

Final Action Research Report – March 2016

Name: Seth Wallace

Title

Bridging gaps of culture and level through communicative language teaching.

Theme of this year's AR:

How can we integrate mixed ages, levels and nationalities in the classroom? How can we encourage negotiation for meaning in preparation and improve attitudes to and results in productive tasks? How can we create a context for cultural sharing and rapport building?

Teaching Context

Semester I:

- 1) Level: 1st Year University Students
- 2) Class size: 24
- 3) Time: 90 minutes, once weekly
- 4) Nationalities: 9 Nepalese, 8 Japanese, 6 Chinese, 1 Vietnamese
- 5) Levels: 7 beginners, 17 inter/adv.
- 6) Ages: 19-46
- 7) Text books: Beginners – English Conversation Curriculum (S.Wallace)
Inter/adv. - Tools for Increasing Proficiency in Speaking 1 (Prof. Duane Kindt)

Semester II:

- 1) Level: 1st – 3rd Year University Students
- 2) Class size: 6
- 3) Time: 90 minutes, once weekly
- 4) Nationalities: 4 Japanese, 1 Chinese, 1 Vietnamese
- 5) Levels: 3 beginners, 3 inter.
- 6) Ages: 22-62
- 7) Text book: WorldView 1 (Pearson ESL)

Course Goals and Objectives:

To encourage students to hold a 2.5-minute timed conversation.

To encourage the higher-level students to help the lower students negotiate for meaning.

To encourage students to be aware of conversation strategies and to use them in interactions.

To encourage cultural sharing and the establishment of rapport between students.

To encourage lower-level students to take the lead as much as possible in classroom discussions, then offer them the chance for higher-quality production in written homework task.

Problems (Both groups were from the same university)

The main issue in the spring semester was how to deal with the gross divergence in level. At least 2 students couldn't read the roman alphabet whilst a group of around 10 were expert speakers of English. It then became a question of how to integrate their efforts both in classroom tasks and for assessment.

In the fall semester, the key issue was how to encourage output, especially the quality and quantity of spoken English.

With vastly different learner profiles, motivations and levels, how could output be shared between the speakers for learning and assessment?

What I did

I developed interesting and personalized materials to complement the textbook unit topics in order to motivate students and focus them on communicative speaking activities.

I introduced conversational strategies such as openers, closers, shadowing and clarification techniques to encourage student output and confidence using spoken English.

I used a variety of materials such as audiovisual, printed hand-outs, and supplementary textbooks in order to raise student interest and noticing.

I developed a positive learning environment, encouraging students to share cultural elements with each other and be inquisitive about the origin of their classmates as well as their contrasting reasons for learning English.

I developed timed conversations, changing partners in order to lengthen and deepen the interactions.

I implemented speaking tests as both mid-term and end of term assessments in the second semester in order to focus students on conversation strategy usage and encourage output.

I introduced the students to peer assessment, modeled feedback and exemplified comments after the mid-term speaking test. They agreed to share their work between them so I photocopied and distributed a copy of each student's work to each class member. This prepared them for the feedback and allowed them to follow the conversation more easily in review. Further, it constituted listening and reading practice and developed confidence.

I modified the peer feedback categories between the mid-term and final speaking tests. I also clarified, exemplified and modeled the new categories with a focus on conversation strategies, rapport building during the discussion and constructing a successful conversation.

We focused on conversation breakdown, how to avoid it and how to prevent it.

I provided an extended feedback session after the midterm recorded speaking test in order to guarantee student noticing of the positive effects of conversation strategy use. This included analysis of the recordings of the speaking tests and clarification of the elements of a successful conversation. We compared and contrasted both pairs' conversations, exemplifying positive elements and evaluating the relative success of each.

I reduced the number of questions for the final speaking test.

I provided students with a description of the final speaking test, along with the topic a week before the speaking test.

I provided students with a rubric a week prior to the final speaking test in order to give them a clear idea of expectations for assessment.

The rubric (kindly recommended by Professor Sato) is weighted heavily to encourage fluency and content.

I introduced the students to peer assessment, modeled feedback and exemplified comments after the mid-term speaking test.

