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**Illocutionary Work in Group Discussion**

**Preparing learners for asymmetric interaction with human and AI support**

This handout accompanies a workshop on illocutionary work in group discussion. Participants will read a short story, examine a discussion excerpt, and use a simple microgenetic rubric to explore how interpretive and interactional work becomes visible in talk.

**Contents:**

1. Excerpts from Literature Circle and Mock Trials
2. Discussion Scoring Rubric
3. Nanohana Skies - story

**EXCERPT 1 (LC): Beginning a Literature Circle Discussion**

Literature Circle – Nanohana Skies

Question 1:

What kinds of work is S8 doing to make this discussion possible, and where do you see evidence of interpretive vs. interactional effort?

Roles:

S8 – Discussion Leader (DL; also assumes Summarizer role)

S5 – Experience Connector (EC)

S13 – Passage Person (PP)

Time: 00:28–01:25

S8 (DL):

So today, there's no summarizer here, so I want to summarize quickly.

This story is about Kai, who returns to his hometown and looks for his old love, Mizuki.

He still has doubts about her and their past, and there was a violent incident that sent him to prison.

The story ends with learning about trust or love or something like that.

So first, who are the main characters in this story?

S5 (EC):

Kai, Mizuki, and Ryo.

S8 (DL):

Can you describe their relationship? S13-san?



## **EXCERPT 2 (LC): Responding to a Text-based Prompt**

Literature Circle – Nanohana Skies

Question 2: How does S13 move from the text to an interpretation, and what evidence do you see of ownership rather than repetition?

Focus: Interpretive ownership + collaborative interaction

Roles:

S13 – Passage Person (PP)

S8 – Discussion Leader (DL)

S5 – Experience Connector (EC)

Time: 16:09–18:08

S8 (DL):

I want to focus on Kai's mom's bedtime story.

Can you see this line on page four?

I think there is a connection between this part and Kai's behavior toward Ryo.

What do you think is the connection?

S13 (PP):

I think Kai really values the truth.

But at the same time, it's really difficult to tell if someone is telling the truth or not.

He wanted to believe Mizuki, but because he couldn't be sure, he couldn't believe her.

I think his mom's line affected the way he was thinking.

S5 (EC):

I think Kai is an honest person.

He doesn't want to lie to anyone, anytime.

That's why he couldn't accept the situation.

S8 (DL):

So the relationship between Kai and Mizuki is... ambiguous?

## **EXCERPT 3 (LC): A Breakdown in Discussion**

Literature Circle – Nanohana Skies

Question 3: What kinds of work are missing here, and how does their absence affect what becomes possible in the interaction?

Roles:

S17 – Discussion Leader (DL)

S15 – Passage Person (PP)

S4 – Experience Connector (EC)



Time: 09:50–10:01

S15 (PP):

When you read this passage, what do you think what he's done?

S17 (DL):

Actually, I didn't read this sentence, so sorry about that, S15.

S15 (PP):

Okay, thank you, S17.

I think I'm not sure what he's done, but he did something bad, so that's why the owner said that.

### **Mock Trial Excerpt A: Prosecutorial Cross – Text Ownership + Intentional Control**

Roles:

S8 – Prosecutor

S9 – Defendant (Kai)

Notes:

- S8 asks sequenced, contingent questions (not scripted)
- Questions track mental state over time (intent → doubt → action)
- S9 resists simplification and elaborates (flouting yes/no)

Time: ~17:16–18:12

S8: When did you start wondering the baby might not be yours?

S9: When I heard the baby news... I doubted at that time.

S8: Did you try something to understand Mizuki or confirm the truth?

S9: Yes, of course I tried... but every time Mizuki met Ryo, I had to doubt.

Question (MT-Q1):

Where do you see evidence that S8 is working with the story, not just asking questions?

What interpretive and interactional work is S9 doing in response?

### **Mock Trial Excerpt B: Witness Resistance to Yes/No Framing**

Roles:

S8 – Prosecutor

S9 – Defendant

Notes:

- Clear yes/no pressure
- Witness expands instead of complying
- Shows illocutionary work under high responsibility



Time: ~20:19–21:05

S8: Did you try to kill him?

S9: No... I didn't plan to kill. But my feeling was out of control.

Question (MT-Q2):

How does S9 reshape the question rather than simply answer it?

What does this tell us about ownership, responsibility, and risk?

### **Mock Trial Excerpt C: Jury Deliberation – Revoicing & Evaluation**

Source: MT1 G2 Deliberation

Notes:

- Jurors revoice trial evidence
- Movement from personal opinion → collective judgment
- Clear interpretive + interactional management

Time: ~00:18–01:15

S8: He hit twice, so there was intention—but he was out of control.

