A handbook for high school English teachers in China

DISCUSSION MATTERS

FACILITATING STUDENTS’ ENGLISH PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE THROUGH CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS

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Dear Readers:

This handbook is intended to be a resource for high school English teachers in China. Although our nation allegedly has the largest number of English learners (Jiang, 2003), our students still find it hard to use English confidently in real-life communications. Meanwhile, despite the recent call by Ministry of Education (2000) to develop students’ English ability on the pragmatic level, many of our teachers lack sufficient theoretical knowledge and pedagogical support to meet that requirement, and thus still cling to their traditional grammar-translation approach.

To address such problems, this handbook offers several key instructional practices on classroom discussions that are specially adapted to the Chinese educational context. It also includes relevant research theories and evidence that demonstrate their effectiveness in developing students’ English pragmatic competence, as well as suggestions and support for teachers to implement them. While the problems we aim to tackle mainly appear in public school classrooms at the senior secondary level, these recommendations might also be useful for language teachers in China who work in international high schools, elementary schools, and junior middle schools, as long as they are properly adjusted to cater to the specific context.

We hope that by reading this handbook, you can reflect upon your current ways of teaching, your students’ level of pragmatic competence, and how these discussion practices might be incorporated in your classroom. Finally, we truly encourage you to make the first step and try out your own selection of discussion routines. You’ll soon notice that your students become not only competent in using English, but also willing to use it themselves!

With great love,

Zixin & Yuxiao

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This concept map gives you a brief overview of what we are going to cover in this handbook. We aim to use classroom discussions to promote students’ English pragmatic competence in China. Though it may look unfamiliar to you at this point, we hope when you finish the book, you can understand the terminologies and theories behind our proposal.
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Chapter One

THE CONTEXT OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSES IN CHINA

1.1 HOW TEACHERS TEACH?
THE “DEFAULT PRACTICES” FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS IN CHINA

“Class begins.” Ms. Shen, the English teacher, standing at the podium and facing towards her 40 students who sit in rows of desks and chairs, says to the class. “Stand up!” The class student monitor shouts out to all the students. After hearing the command, all students stand up as a manner of showing respect to Ms. Shen. Followed by the teacher’s greeting “Good morning, everyone”, students reply in one voice, “Good morning, Ms. Shen”. This is how an English class opens at Pudong High School in Shanghai, China, and Ming Li, 16 years old, is one of the students in the
class. He is required to take English as a foreign language and has English classes 45 minutes each day, 5 days a week. He has been learning English since first grade, and it has always been attached with great importance, since English, along with Chinese and Maths, is a compulsory test subject and weighs a large percentage in the total score of the National College Entrance Exam. After students sit down, Ms. Shen asks everyone to open the textbook and reads the text together. Then, she explains the main idea of the text and asks students about the new grammatical structures and vocabulary used in the text. Usually, only if the students believe they have the correct answers in mind will they raise their hands and wait for Ms. Shen's call. Conversation seldom happens between students and her. What happens instead is often nothing more than a check for right or wrong answers. Students take down notes and work on exercise sheets, answering various tasks such as reading comprehension, blank filling, and translation. When the class bell rings, signaling the end of the class, the only sentence Ming Li has spoken during the whole session is “Good Morning, Ms. Shen”.

I believe you are quite familiar with this scene. What Li encounters is not exceptional, but a rather typical EFL (English as a Foreign Language) class setting in Chinese high schools. Like Li, another 50 million secondary school students are also studying English in China (Adamson, 2004), and might be going through similar learning experience.

As teachers, it is time for us to rethink about the conventional pedagogy used in EFL classrooms in China. The current mainstream teaching approaches focus on lecturing, through which the teacher transfers the knowledge of vocabulary and syntax to the students (Liu & Huang, 2012). Meanwhile, the assessment test of English as a subject focuses mainly on vocabulary recognition, grammar knowledge, reading comprehension, and English-Chinese translation (Liu & Huang, 2012). In other words, students’ oral English is seldom tested. Besides, the big class size of more than 40 students also hinders the teacher from promoting dialogues or implementing group discussions effectively (Hong, 1991). As a result, students are not motivated to “speak” or “use” English, but rather used to reciting texts, memorizing vocabulary lists,
receiving grammar drills and doing literal translation exercises. Now it is time for us to reconsider our “default practices” for EFL classes, and ask ourselves: Should we simply teach the students a subject to help them pass a high-stake test, or motivate them to use a language effectively?