I modified the peer feedback categories between the mid-term and final speaking tests. I also clarified, exemplified and modeled the new categories with a focus on conversation strategies, rapport building during the discussion and constructing a successful conversation.

We focused on conversation breakdown, how to avoid it and how to construct smooth unscripted communication with a focus on fluency.

Inclusions:

Class work samples from mid-term and final speaking tests.

- (i) Mid-term speaking test class interview sheets
- (ii) Mid-term peer speaking test feedback sheets
- (iii) Final speaking test description, rubric and class interview sheets - unfilled
- (iv) Final speaking test class feedback sheets

ABU Eikaiwa 2 - Half-term test
Week 8 11/19

Really oh, I see. The Internet

Q1) How do you spell your name?

- when did you come here?
- How many members do you have in your family?

Q2) Do you use the internet?
(why do you use it?)

- Do you contact friends on the phone?
(How long do you contact friends on the phone a day?)
- Do you get your news on the internet?
(when do you get them?)
- Do you listen to music on the internet?
(Whose song do you like the best?)
- Do you buy books on the internet?
(do you think that is convenient?)

Q3) My opinion

For / Against using the internet to study

- think its useful for us to research.
we can find anything anywhere and anytime on the internet.
- We can save money and time to use the internet.

Student A

P
A
I
R

1

ABU Eikaiwa 2 - Half-term test
Week 8 11/19

The Internet

- What's your name?
where do you live?
where do you come from?
where are you from?
- Do you use the Internet?
- Do you use the Internet to buy books?
- Do you think buy book on the Internet convenient?
- Do you listen to music on the internet or phone?
whose songs do you most like to listen to?
- Who is best people do you like?
- Do you think listen music can make you happy?
- do you like what kind of music do you like?

Student C

Okay, thank you. That's all for now.

convenient

NB: Only corrected if risk of communication breakdown.

ABU Eikaiwa 2 - Half-term test
Week 8 11/19

The Internet

What's your name?
Where do you live?
Do you like a pet?

Do you use the Internet?
(research a route by train)

Did you buy a book recently on the internet?
(to read a book or a comics)
[Kindanoya Maruon]

Do you do your banking in person?

Do you contact your friends on the phone?

Do you listen to music at home?

what kind music do you like?

What's your favorite food?

Student B

P
A
I
R

2

ABU Eikaiwa 2 - Half-term test
Week 8 11/19

The Internet

What's your name? How much ^{was your} (do you buy) ^{electronic dictionary}

What do you eat ^{did} school lunch today?
for lunch

Do you use the Internet?
What do you use the Internet for?

Do you buy books in person?

Where do you go to shop?

Do you listen to music at home?

What kind of music?

Do you get your news from TV?

How ^{do you} get your interesting news?

Do you research information on the Internet?
What do you research information ^{did you research} ^{at present?}

Student D

2015/11/19

FEEDBACK

PEER

ABU Mbd Team Speaking Test

Peer Assessment

Self Reflection

Interview

ABU Evidence 2

Name 1

Peer Assessment

Self Reflection

Interview

ABU Evidence 2

Name 1

Peer Assessment

Self Reflection

Interview

ABU Evidence 2

Student A

Identity	Eye Contact	Content	Information	Fluency & Structure	Clarity	Linking
C	3	2	3	3	3	2
Mr. J						
T	3	2	3	3	3	2
K						

How to credit from team leader

J: is good to speaking English.
J used stress, he speaks with speed.
C: use good shading in → clear meaning.
C: repeats the question →
T: ... polite to answer / good pronunciation.
T: speaks with good tone clearly.
K: answers come questions, clear questions.
K: answers are rich in variety.
"Oh, yes"

Mr. J asks 'what's your name?'
Mr. J. speaks flat tone.
C speaks not clearly, sometimes drops final sounds.
T: wept → clothes
K: My name is Hyda → Kan
Sometimes dull answer.

PAIR #1

Student C

Identity	Eye Contact	Content	Information	Fluency & Structure	Clarity	Linking
C	0	0			please	0
J						
T	0	0				0
K						

How to credit from team leader

C: fluent, good checking, interesting help a partner.
- stresses clear good answer, linking clear.
J: repeat about good shading and good.
T: clear answers, good tone, good explanation, good structure.
K: answer comes clear question.
My tone is down-keep sentences.

