**Overview**

The Academic Skills class is meant to teach students note-taking skills. The primary activity is to watch and listen to six video lectures on various topics of fifteen to twenty minutes in length. As a supplement to that activity, I have students come before the class about three times per term to give very short lectures on topics of their own choosing. Although this strengthens their abilities as speakers, the primary purpose is to strengthen the listening abilities of the audience.

**Format of the Activity**

1. Each speaker speaks for one minute. I time them so they will notice if their speeches are too short. I cut them off at the end of a minute. I tell them to practice beforehand to check that their speeches are a minute long.

2. Each speaker speaks from notes, not from a script. I tell the presenters to write down a maximum of twenty main points on a single note card.

3. During each speech, the members of the audience write down as many key terms for the speeches as they can. The aim is to guess which terms the speaker chose as main points; that is, the terms that the speaker wrote down on his/her note card beforehand.

4. After all the speeches are finished, the speakers show the contents of their note cards to the class. This can be done using the OHC (overhead camera).

5. The members of the audience circle terms on their lists if those terms also appeared on the speakers’ note cards. The aim for the audience is to identify at least 10 key words from each of the speakers’ cards.

6. The score for each person is calculated on a 100-point scale and the one-minute lecture notes from the speakers are handed in.

**Observations**

1. The variation of topics is an important part of the activity. Holidays, places the students have visited, hometowns, favorite musical groups and other topics are presented. I do not give any guidance as to the type of topic a person may choose. The greatest variation in topics is one of the aims.

2. The variation in speaking styles will strengthen the skills of the listeners. Some speakers might rush, others might speak too softly, but all of them tend to become better speakers as they listen to many other speakers.

3. Additional practice strengthens the skills of the listeners. Each person listens to about five speeches per class. In total, they will hear over 60 speeches over the course of the term. Listeners become more accustomed to the activity as they follow the routine of note-taking.

Yourname: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_ **/100**

**First speaker: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** /10

**Keywords: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Second speaker: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** /10

**Keywords: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Third speaker: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** /10

**Keywords: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Fourth speaker: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** /10

**Keywords: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Fifth speaker: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** /10

**Keywords: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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