### 1.2 HOW STUDENTS PERFORM?

**“A SUBJECT TO LEARN” OR “A LANGUAGE TO USE”**

So far, we’ve reviewed the current mainstream teaching approaches in Chinese EFL classrooms, so what’s the result? You might have already got some first-hand impression from your own students’ English performance, but still let’s explore the bigger picture together!

English has been promoted nationwide by the Chinese government since 1970s for different political and economic reasons (Lam, 2002), and has indeed achieved great success within the realm of education (Hu, 2003). However, due to the overemphasis of traditional pedagogies (as we explained above), many students stop at being English learners who are often “deaf-and-dumb”, and never reach the status of competent English users (Wei & Su, 2008). According to a nationwide survey conducted by Wei & Su (2012), only 7% of English learners reported using English “often”, while 69% claimed that they “seldom” used the language. When it comes to oral proficiency, only 21% reported being able to sustain a conversation in English beyond initial greetings. In other words, despite their learning of **declarative knowledge** about form and meaning of English, Chinese students often fail to acquire the **procedural knowledge** on how the language can be used in real-life context.

**Declarative knowledge** means knowing THAT something is the case (e.g. “a” is the first letter in English alphabets), while **procedural knowledge** involves knowing HOW to do something (e.g. how to express gratitude in English) (Hecht & Hadden, 1992).
As a result, we herein identify two interconnected problems that currently exist in the high school EFL classrooms in China:

1. **For teachers’ instructional practices**, the monopoly of traditional grammar-translation method still exists, and the incorporation of communicative discussions remains more like a call, which has either been poorly implemented or not at all.

2. **For students’ learning outcomes**, exam results demonstrate that students generally achieve certain level of understanding on the form and meaning of the language, but are often incapable of using it competently for communicative purposes.
2.1. WHAT IS PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE?

Now we know the problems, but before we jump into any pedagogical solutions, it might be good if you can be equipped with essential concepts and theories on the topic of pragmatic competence. First of all, you might even be thinking, “What exactly is pragmatic competence?” Let’s find out!

The notion of **pragmatic competence** was first defined by Chomsky (1980) as the knowledge of conditions and manner to use the language appropriately and effectively for various purposes. It was proposed in opposition to **grammatical**
competence, which refers to the knowledge of form and meaning, including but not limited to intonation, phonology, syntax, and semantics (Thomas, 1983). This division of linguistic competence is in line with Leech's (1983) classification of linguistics, which includes grammar (the decontextualized formal system of language) and pragmatics (the use of language in goal-oriented speech situations). Ever since the proposal of this new dimension of competence, the field of foreign language education has been redirected from teaching grammars to developing pragmatics in both research and practice (Rueda, 2006).

To crystalize this somewhat abstract concept, researchers further divided pragmatic competence into two levels (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). On the lower level lies the pragmalinguistic competence, which refers to the ability to use linguistic elements to perform speech acts (Cenoz, 2008). To achieve that, learners need to be able to fluently arrange and produce their speech during communication. On the upper level lies the sociopragmatic competence, which means the ability to select appropriate speech-act strategy according to the situational and social variables (Harlow, 1990). Learners at this level are able to speak not only fluently, but also appropriately in terms of the microscopic context and the macroscopic culture. Therefore, it is vital that learners understand the different speech act mechanisms of the target language (TL) as well as the broader society and culture in which the TL is embedded.
In response to such theoretical endeavor, practitioners have tried to explore the pedagogies through which pragmatic competence can be fostered. One common suggestion is to conduct explicit instruction, which suggests teachers explicitly instructing rules and conventions attached to the pragmatics of TL (Ifantidou, 2012). For instance, an EFL teacher might directly tell the students that in English, people often order food by asking questions in order to be polite (e.g. “Can I have...?”). While explicit instruction has been found to be effective in raising students’ awareness and knowledge of pragmatics when they perform certain speech acts (e.g. Halenko & Jones, 2011), it often ignores their ability to make use of such knowledge (Kasper, 1997). For example, students might know how to be polite when they order food in English, but they seldom actually practice it in real or simulated settings.