Student B

Identity	Eye Contact	Content	Information	Fluency & Structure	Clarity	Linking
C	0	0	numbers please	0	same tone	
J						
T						
K						how is better

How to credit from team leader

C: (short) good shading, clear meaning, repeat description, "Oh, sorry", clear answer.
J: good, clear tone, good shading, good structure.
T: clear question, good explanation, good answer.
K: answer come question, good clear, "oh, yes".

Mr. J asks 'what's your name?' "What is your name?"
T: ... clothes
K: My name is Hyda bin. Sometimes

PAIR #2

Student D

Identity	Eye Contact	Content	Information	Fluency & Structure	Clarity	Linking
C	4	3	4	3	2	4
J						
T	2	2	3	2	2	2
K						

How to credit from team leader

C: They speaking joke, rapidly answer, flat tone clear meaning.
J: God +
T: God +
K: clarity voice, clear question, God explains question for example an answer.
not fully said answer, It's thing don't understand.

Fluency 8 points	(10) be able to maintain a 3.5 minute conversation fluently, with good content (7) be able to maintain a 3.5 minute conversation with some fluency, with adequate content (4) be able to maintain a 3.5 minute conversation with some fluency, with poor content (1) be hardly able to maintain a 3.5 minute conversation with some long	Accuracy (grammar & pronunciation) 4 points	(3) be able to communicate with some accuracy (2) be able to communicate with some errors (1) communicate with many errors, using mainly key words	Delivery (volume & eye contact) 3 points	(3) be able to speak with good volume and eye contact (2) occasionally speak with adequate volume and eye contact (1) be hardly able to speak with adequate volume and eye contact	Strategies (conversation & follow-up questions) 4 points	(4) be able to use many conversation strategies and follow-up questions (3) be able to use some conversation strategies and follow-up questions (2) use a few conversation strategies and follow-up questions (1) be hardly able to use conversation strategies and follow-up questions
---------------------	---	---	--	---	--	---	--

ABU Final Speaking Test Rubric
 Adopted from Gato & Takahashi (2008) Curriculum Revision
 in a Japanese High School
 Teacher-Teacher and Teacher-University Collaboration

Relative 2
 Week 15: 1/21
 Final Interview Preparation

1

2

Notes

Workload to focus on from Monday, June 5

Conversation strategies I want to use in English: TALK 2
 For example: (1) asking (2) listening (3) I see (4) Oh, I see (5) Oh, really? (6) Thank you (7) That's all for now.

Notes for 3 follow-up questions

1

2

3

Notes

Relative 2
 Week 15: 1/21
 Final Interview Preparation

1. Vocabulary
 Future Plans

MY FUTURE PLANS

2. Questions - for example: What are your future plans?
 A. In the space below, write 3 new questions about your future plans.
 B. Interview 2 people, note their answers. Note good questions you hear in the NOTES box.

Interview

Notes

2

Notes

Goal: On the subject of Future Plans (Unit 23 in Worksheet 1), you will make a 3.5-minute (reading of an interview with your partner).

You will also give your opinion about how hearing to speak more English will change your future. Remember to first check any vocabulary you might need.

For your interview, decide to pairs and write:

- 3 introduction questions -- to meet and get to know your partner.
- 3 find questions -- see below.
- 3 free follow-up questions -- please pair (discuss with) each good question to find out a little more from your partner.

For example 2: (1) What are your future plans? Why? (2) Will you use English in the future? How? (3) Will it help you with your plans? How?

Option:
 For your option section: please write notes but speak freely about the question. You will speak on your own about these 3 points:
 (1) 3 Future Plans: (2) Will speaking more English help me? How?
 (3) My advice for " " is _____

Gender: Both recorded speaking parts will be peer and teacher graded.

