

Speaking

Name: Feedback blog

Aim: to provide an online repository for feedback on classroom speaking activities

Context: all (depending on location of blog – see notes)

Level: A1 – C2

Type of tool: blog (either free-standing on the internet or as part of an LMS)

Type of material: feedback – OWN, speaking activity – OWN/PUB

Planning: medium – for establishing the blog and its use, on-going – if the blog is to be used across an entire course / academic year

Preparation:

Set up the blog. You can either do this using one of the many free online blogging services or use the blog feature native to your institution's LMS.

Procedure:

1. In the classroom:

Explain that the blog is to be used as a forum for you, the teacher, to post feedback on class speaking activities. This is to give the maximum amount of classroom time over to speaking. Tell the students that they will be able to comment on the blog posts and any comments not dealt with on the blog will be followed up in the next class.

Initiate a discussion about the type of feedback that could go on the blog. What would the students find most useful. Some ideas are: correction of mistakes, lists and examples of new vocabulary that came up during the discussion, supplementary practice material, and links to most information on topic or language points (online dictionaries, other resources on the course LMS). Explain that any decisions will be revisited and reviewed after the blog has been in operation for a period of time.

Divide the class into small groups to discuss an etiquette for the use of the comments and report back. Agree a class policy.

The type of feedback and the policy on etiquette agreed form the text of the first post on the blog.

2. Outside the classroom:

Post feedback on the blog as soon as possible after a class speaking activity. Monitor comments. Most blogs require the administrator to approve comments before they appear on the blog. Where necessary, respond to comments. Decide what, if any points, to take up in the next class.

3. In the classroom:

Follow up on any points arising from the feedback and comments that are appropriate to do in class i.e. pronunciation drills or detailed clarification of any confusions.

Variation:

Written feedback from a speaking class, e.g. mistakes or new vocabulary, could be distributed on paper. Pairs of students take it in turns to work together to write the feedback post (within 24 hours of the class) in which they propose corrections to the mistakes or provide definitions and example sentences for the new vocabulary. Other students comment.

Notes:

There are always issues of privacy and security associated with blogs on the public internet. You need to make an informed decision about this before embarking on this activity. It may not be appropriate to use such a blog with younger learners. You should also take this into consideration when you discuss the use of the blog with your students. An example is: what sort of information should not be included on the blog eg, names, contact details, and sensitive or confidential commercial data.