2.2. HOW TO USE CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TO PROMOTE STUDENTS’ PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE?

Research shows that facilitating discussion in classroom can be an effective method to promote students’ pragmatic competence (e.g. Dong et al., 2008). Here, we would like to distinguish two types of classroom discussions.

The first type is implemented in the format of recitation (Almasi, 1995; Cazden, 2001). It is frequently used in classroom practice in China to help students familiarize the content, through ways such as repeating details of the text and constructing conversations in similar sentence frames. Recitation discussion has an IRE pattern—the teacher initiates, the students respond and the teacher evaluates (Cazden, 2001). It gives students the opportunity to improve oral proficiency and get multiple exposures to listen, to speak and to use the language, thus improving their pragmatics through repetition (Halenko & Jones, 2011).

Another type of discussion is conducted in the format of dialogue between students. A dialogically-organized discussion is to “guide students to ask and answer authentic questions [...] and engage them in rich and rigorous conversations about
their questions and interpretations” (Catterson & Pearson, 2017, pp.458). In this way, the teacher does not always hold the discussion floor and hands over the interpretative authority of deciding whose speech is accurate, correct or better than the others (Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001). Students discuss with peers and the teacher observes and offers additional guidance (Ford-Connors et al., 2015). Students are not aimed to provide a right answer at the end of the discussion, but rather are supposed to corroborate and practice the language skills in appropriate context. When students discuss with each other to address the authentic questions, they can articulate their thoughts and exchange ideas with students holding other perspectives. In this way, students are given opportunities to practice performing various speech acts, such as refusing (Allami & Naeimi, 2011), requesting (Taguchi, 2006), apologizing (Chang, 2010), and disagreeing (Kreutel, 2007), all of which are closely related to the pragmatic competence we mentioned above.

In one word, when classroom discussions are facilitated effectively, teachers can help students promote their pragmatic competence—through recitation discussion students can increase oral proficiency, and through dialogically-organized discussion they are given opportunities to practice speech acts. As social collaboration between students leads to an increase in students’ motivation and engagement in the classroom (Guthrie & Cox, 2001), a benign cycle can be constructed and students will capitalize on the importance of discussion in learning.
Now that we understand a bit more about classroom discussions and pragmatic competence, let’s put them into practice! In this part, we will introduce research-based pedagogies through which teachers can effectively conduct discussions so as to improve students’ English pragmatic competence. Let’s get started!
3.1. PRE-DISCUSSION PREPARATION

Prior to each set of discussions, proper **scaffolding** on both content and language levels should be offered (Walqui, 2006).

On the content level, teachers should first provide relevant **socio-cultural context** of the target culture, because 1) students are found to be more motivated to speak and participate when discussions are situated in a specific context (Freebody & Luke, 1990), and 2) it can familiarize them with the target culture, which in turn lays the knowledge foundation for developing sociopragmatic competence.

Besides introducing new contextual information, teachers should also strive to establish a connection between the coming discussion activities and students’ **background knowledge** (Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis, 2009). After receiving such content scaffolding, students are likely to perceive the upcoming discussions as both authentic and relevant tasks, and thus become engaged even before the activities start.

However, engagement is not enough, since language still remains to be a major hurdle for discussions to proceed. Of course, to develop English pragmatic competence, we want our students to discuss in English, but that can hardly be achieved without proper language scaffolding. On the one hand, **explicit instruction** on relevant **vocabulary** is necessary (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). By relevant vocabulary, we mean 1) the high-utility words that are frequently used in discussions to perform speech acts (e.g. believe, disagree, support), and 2) the content words closely related to the specific discussion topics. It should be noted that these words are expected to be used actively in the ensuing discussions, so instruction should not

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**Scaffolding** is a pedagogical concept that provides a support structure for students to enable the implementation of certain classroom activities and the development of certain skills (Donato, 1994).

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**RESOURCE KIT:**
If you want to know more about the specific ways to effectively conduct **explicit vocabulary instruction**, please refer to Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn (2009).
be limited to their meanings, but should also include their connotations, pronunciations, and how they can be properly used in sentences (Rivera-Colon, 2015).

