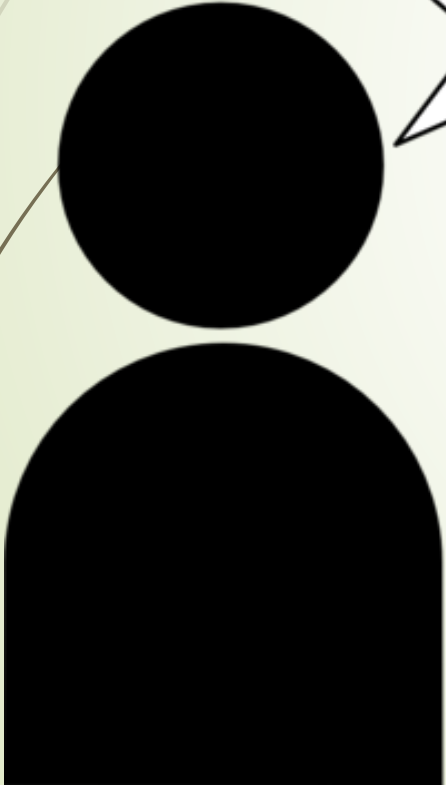
Because a company wants to sell products to lots of people and can contact them with social media!

Discussion Behaviours Encouraged by Skills - Comparison

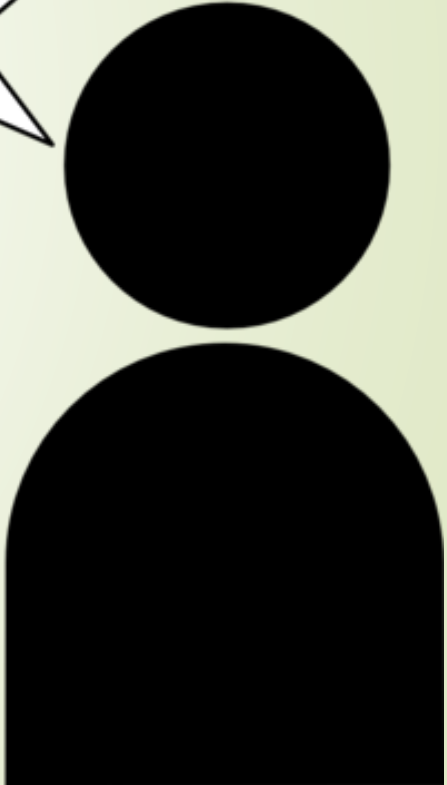
Discussion Skill	Skill phrases	Communicative potential of skill use
Comparison	<p><u>Asking others to compare (Listener side)</u> Which is better/worse – (X) or (Y)? How is (X) better/worse than (Y)?</p> <p><u>Comparing (Speaker side)</u> (X) is better/worse than (Y)</p> <p>Use some other grammatical form that expresses comparison</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The group examines the topic of discussion in more depth (rather than simply discussing one isolated aspect)• Critical thinking



Topic – Social Media



What are the most serious risks of social media?




I think bullying is a problem on social media.



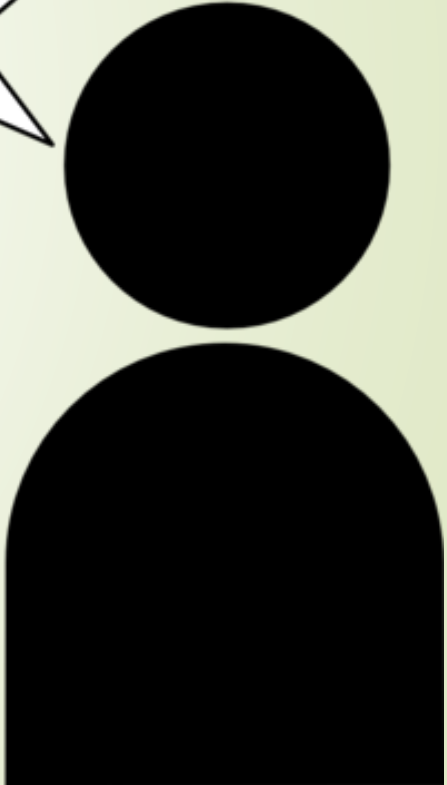
Topic – Social Media



Why do you think so?