(iv)

Language 2 Future Plans - Interviews and Opinion Seth Wallace Peer Assessment Fall Semester 2016

Name K ID# _____

Student D

Name(s)	Teamwork (Helped each other/how?)	Delivery (postures?)	Conversation Strategies (How many, correctly used?)	Fluency (L.Sounds/interesting?)	Accuracy (good grammar?)	Impression (Fun, successful conversation?)
Pair 1: K C	I help at miss	hand	Oh I see Oh really? Me, too Oh I don't like. Thank you for opinion. Thank you for advice.	4	Fluent/ios Consciousness	Fluency speaking
Pair 2: T K	helped each other	pose	Oh I see. Oh really? Me, too. Yes. nise. Very much. Thank you that's all for now	4	accent can go to hot spots	
How it could have been better						
Pair 1:			I could speak more fluently than the last time			
Pair 2:			My head become pure white.			
			Word isn't understand or forget.			

Language 2 Future Plans - Interviews and Opinion Seth Wallace Peer Assessment Fall Semester 2016

Name I ID# _____

Student A

Name(s)	Teamwork (Helped each other/how?)	Delivery (postures?)	Conversation Strategies (How many, correctly used?)	Fluency (L.Sounds/interesting?)	Accuracy (good grammar?)	Impression (Fun, successful conversation?)
Pair 1: K C	fresh air	Oh	By the way, Oh really? Oh I see. Let me see. Me too, Oh really?			My advice you
Pair 2: T K			and for example y y y nice! Oh, good great			led more a light more good job make money
How it could have been better						
Pair 1:						
Pair 2:			too slow - T too light ✓			

Language 2 Future Plans - Interviews and Opinion Seth Wallace Peer Assessment Fall Semester 2016

Name J ID# _____

Student C

Name(s)	Teamwork (Helped each other/how?)	Delivery (postures?)	Conversation Strategies (How many, correctly used?)	Fluency (L.Sounds/interesting?)	Accuracy (good grammar?)	Impression (Fun, successful conversation?)
Pair 1: K C	helped each other	Potter very happy	let me see meta? a really friendly. Enjoyed the conversation helped the each other	minutes: 20 minutes: 15	good grammar	Successful conversation
Pair 2: T K	helped each other	friendly	Enjoyed the conversation. Oh really let me see that's all for now. Maybe	breakdown	not good	not good
How it could have been better						
Pair 1:			No breakdown			
Pair 2:			more fluency is good			
			don't fluency			

Language 2 Future Plans - Interviews and Opinion Seth Wallace Peer Assessment Fall Semester 2016