S1: Mental illness is the biggest reason. He should go to a hospital.

Question (MT-Q3):

What kinds of work are jurors doing to turn testimony into judgment?

How is responsibility distributed differently here than during the trial?



## Appendix 1. Scoring Rubric for Multistage Stakeholder Discussions (v4.2)

This rubric operationalizes **interpretive** and **interactional** engagement in stacked **Literature Circle (LC)** and **Mock Trial (MT)** tasks. It is designed for **formative assessment**, **microgenetic tracing**, and the **argument-based validation** of role-based discussion ecosystems supported by Digital Mentors. Learners must produce sequences at least two times to demonstrate stabilized performance at a given level. Scores reflect performance within the affordances and constraints of the assigned role (e.g., witness, defendant, discussion leader, etc.).

### Interpretive Reasoning Scale (0–3)

Score	Descriptor	Operational Indicators
0	Estranged / Minimal	No evidence of reading; confused plot, characters, or chronology; denigrates text without explanation
1	Literal / Surface	Identifies events or details, but without explanation or causal reasoning
2	Conceptual / Relational	Explains motivations, relationships, concepts, or themes (e.g., fear, trust, ambiguity), <b>without</b> precise terms and implications
3	Interpretive / Ownership	Uses precise conceptual terms ( <b>provocation</b> , <b>self-defense</b> ...) and explains implication (e.g., “ <b>Self defense</b> is a valid response to <b>Provocation</b> .”) )

### B. Interactional Management Scale (0–3)

Score	Descriptor	Operational Indicators
0	Withdrawn / Disruptive	Minimal participation, off-task behavior, or no uptake of peers’ input
1	Reactive	Responds only when prompted; relies heavily on others’ ideas
2	Collaborative	Builds on or paraphrases peers’ ideas; sustains group flow, demonstrates ‘edge of interlanguage’ language use.
3	Strategic	Initiates, repairs, or redirects discussion; <b>repairs salient errors*</b> (lexical, referential, conceptual) in ways that <b>elevate the discussion</b>

\*Salient repairs noticeably advance understanding, reasoning, or interaction.

### C. Revision & Repair Principle

When a learner **revises an interpretation**, credit may apply to **both scales**:

- **Interpretive credit**: when the revision deepens meaning, causal reasoning, or conceptual clarity.
- **Interactional credit**: when the revision responds to peer input or supports collective understanding.

(Example: re-framing an earlier claim after peer challenge.)



## D. Role Sensitivity (Applied Equitably)

Scores reflect **discursive effectiveness within role constraints**. Learners are **not penalized** for structurally limited roles.

### Discussion Leader (DL)

- Frames questions that advance discussion
- Manages turn-taking and pacing
- Synthesizes contributions
- **Moves the group up the interpretive scale**

### Passage Person (PP)

- Selects salient passages with page/line references
- Explains interpretive significance
- Anchors discussion in the text

### Experience Connector (EC)

- Activates schemas or lived experience
- Relates experiences to story concepts
- Paraphrases peers to sustain interaction

### Lawyer (Prosecutor / Defense)

- **Differentiates open vs. closed questions strategically**
- Uses questioning to advance argumentation
- Applies procedural and case knowledge

### Witness / Defendant

- Responds coherently with close reading of the text
- Supports their side strategically
- Knows when to **elaborate beyond yes/no responses**

### Juror (Deliberation)

- Evaluates testimony and evidence
- Uses deliberation language
- Supports consensus-building

## E. Scoring Principles

- Scores reflect **observable discourse behavior**, not perceived effort or personality.
- Role rotation across tasks ensures equity.
- Scores may be used for **individual**, **role-based**, or **group-level** analysis.
- The rubric supports **formative feedback**, **microgenetic tracing**, and **design inference** for Digital Mentor scaffolding.



# Nanohana Skies





## Nanohana Skies

A story inspired by H.E. Bates, retold by Pachi Inkblots

Kochi prefecture, on Shikoku island, lies along an arc of the sea, carved from the brunt of many typhoons coming in from the Pacific. The skies there can change in a moment from sunshine to downpours, to the wind swept rage of a cyclone. Beneath the changeable, yellow sky, our main character, Kai, exits from Kochi station after having spent many years away. Tomorrow, he will meet his new boss at the canola oil processing plant, and meet his old boss at the *nanohana* farm outside town. If only I could get my old life back.