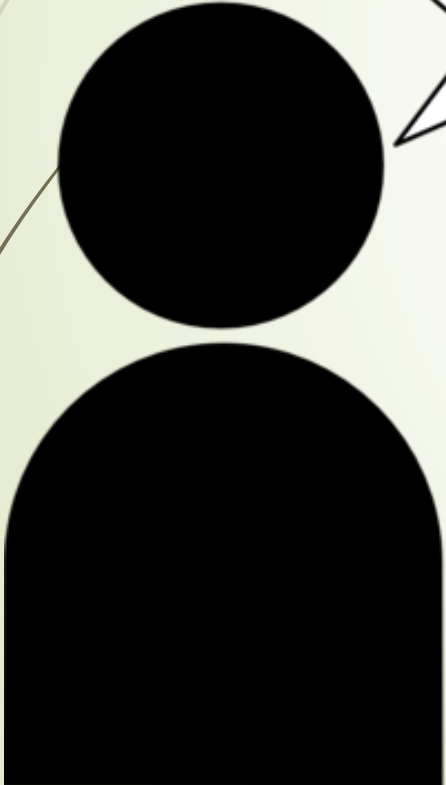


Because my friend was
bullied in High School.





Topic – Social Media: Comparison



What are the most serious risks of social media – physical health or mental health?



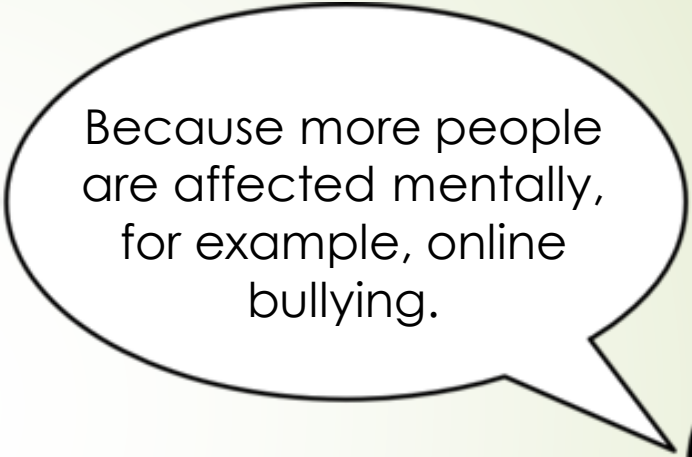
I think mental health is a bigger problem.



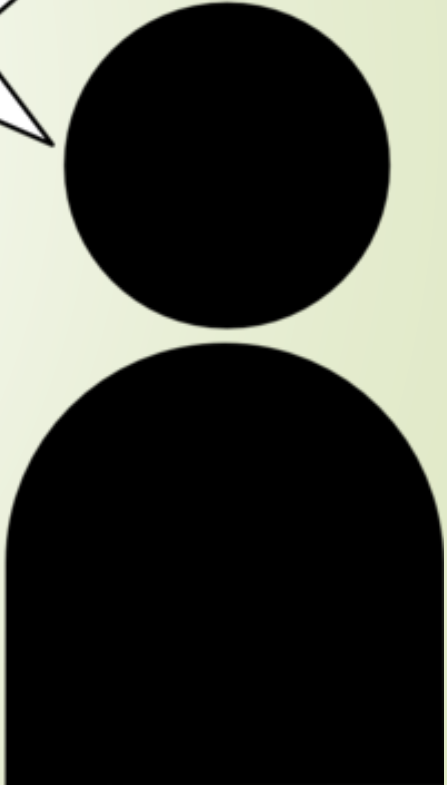
Topic – Social Media: Comparison



Why do you think so?




Because more people are affected mentally, for example, online bullying.






The Purpose of an EFL Classroom Discussion

- ▶ For students: To share ideas about a topic and learn something new
 - ▶ About their class members
 - ▶ About the topic
 - ▶ About the English language (especially through the ongoing negotiation of meaning)
 - ▶ For teachers: To help all students unlock the communicative potential of the functional phrases
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Meaningful Interaction

- More likely when task goals are mutually understood
 - Shared concepts of purpose and value within the group are crucial
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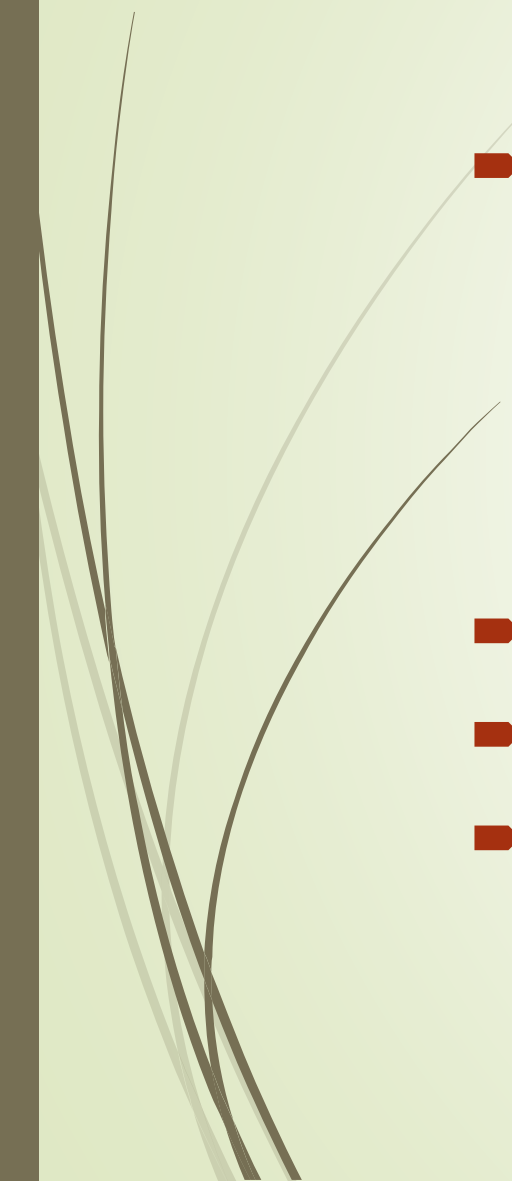