Name C ID# _____

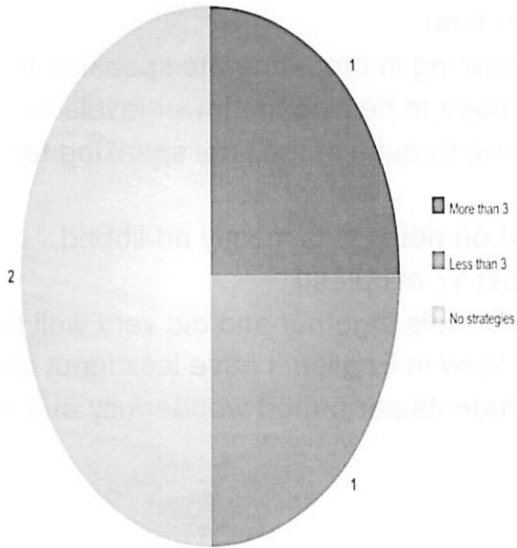
2016/2/18

Student B

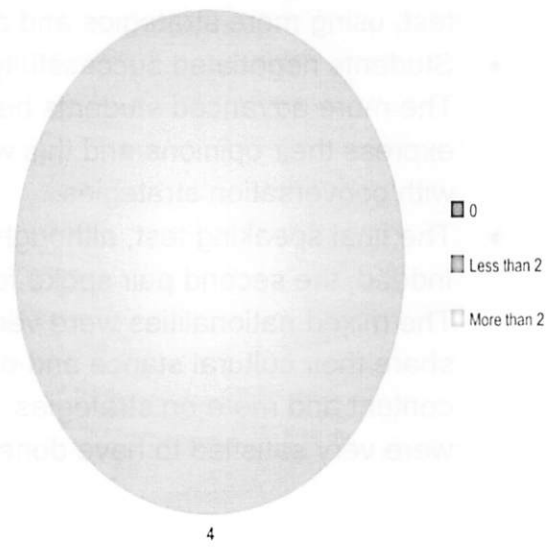
Name(s)	Teamwork (Helped each other/how?)	Delivery (postures?)	Conversation Strategies (How many, correctly used?)	Fluency (L.Sounds/interesting?)	Accuracy (good grammar?)	Impression (Fun, successful conversation?)
Pair 1: K C	helped each other	Share of conversation	Thank you for now. Thank you for advice. Oh really talking with you. Oh I think so. Let me see.	friendly clearly	good grammar	fun No... stronger great in school?
Pair 2: T K	helped each other	good questions and answers	shadowing. I see. I think so. Oh I see. Sorry. Thank you. Nice talking with you. Nice!!	K is more talkative than before friendly	good grammar but she likes she does	fun successful helpful
How it could have been better						
Pair 1:			K is more friendly, more talkative more confident			
Pair 2:			with laughing more genial easier to understand			

Contrast between mid-term and final speaking tests

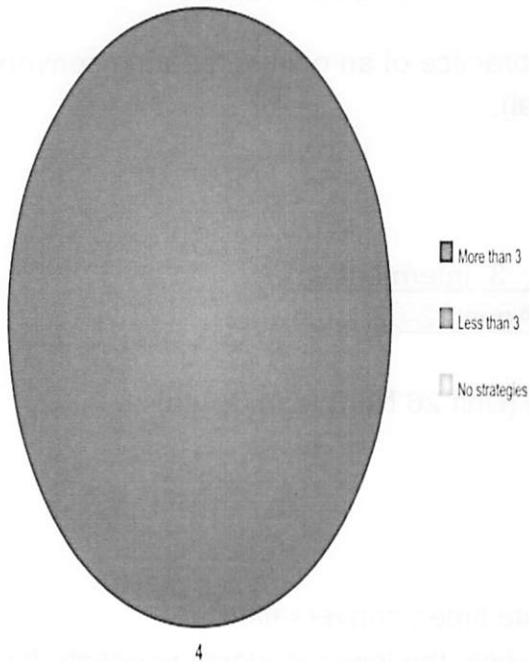
Mid-term speaking test use of strategies (S=4)



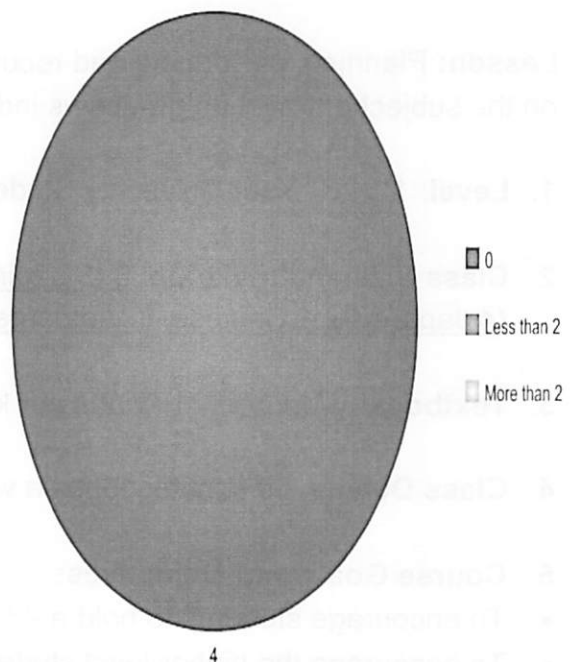
Mid-term speaking test communication breakdowns (S=4)



Final speaking test use of strategies (S=4)



Final speaking test communication breakdowns (S=4)



Results

- Students noticed the elements needed for a successful conversation. They became motivated to produce a longer and more enjoyable interaction.
- Students understood conversation breakdown and noticed the value of conversation breakdown in avoiding this.
- Students became more confident between the mid-term and final speaking test, using more strategies and a kinder tone.
- Students negotiated successfully for meaning in preparing the speaking tests. The more advanced students became used to helping the lower levels to express their opinions and this was borne through in the final speaking test with conversation strategies.
- The final speaking test, although based on notes was mostly ad-libbed. Indeed, the second pair spoke for almost 17 minutes!!
The mixed nationalities were very comfortable together and did very well to share their cultural stance and point of view in English. I gave less input on content and more on strategies. The students performed wonderfully and they were very satisfied to have done so.