On the other hand, support should also be offered on **sentence** and **discourse** levels. Teachers can write down on the board sentence starters that are likely to be used or that they hope students to use to perform certain speech acts in the upcoming discussions. See Table 1 for an example of what sentence- and discourse-level scaffolding looks like. Be sure to design your own support resources for each discussion activity, because one-size does not fit all!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Useful Sentence Starters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. State relationship</td>
<td>As X increases, Y increases / decreases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide data</td>
<td>For example, when ____ , then ____ .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Make an inference</td>
<td>From this pattern, we can infer that ______ .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Make a prediction</td>
<td>When ____ happens, we can predict that ____ because ____ .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: An Example of Sentence- and Discourse-level Scaffolding (Bondie, 2018)*

Now that we’ve done our preparation on both content (providing socio-cultural context and connecting background knowledge) and language (instructing vocabulary explicitly and scaffolding sentence/discourse structures), it’s very likely that our students are not only engaged in but also prepared for the coming discussions. Therefore, without further ado, let’s move on to our main part -- discussions!

### 3.2. IMPLEMENTING THE DISCUSSION

New teachers may find it quite challenging to lead a discussion in class, as you might fear you would trap yourself in an awkward situation, where only a few students are willing to speak while others remain reticent, or some students simply stray from
the point and start chit-chatting. Don’t worry! Even experienced teachers may still have some lingering doubts about how to implement an effective discussion in class. In this section, we will learn three discussion routines that have been proved useful, and see if you can implement these routines in your own classroom.

### 3.2.1. DESKMATE EXCHANGE

As a teacher standing at the podium looking at the young and innocent faces of your students sitting below, you may easily fall into the conclusion that you are the one and only expert of knowledge in the classroom. However, keep in mind that students are also each others’ help resources!

Deskmate exchange routine is a simple, brief and easily implementable routine that you can first try so as to facilitate dialogues between students. It was originally referred to as elbow partner exchange, in which “two students sitting next to each other engage in purposeful conversation on a topic related to the lesson” (Bondie, Gaughran, & Zusho, 2014, pp. 44). In the Chinese classroom settings, the seats are fixed and two desks are usually combined into one set. The two students sitting next to each other are referred as deskmates and they will sit next to each other in every class for a whole semester or even longer. In this way, deskmates are familiar with each other, and thus it is easier for teachers to use this routine as the first step to encourage students to open their mouths and talk. In deskmate exchange, every student in class has the opportunity to talk as there are only two people involved in the discussion and everyone takes turns to talk and listen.

**TEACHER NOTES**

*Activity: Deskmate Exchange*

- Turn to your deskmate and make eye contact
- The person on the left shares for 30 seconds
- The person on the right shares for 30 seconds.
- You can agree, disagree with your desk mate or share a new opinion.
- When one person is sharing, the other person cannot interrupt.
3.2.2. RUMORS

When students become more and more used to sharing ideas with deskmates, you can lead students to exchange thoughts with other students in the class as the audience should not be confined to merely deskmates. We would like to introduce you to a discussion routine called “Rumors” that allows students to share responses with each other, and pass on the messages to someone else (Bondie & Zusho, 2018).

This interesting class activity includes both writing and speaking exercises. Students first work independently and write down their thoughts. Teachers can prepare sticky notes or ask students to write on a single piece of paper. They cannot write it on a notebook because students will pass this piece of writing to someone else. After students finish their writing, they will be engaged in the first round of one-on-one discussion. With a piece of writing in hand, students know what they are about to say, so awkward silence is unlikely to happen in the classroom. Every student has a full length of thirty seconds of speak. It is important for students to know that this period of time is completely allocated to the speaker and the listener cannot interrupt or ask questions. However, they can ask clarification questions, express their thoughts or defend their opinions during the open exchange of one minute. Besides, students will listen actively, as they have to retell their partners’ ideas to another student in the second round. In this way, students actively practice taking perspectives as they restate the other students’ opinion.

In this routine, students would find it interesting that they can explore their peers’ perspectives. This interaction not only will help them learn the contents of the class more deeply, but also can enhance their social perspective taking skills. Teachers can also ask students questions at the end of the discussion about perspective taking. For example, you might ask “Although you probably don’t know who writes the response in your hand right now, try to stand in that person’s shoes and infer why (s)he makes such statement? Do you agree or disagree with that response?”

