Ideas for getting students to speak in large classes

A challenge faced by many teachers is getting students speaking in the classroom. Speaking activities succeed when each student is involved, has many opportunities to speak, and is motivated to contribute.

The following two classroom structures can be used with many classroom speaking tasks found in *Touchstone Second Edition* Student's Books and many of the tasks suggested in *Touchstone Second Edition* Teacher's Editions. These two structures ensure that students are not wasting valuable speaking time waiting for their turn. Each pair or group is actively working towards a shared goal.

Think–pair–share

Use This structure can be used with any critical thinking or personalization task where students have a question or problem to respond to.

How it works Have students form pairs. Pose a question such as ones in *Touchstone Second Edition* Student's Book 3 (e.g., *Who would you like to meet? Why?* on p. 8), critical thinking questions related to a unit topic (*Which qualities do you admire most in a person?* for Unit 1), or questions related to a topic that students suggest. Give students a designated amount of time, such as thirty seconds, to think through their response individually and rehearse the language they will use to answer. When time is up, have students turn to their partner and take turns sharing their responses. Pairs then share their answers in one of these ways:

Variation 1: Have students report their partner's answers to another pair.

Variation 2: Have pairs share their answers with a larger group, or with the entire class.

RoundTable

Use This structure can be used for brainstorming, practicing, or reviewing.

How it works Have students form groups, and assign a different role to each student:

- *Task leader.* This person reviews the task to be done. The leader makes sure that group members stay on task and can indicate when the next person in the group should respond (such as when one student is talking too much and others too little).
- *Secretary or recorder.* This person writes down the information that relates to doing the task (e.g., ideas on which Ss agree). Secretaries can ask group members to repeat what they said or read out what they wrote for group members to confirm.
- *Encourager.* This person tries to get all Ss to respond fully, encouraging the reluctant member to say more.
- *Coach.* This person can check for a specific language point and remind other students of the point: "Remember the rule for what comes after the verb *want.*"

Initially, model the task and language to use for each role. Have students repeat one role several times until they feel comfortable with it. Also, have students evaluate their performance of the role and discuss any problems they had doing it.

Assign a group task, such as *Touchstone Second Edition* Student's Book 3, Exercise 3 on p. 13, or an Extra Activity for groups in this Teacher's Edition. Students in the group take turns responding. The leader can start the responding, and it can continue clockwise.