Lesson Plan – Week 14

Name: Seth Wallace

Lesson: Planning, performing and recursive practice of an opinion-bearing conversation on the subject of travel (in groups vs individual).

1. **Level:** 1st – 3rd Year University Students
2. **Class Size and make up:** 6 (3 beginners, 3 intermediate)
(4 Japanese, 1 Chinese, 1 Vietnamese), Ages 22-62
3. **Textbook:** WorldView 1 (1 unit per koma) (Unit 26 North and South)
4. **Class Details:** 90 minutes, once a week
5. **Course Goals and Objectives:**
 - To encourage students to hold a 2.5-minute timed conversation.
 - To encourage the higher-level students to help the lower students negotiate for meaning.
 - To encourage students to be aware of conversation strategies and to use them in interactions.
 - To encourage cultural sharing and the establishment of rapport between students.

- To encourage lower-level students to take the lead as much as possible in classroom discussions, then offer them the chance for higher-quality production in written homework task.

6. Class Context:

A more manageable sized group this semester. The student levels and age group are widely mixed.

7. Today's Goal:

- **Speaking. To encourage lower-level students to take the lead in classroom discussions.**
- **Writing. To encourage analysis and autonomous learner investigation into the topic of solo vs group travel, synthesized in written output.**
- **Negotiation for meaning across different levels. Encourage higher level students to enable lower levels to produce more spoken output.**

8. Class Context:

A small group this semester. Student levels and ages are widely mixed.

9. Today's lesson plan

- I. Housekeeping. Introduction of topic. Structured input story – Seth's trip to Europe with his in-laws.
- II. Student mind map. T elicits terms relating to the opinion "Travel – as a group or alone" adding related terms. Students note down filled out mind map on sheet. Pre-teach vocab for input.
- III. Teacher makes a short structured input talk about solo travel vs group travel. Students make notes, add to mind map.
- IV. T feeds back from students, completes and shows mind map on the board.
- V. Students brainstorm vocabulary, share on board, note down.
- VI. Introduction of conversation strategies. Modeling of conversation strategies. Drilling.
- VII. Selection of pairs for first conversation, mixing of pairs for conversation practice (Travelling – as a group or alone? worksheet).
- VIII. Students write their opinion, assess and state 5 reasons for their opinion, then have a timed conversation with two class members, adding strategies. They may adopt questions they find good. Pairing: lower students with higher but lower students are encouraged to state all 5 reasons, higher only 3. Higher
- IX. Pairs are changed, process repeated. Higher students are encouraged to help the lower students state their 5 reasons in pair conversation.
- X. Strategies are reviewed. Adjustments to notes are made as necessary.
- XI. Students return to their original pair for the final timed conversation of 2-2.5 minutes.
- XII. Students then write their fuller opinion as written homework.

XIII. Homework is graded for the course.

10. What happened

- (1) Of the 4 students present, both pairs were able to hold a 2-minute conversation with some grammatical errors.
- (2) The higher-level students sought to enable the lower-level students, offering strategies when conversation breakdown looked likely.
- (3) The lower level students in each pair were able to contribute more to both classroom discussions and written homework output activities.
- (4) Students exchanged original and pooled examples of good travel options in pair conversation with reasons to support these options. They improved the quality and quantity of output through recursive practice.

11. What I might change in future

- (1) Give students more time to interpret the structured input.
- (2) Provide students with a written copy of the structured input text in order to cater to visual learners.
- (3) Develop the mind map into a model conversation which I would write out on the board. Have students provide one part including strategies detailed.
- (4) Demonstrate the model conversation.
- (5) Provide the beginner students with extra conversation strategies in the model conversation.
- (6) Give students more time to practice with more conversation partners.