**Social perspective taking** means “putting one’s self in the place of another person and to make inferences concerning the other’s capabilities, attributes, expectations, feelings, and potential reactions.”
Meanwhile, speaking is not a heavy burden anymore as students are talking about their peers’ opinions, not about their owns, so they would gradually relinquish their original mindset that only the correct answer is worth spreading. In one word, by going through this routine, students will not only practice their perspective taking skills, but also improve their oral and written proficiency.

**TEACHER NOTES**

*Activity: Rumors*

- Independent work: write down individual response on a sticky note or a piece of paper
- Ask students to stand up with the response and walk around the class to find one partner
- First round exchange: 2 minutes
  - 1st student shares your response with the other student, and the 2nd student listens to the partner’s response carefully (30 seconds)
  - switch role: the 2nd student speaks and the 1st student listens (30 seconds)
  - open exchange (1 minute)
  - swap the piece of writing
- Each student, now with a new piece of response in their hand, is now the owner of that response, and (s)he should find a new partner.
- Second round exchange: 2 minutes
  - Students at this point are not speaking on their behalf, but as the owner of the new response.
- Repeat the steps of swapping paper and finding new partner to talk to.

*The teacher can end this routine any round of repetition (s)he likes.*
3.2.3. $1\times2\times4\times\text{ALL}$

After students have grabbed some content knowledge in the lesson, through ways such as reading a text or watching a video, the teacher can use this routine to test the students’ learning.

First, students are asked to come up with a question or a statement regarding the course material. As they prepare their discussion, they can write down a whole sentence, circle some key words, annotate or even illustrate. Any means to capture their ideas is acceptable. It would give students a sense of security about what to share next and also an agency of choice as they can freely choose whatever ways they find comfortable with.

Then, each student discusses with another student. After the one-on-one conversation, the teacher asks students to talk to different people in a four-student group.

**TEACHER NOTES**

*Activity: $1\times2\times4\times\text{all}***

- Independent work: jot down a question you have regarding the text.
- Find one partner and take 2 minutes to share and discuss your questions.
- Find a new group of 4 students.
  - You cannot work with the same student.
  - Decide who will share first. The student who will share first raises their hand and points to the student who will share second.
  - Each student shares one question, while the others listen without interruption.
- Nominate a reporter of the group
  - In the four people group, students discuss the most valuable question they have in mind and nominate one representative from their group as the reporter.
- The reporter of each group shares with the whole class.
- The teacher records every question on the board and asks the whole
As students listen to other group members’ questions or statements, they can talk together to find any similarities between their thoughts. After the group discussion, each group has to select a reporter and present their ideas to the whole class. In this way, students are forced to open their mouth and talk, thus improving their oral proficiency as they are given more chances to practice.

Even if they don’t have a new idea to share, they can repeat, confirm, add or question other students’ opinions, and practice the speech acts in a real life scenario. Another advantage of this routine is that the teacher can have everyone’s voice heard in a relatively short period of time.

Congratulations! Now you’ve finished the major part of our mission. Let’s take a brief review. We have introduced three discussion routines:

- Deskmate Exchange, the basic one-on-one exchange with deskmates
- Rumors, a combination of writing, speaking, and perspective taking exercise
- 1×2×4×all, pushing students to engage in group discussion and presentation in front of the whole class.

You can also make some adaptation of these discussion routines to fit your class setting. Make sure that your discussion routines can achieve the two main goals:

1. Every student has a chance to speak. → increase students’ oral proficiency.
2. Everyone actively listens to others and makes responses. → improve the speech acts performance.

Now you know how to implement discussions in your classroom, but don’t rush to end the class here. Research shows that to make learning effective, we need not only action, but also reflection (Cumming, 1993). Discussion tasks are no exception (Levy & Kennedy, 2014). So now we’ll end this part by providing strategies through which teachers can prompt students to have instructive post-discussion reflections that may further consolidate their budding pragmatic competence.
3.3. POST-DISCUSSION REFLECTION

Reflections should serve the purpose of enhancing students’ memories for the “gains” and “gaps” after the discussion (Parker & Hess, 2001). For “gains”, ask them to think about 5 (or any number you find appropriate) key takeaways, whether they are insightful ideas on the discussion topic, or simply new ways they can use the language to achieve certain communicative purposes. For “gaps”, ask them to jot down their lingering questions or problems, and the next steps they can take to solve those problems.