Aligning Interactional Purpose

- When using a functional syllabus, goals can be confusing
- Problem
 - Student A understands the goals/purpose and the communicative potential of the phrases so is invested in the task
 - For Student B, task goals are too vague or task completion appears too difficult so the communicative potential of the phrases are not realised
- Possible solution
 - If discussion goals are clear and appear easily attainable by all group members – more meaningful communication should ensue



A Shared Discussion Template – Strategic Investment

- Discussion preparation activity
 - All relevant skills for the discussion are listed
 - Students brainstorm ideas for each skill
 - All students become aware of and understand how phrase use fits into a discussion
 - Initial templates should be filled out by the teacher
 - Subsequent class applications can be scaffolded
 - Ideally, final lesson templates can be blank and everything is completed by the students (including questions)
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Discussion Topic

Public Manners

JALT 2019 Presentation: Discussion Question 1

Question: Which is a better public rule -

- No smoking in restaurants **or** No walking on escalators?
- No eating/drinking on trains **or** No using smartphones while walking?

Viewpoints

A smoker/non-smoker	A busy office worker	An elderly person	A mother/father with a small child
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Comparison

Smoking in restaurants	Eating/drinking on the train
Walking on the escalator	Using smartphones

Balancing Opinions

<u>Smoking in restaurant</u> (+) More customers (-) Less customers	<u>Walking on the escalator</u> (+) People can move more quickly (-) Cause accidents	<u>Eating/drinking on the train</u> (+) Saves time (-) Smells and sounds	<u>Using smartphones</u> (+) Send a quick message to a friend (-) Cause accidents
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Discussion Skill	Preparation questions
Comparison	What can we compare in this discussion?
Different Viewpoints	What are some different viewpoints we can discuss? (Who would be interested in or affected by this topic?)
Balancing Opinions	What are the advantages or disadvantages (of the things you are comparing)

Discussion Topic

Learning a Language

Meaningful Interaction in EFL Discussion Classes Nov 3rd 2019

Presenter – Robert Smith smith-r@rikkyo.ac.jp

Viewpoints

Comparison

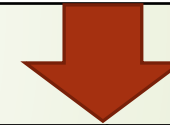
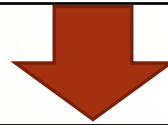
Balancing Opinions

JALT 2019 Presentation: Discussion Question 2

Question: What are some good ways to improve language skills?

- Speaking - _____
- Writing - _____

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_____	_____	_____	_____
(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)
(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)

Discussion Skill	Preparation questions
Comparison	What can we compare in this discussion?
Different Viewpoints	What are some different viewpoints we can discuss? (Who would be interested in or affected by this topic?)
Balancing Opinions	What are the advantages or disadvantages (of the things you are comparing)

Discussion Topic

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Viewpoints

Comparison

Balancing Opinions

JALT 2019 Presentation: Discussion Question 2 (Completed example)

Question: What are some good ways to improve language skills?

- Speaking - Going to a conversation school **or** having foreign friends?
 - Writing - Using social media **or** writing a diary?

A university student	A businessperson	A tourist	An exchange student
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Going to a conversation school	Using social media
Having foreign friends	Writing a diary



<u>Conversation school</u> (+) Trained Teachers (-) Cost	<u>Foreign friends</u> (+) Exchange language and culture (-) Difficult to find	<u>Social Media</u> (+) Easy to connect with new people (-) Could be wrong information	<u>Diary</u> (+) Write about your own interests (-) Can be boring for some people
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Discussion Skill	Preparation questions
Comparison	What can we compare in this discussion?
Different Viewpoints	What are some different viewpoints we can discuss? (Who would be interested in or affected by this topic?)
Balancing Opinions	What are the advantages or disadvantages (of the things you are comparing)



References

Smith, R. A. (2019). Observations on Purpose and Value in EFL Discussion Classes. *New Directions in Teaching and Learning English Discussion*, 7, 79-86

Can be downloaded from the Rikkyo EDC website
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