12. Inclusions

- (i) Student class work samples of the worksheet/preparation for the 2.5 minute timed conversation.
- (ii) Student written samples from the homework opinion section

CA - Student 1

Student 2

chi

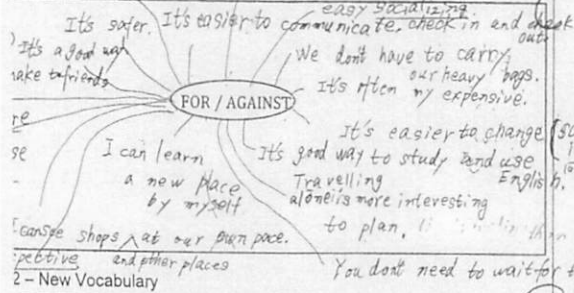
Study

Travelling - as a group or alone?



Opinion: It is better to travel in a group.

Step 1 - Brainstorming
don't get lonely. It's easy to solve problems.



rely adventure
 perspective socializing
 itinerary

1 - Write the reasons

We don't get lonely because we can contact with the group.
 It's safer because we can travel with the conductor.
 It's easier to change itinerary if it will rain.
 Our perspective is more likely to change because we can contact with foreigners directly.
 We can choose how to use our time because we can make any plans.

- Let's talk
 A: How are you doing?
 B: good, thank you. And you?
 A: Great. So, do you think it's better to travel in a group?
 B: I do. / No, I don't.
 A: Why do you think so?
 B: Cause.....
 A: How about you?
 B: I don't think it's good to travel in a group because.....
 A: Thank you for the interesting conversation.
 B: Thank you, too.

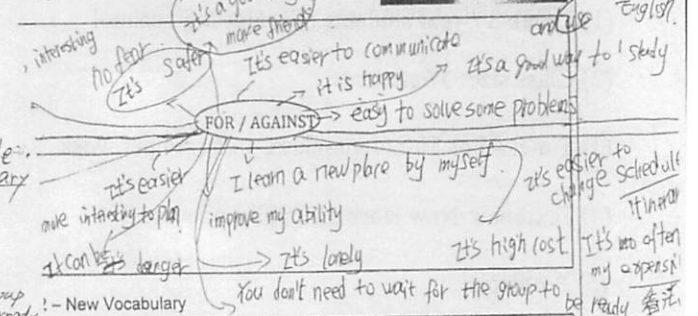
STUDENT 1

Travelling - as a group or alone?



Opinion: It is better to travel in a group.

Step 1 - Brainstorming



perspective 语言交际能力, 看法, 见解, 洞察力, adj 透视的.
 itinerary 旅程 socializing 交往 adventure 冒险活动

3 - Write the reasons

It's easy to make friends. → Because we see new things together.
 It's interesting → Because we can do some games together.
 It's safer → Because meet the bad people we can scare away the bad people.
 It's easy to solve some problems → Because if we are in trouble we can work together to deal with it.
 It's a good way to study and use English → Because in dealing with some things we can boldly speak English.
 It can improve myself English level.

- Let's talk
 A: How are you doing?
 B: I'm good, thank you. And you?
 A: Great. So, do you think it's better to travel in a group?
 B: Yes, I do. / No, I don't.
 A: Why do you think so?
 B: Because.....
 A: How about you?
 B: I (don't) think it's good to travel in a group because.....
 A: I see. Thank you for the interesting conversation.
 B: Thank you, too.

STUDENT 2

CA - student 1
 I think that group travel is better because it's easy to make friends. Because we see new things together and don't get lonely.
 But I choose to travel alone.
 There are 4 reasons.
 Firstly, I can choose how to use my time because I can make my own plans.
 Secondly, Our perspective is more likely to change because we can contact with foreigners directly.
 Thirdly, It is easier to change our itinerary, so we can go anywhere and anytime by ourselves.
 Last, we can enjoy the best travel because I think it adventurous for us to go alone.

chi - student 2

Final Step - Express your opinions



I think that group travel is better easy to make friends because we can see new things together. Travelling as a group that is interesting because we can do some games together. As a group it's safer because meet the bad people we can scare away the bad people. As a group travelling is better to solve problems because if we are in trouble we can work together to deal with it. Last one travelling as a group is a good way to study.