To implement such reflection tasks, we recommend the “Plus-one Reflection Routine” adapted from Ritchhart (2017), which again engages students in peer collaboration -- this time not verbally, but through written work!

TEACHER NOTES

Activity: Plus-one Reflection Routine

❖ Ask each student to write a list of key takeaways from the discussion (2 min).
❖ Ask everyone to pass his/her paper to the right, read a peer’s reflection, and add one new idea (1 min).
❖ Repeat at least twice, and return the papers to their owners in the end.
❖ Have each student read the new additions on their list and add insights they have gained from reading others’ works (2 min).
❖ Free discussion (1min).

In this way, students will not only participate in meaningful collaborative reflection, but also practice communicating in English through the written media, and thus promote their written pragmatic competence.

RESOURCE KIT:

If you are interested in knowing more reflection routines or any teaching tools and practices in general, you can visit the website of Project Zero initiated by Harvard Graduate School of Education at http://www.pz.harvard.edu
In this part, we have talked about what you (as an EFL teacher) can do before, during, and after conducting classroom discussions. As you might have noticed, this systematic design of discussion protocols is closely connected to students’ language proficiency (both oral and written), speech-act performance in the target language (English), and socio-cultural understanding of the target culture. Working together, they could lead to the comprehensive cultivation of what we define earlier as pragmatic competence. To have a quick recap of what we’ve covered so far, please see Figure 2 for a macroscopic concept map.

![Figure 2: A Macroscopic Concept Map of our Handbook](image)
Chapter Four

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

Just like declarative knowledge about English is not enough for students, simply knowing what these practices look like is not enough for teachers. At this stage, you may still hesitate to actually carry out these routines. We understand how hard it is to go beyond the teaching strategies you are now comfortable with. Therefore, we’ve summarized help resources and suggestions for you to practice implementing these new pedagogies, too! Let’s take a look!
4.1. PEER OBSERVATION & ASSESSMENT

Learning from peers is good for students, and so is it for teachers. Leading instructive classroom discussions is a complex process that requires teachers to make decisions on a moment-by-moment basis. Sometimes, what you think works the best at that moment might no longer seem so good if you take an outsider’s perspective. Thus, we strongly recommend you to commit yourself into regular peer observation and assessment. It’s a reciprocal process in which you observe and assess other teachers using discussions, and at the same time invite other teachers to observe and assess you. This dual learning process might help you get various “epiphanies” about the nitty-gritty details when a discussion routine is carried out.

4.2. LISTENING TO YOUR STUDENTS

Sometimes, teachers and students might feel differently about the same activity. As a teacher who facilitates the discussions happening in the whole class, you might not notice subtle problems about your routines. For example, a group might seem to be doing well from your perspective, but there could in fact be one student who struggles to comprehend what the other members are talking about in English. In this case, you might think about regrouping your students based on their current level of English pragmatic competence. However, you will never realize these subtleties without taking the students’ perspectives. Therefore, when you try out the routines we introduced in this handbook, always be sure to listen to your students and ask for feedback!

4.3. ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR RESOURCES

Now that you are aware of the importance of discussions and pragmatic competence for foreign language teaching, we hope this handbook will not be your terminus. Instead, we advise you to continue actively looking for further resources by yourself. Here, we offer links to three resource pools for you to start with, but always feel free to explore more on your own!

2: The website “Cult of Pedagogy” (Gonzalez, 2015), the link of which is as follows: https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/speaking-listening-techniques/

3: The website “ThinkCERCA” (ThinkCERCA, 2018), the link of which is as follows: https://support.thinkcerca.com/hc/en-us

We believe by looking for support from other teachers, from your students, and from external resources, you will get better and better in leading instructive classroom discussions and developing students’ pragmatic competence!
We hope this handbook is enlightening for you to rethink your role as a high school English teacher. What do we mean by pragmatic competence? Why is it important? How can we develop students’ English pragmatic competence through facilitating classroom discussions? You might have started to form your own answers to these questions right now, but don’t stop exploring it throughout your career!

If you have questions, please feel free to contact us via the following emails:
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