



FECEI Madrid
Innovation and Tradition
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An innovative
approach:

online forums
and face-to-
face classes
to enhance
speaking skills

Online Forums/Face-to-Face Classes

Online Forums	Face-to-face classes
Asynchronous nature of communication	Real time communication
Students can edit their posts	Verbal communication
Students can communicate at their own pace and in their own time	Tone of voice can alter the meaning of the sentence
Feedback is provided in writing	Spontaneous/quick feedback is produced
Students can re-read their contributions	Direct/straight communication
Students can reflect on their own views and those of their peers	Facial expressions /body language have an effect on communication

Online forums

- Provide an interactive venue for students to ponder and exchange views (Yap & Chia, 2010)
- Help students to develop critical thinking skills and argumentation skills (Smyth, 2011)
- Foster collaborative learning by stimulating students to interact with each other
- Encourage those who are shy and withdrawn to be courageous and willing to participate
- Enable students to be more engaged in real-life communicative situations in a more authentic learning environment
- Allow students to prepare for subsequent oral communication in their face-to-face classes



Face-to-face classes

- Students deal with spontaneous speech
- Students interact in pairs/groups and have to respond quickly

As a result:

- Students may feel embarrassed to speak in front of their peers
- Students may not feel confident to speak in public, especially when they are shy or are not very proficient in the target language

How can students be helped to enhance their speaking skills?

- Students can think about their views prior to posting them online
- Students can take their time to compose their texts online
- Students can interact with their peers in a non-threatening environment that reduces their anxiety

As a result:

- Students feel more comfortable to interact in class due to their being familiar with the subject of discussion
- Students feel more confident in exchanging their views in class after their online practice
- Students produce more language (wider range of grammatical and lexical resources)

Example of Online Forum task

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www.whiterose-valladolid.com/academiawhiterose/foro/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=678. The page title is "Wednesday 9th November". The forum post is by "Ruby Vurdien" and is dated "Mon Oct 31, 2016 10:06 am". The post content includes a link to an article on The Guardian and a list of two questions for a debate.

Author: Ruby Vurdien
Message: Post subject: Wednesday 9th November
Posted: Mon Oct 31, 2016 10:06 am

Dear All,
Here's the link to the article you have to read for your debate.
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfr...-committee>

Then post your views on the following questions.

1. Do you think people from different backgrounds are discriminated against by the Spanish law authorities?
2. What, in your view, are the most suitable ways to deal with juvenile delinquency?

Here's a list of phrasal verbs from the article: end up, show up, put down to, grow up, let off, call for, grow out of, speak out.

Use at least 4 of them when expressing your views.

Have fun! 😊

Ruby

Ruby Vurdien

Student interaction on Online Forum

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www.whiterose-valladolid.com/academiawhiterose/foro/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=678&start=10. The browser tabs include 'Academia de Inglés en Vall...', 'Forum White Rose - View t...', 'Academia de Inglés en Vall...', and '(3 unread) - whiterose_va...'. The forum post is by user 'eva_martinez', who is currently 'offline'. The post subject is 'Re: Wednesday 9th November' and was posted on 'Wed Nov 09, 2016 11:57 am'. The user's profile information shows they joined on 'Sun Oct 09, 2016 2:11 pm' and has '3 posts'. The post content includes a quote from 'Pilar Maestro Ramos' and a response from 'eva_martinez'.

eva_martinez **Post subject:** Re: Wednesday 9th November **Posted:** Wed Nov 09, 2016 11:57 am

offline

Joined: Sun Oct 09, 2016 2:11 pm
Posts: 3

Quote: Pilar Maestro Ramos wrote:

1. In many developed countries, like the article points out, authorities tend to suspect from specific people, because of their appearance, a different nationality or even the place they live. This is a situation that also happens in Spain. This could be seen in daily life, for instance, when a robbery takes place in a public area, the first suspicious person and the one that police is going to look for, is a foreigner or a person that could not wear brand-name clothes. Even, when they are in police hands, they don't have the same opportunities to speak out about their point of view or defence their innocence. Not to be punish, police call them for more explanations and facts, although they were not responsible of what happened. Even, in some occasions police do not take into account the point of view of those that are different from the Spanish upper or middle classes and they impose their power, considering themselves superior than them. In my opinion, our society needs to not to put down people by their appearance and to leave social classifications aside.
2. Regarding juvenile delinquency in my country, I think that the most important point is the role that parents must play in order to teach a series of values to young people, but besides, the work of teachers and schools. Their labour is to help teenagers to look for what they like to be when they grow up and to increase the curiosity about interesting topics for them.

I agree with your point of view, Pilar. There is a bias in the way that police patrols treat offenders, but this is not something specific of this country. In my opinion racism is spread out in all the countries. This is a way of thinking that exclude innocent people from having a normal social life and that should be changed over the years. Appereances can be deceiving, and a person's human potential is independent from their race.

Concerning a solution to the problem, I also think that parents play an important influence in their children's education. Unfortunately, parents don't always have a good influence on their kids and may be the origin of their wrong behaviour, as they grow up with the wrong values.

Top [profile](#) [pm](#) [email](#) [edit](#) [quote](#)

Windows taskbar: 18:20 20/11/2016

How to get started

- <http://www.whiterose-valladolid.com/academiawhiterose/foro/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=678>
- Create an online forum platform by using one of the free websites available, for example, www.createaforum.com.
- Invite students to register by creating their own individual account and password.
- Activate each student's account and place them in their respective group.
- Give each group a name in order to facilitate recognition.
- Reassign groups whenever necessary.



Tips about using online forums

- Upload articles for students to read or videos for students to watch
- Set questions to prompt discussions online
- Get students to post their views online
- Get students to engage in pairs/groups online
- Ask students to use target vocabulary items when expressing their views online
- Divide students into small groups in their face-to-face classes to discuss the issues debated online

¡Thank you!



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