Accoustical training, five exercises for sound differentiation

Goal > *If students assume the function of discussion moderator (instead of the instructor), they gain additional opportunities to practice their speaking and listening competences. Additionally, it furthers their autonomy, their social competence and their opportunities to practice democratic conduct.*

4th – 9th grade **30–45 minutes**

Materials:
Role cards, prepared by the instructor or created in the classroom.

Procedure:

- The instructor first explains that the distribution of clear conversation roles can contribute to the quality of a discussion. Individual roles are then discussed and the cards with appropriate roles are produced (if they had not already been prepared by the instructor. For a sample role card, see next page). Examples of roles or functions:

  - **Discussion leader:**
    Ensures that students stick to the subject, has a complete overview and the primary responsibility
    (demanding).

  - **Recorder:**
    Takes notes of possible group results
    (demanding).

  - **Share -of- conversation manager:**
    Ensures that everyone is given a chance, to avoid that individual students dominate the discussion
    (demanding).

  - **Rule keeper:**
    Ensures that important rules are adhered to, e. g. "only one speaker at a time" or "no one is laughed at"
    (moderately difficult).

  - **Time manager:**
    Is responsible for compliance with the predetermined talk time
    (easy).

- The conversation roles are assigned to the students according to their abilities. They receive an appropriate role card which specifies their role and corresponding assignment.

- The roles are first tested by means of a short, simple conversation.

- The discussion will be reviewed with the following questions: what went well? What can still be improved?

Comments:

- The roles must be adapted according to the group and the conversational context. Every role should provide a genuine benefit to the group discussion. For instance, it would be redundant to appoint a sound volume manager if the group has no issues with loudness.

- All roles are important, but some are more challenging. This provides all students with an opportunity to actively contribute.

Example of a role card for the discussion leader:

Discussion leader	
1.	You open the conversation. *"The goal of our discussion today is..."*
2.	You then pose a question or ask for opinions. *"What do we require to reach this goal?"*
3.	You must ensure that the discussion participants stick to the subject. *"This does not fit with the topic."*
4.	You ask for clarification, if something is not comprehensible. *"What do your mean by....?"*
5.	You terminate the discussion! *"Today, we have agreed that..."*
6.	You ask a final question for the conversation: *"What do you think went well? What could we do better next time?"*

15 To assume the role of discussion moderator

Goal

This exercise is a simplified version of #14 and pursues the same objectives in the area of speech education: democratic conduct, and free speaking. By limiting the roles to just one (discussion leader), this exercise is also appropriate for younger students (from 2nd grade on) and for shorter discussion rounds.

2nd–4th grade   **15–30 minutes**

Procedure:

- It is presumed that a conversation topic has been chosen (either by the instructor or the students) or that the instructor has a prepared list with possible age-appropriate discussion topics from which the students can choose.

- The instructor explains that s/he would like to hand over the moderation of the conversation to a student. Who wants to give it a try? What do you have to pay attention to in guiding the discussion? (Key points: preparing stimulating questions and prompts; observing the time frame; compliance with the conversation rules established thus far.)

- The child who assumes the moderator role is given 5 minutes of preparation time and writes down a few inspiring questions and prompts for the conversation. The instructor must absolutely assist the student in this phase.

- The student initiates the conversation in that s/he writes the topic and the goal on the board and arranges his/her notes.

- The conversation is guided based on the discussion leader's notes.

- In closing, the course of the conversation and the experiences with the leadership of the discussion are briefly reviewed.