

## Rhetorics 1 – Small Talk

Homework: exercises 1,2,3,7

- 1) Think about 3 informal topics you would like to discuss with other people:
  - a. ....
  - b. ....
  - c. ....
- 2) Think about the group of people you are going to meet – are the topics suitable for this particular group of people? (consider age, education, situation). Would you change any of the topics or add a new one?
  - a. ....
  - b. ....
  - c. ....
- 3) Is there a topic that might be sensitive for someone from the group? (sometimes must be reconsidered on the spot) If your topics are staying, think about those you should probably avoid. Why some controversial topics can be discussed in particular groups while in others it is inappropriate? Is it a good idea to start talking about serious topics with a group of people you do not know very well?
  - a. ....
  - b. ....
  - c. ....
- 4) Choose one of the topics that have remained as suitable for our group and try to engage others in a small talk. You have approximately 30 seconds to prepare. Try to think about the general structure:

Think in Terms of a Well Written Paragraph. Although writing is not the same as speaking, there are some common characteristics relating impromptu speaking and well written paragraphs. A well written paragraph contains:

- An Introduction
  - A Main Idea or Point
  - Supporting Evidence / Examples
  - Conclusion
- 5) Engage in the conversation (each one for about a minute). Listen to your colleagues and if possible react either in your speech, or/AND in your gestures, facial expression, little agreeing or disagreeing sounds. Show you are LISTENING!!!
  - 6) Was the topic successful? If yes, you can go on for a longer time, if not, change the topic.
  - 7) Choose which topics are appropriate and which are not:

### **Small Talk - Appropriate?**

Which topics are appropriate for small talk discussions? For those topics which are appropriate, think of one interesting comment to make when the teacher calls on you. For

those topics which are not appropriate, be able to explain why you believe they are not appropriate for small talk.

- **The latest films**
- **The One True Path to Eternal Life**
- **The local basketball team**
- **Cars**
- **A product you would like to sell to everyone**
- **The Death Penalty**
- **Your home town**
- **How much you make**
- **Your last holiday**
- **Your favorite movie-star**
- **The correct political party**
- **The weather**
- **Gardening**
- **Your health problems**
- **Your family**

8) Play the game in your group – exercise for quick reactions

### **Small Talk - Socially Mixing**

Play this game quickly in small groups. Throw one die to move forward from one subject to the next. When you get to the end, return to the beginning to start again. You have thirty seconds to begin making a comment about the suggested subject. If you can not, you lose your turn!

- Your best friend
- The last film you saw
- Pets
- Rock and roll
- A magazine
- Learning a language
- Playing tennis
- Your current job
- An interesting excursion nearby
- The Internet
- Marilyn Monroe
- Keeping healthy
- Human cloning
- Your favorite food
- Finding a job in your country
- The last book you read
- Your worst holiday
- Something you've never done, but would like to do
- Teachers - what you like
- Teachers - what you don't like

Source: [http://esl.about.com/od/conversationlessonplans/a/lesson\\_smtalk.htm](http://esl.about.com/od/conversationlessonplans/a/lesson_smtalk.htm)