Kai was surprised to see the many new buildings around the station, under a sky filled with heavy, fast-moving clouds. Despite the many tall buildings, he easily found his way into the covered market, now remodeled but with many old shops he remembered. He saw the phrase '*Kochi-ke*', meaning 'Kochi family' as a slogan for the town on several buildings. Family, all of us, he thought.

So he took time to find some of the oldest alleyways and see his favorite old hideouts and new things like stand-up sake bars, until he found an old *kissaten* – the coffee shop where he first met Mizuki so many years ago.

Back then, he came to town every week to deliver fresh rapeseed to the canola oil processing plant. Sometimes he also delivered *yuzu*, at various stages of development for use in garnish or for making other condiments. In his early years, he drove his boss's truck. Later, he was ready to buy his own.

The *kissaten*'s wooden sign was faded, the noren curtain at the entrance swayed gently in the wind. Kai pushed open the sliding door and stepped inside.

"One breakfast special," he said to the owner behind the counter.

Two elderly women sat in the corner playing shogi. The *kissaten* smelled of grilled *bonito* and old tatami, but now they served thick toast and coffee, too.

Kai talked to the owner, who suddenly recognized him. "When did you get out? I hope you're not going to cause any more trouble."

"I've done my time. I am home now. I'm looking for Mizuki Takahashi. She used to live nearby in Sumire-chō. She used to sit here all day writing on her laptop."

The owner set down a plate with egg, toast, and salad. "That was a long time ago. Why don't you let her be?"

One of the shogi players looked up, smiling. "Takahashi Mizuki? She still lives in Sumire-chō. She's been working remotely as a writer for a long time now, but she hasn't come in for a long time."

"Thanks," said Kai.

He finished his coffee and stepped back outside. The clouds were moving fast, still with a yellow tinge. The sight of it pulled him back to his first visit to this shop, many years ago.

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That day, he had arrived with a truck full of rapeseed. He was stopping for breakfast before heading across town to the canola oil processing plant. He also tended a *yuzu* orchard, and so he went to



deliver boxes of green *yuzu* to the restaurateurs' market. The rain came suddenly, carried by the typhoon winds. That's when he saw the *kissaten*, and rushed in to find shelter.

Just as he reached the door, he bumped into a young woman.

"Whoa, careful!" she laughed.

He didn't notice her clothes, maybe blue? He wasn't sure. But he noticed her full lips, long brown hair, and sharp, playful eyes. She had a warm, quiet laugh, not too loud. A moment later, the rain eased, and the humid September air pressed around them.



"You're like an umbrella, you're so tall," she said, stepping between him and the door.

He often stood out in crowds—taller than most, with his mother's American features and his father's quiet manners. That mix had made him feel out of place sometimes, both in town and in his own skin.

The *kissaten* smelled of grilled fish and tatami back then. But she said, "It smells sweet today, like honey and mustard. Do you smell that?"

"That's me. My hands still smell like *nanohana*. I've been tending the fields since sunrise."

He held up his hands. She leaned in slightly. "Ah, that's it. A good smell."

He watched as she drank her tea. She's beautiful, he thought. He needed to be at the market by noon, but he stayed with her until almost two. Each time he thought of leaving, the rain beat against the roof again. Then, at last, the storm passed.

"I have to go," he said.

"You'll be fine," she said. "You have a lucky face. People like you are always lucky."

"How do you know?"

"I bring luck," she said. "I always do."

She was right. That day, and for a long time after, luck followed him.



Soon, he bought his own truck. "My friend Ryo has one he wants to sell," Mizuki had said. "I'll talk to him—it'll be cheap." Ryo was very successful. He owned several liquor stores and an izakaya, and could often be seen drinking with the elite businessmen in the lively area near the station.

She was right. He got it for much less than expected. "You see?" she smiled. "I bring luck."

That summer, Kai began visiting her house in Sumire-chō. Her mother had passed away, and her father worked nights at the train station. They spent their nights together, quietly, simply. She understood him without words. "I think I have figured out a loan to buy the machines you want, to process the *nanohana* into oil. We could probably even buy our own place someday."

"How are we gonna do that," said Kai, "I don't make much as a farmhand, and while I love your creative mind as a writer, we will still need a sizable loan."

"Remember what I said about luck? I can ask Ryo for a loan. He still looks out for me. But I will need to talk to him."

Sometime later, one morning, as they lay together, he hesitated before asking, "You and Ryo... How long were you together?"

Mizuki exhaled. "It was a long time ago. We grew up together. When I was younger, I thought he was the one."

Kai stared at the ceiling. "And now?"

She touched his face. "He's not you. He never was. He helped me when I needed it, but he wasn't the man I wanted. He isn't the man you are. In fact, I have some news for you."

"Then why do you have to spend so much time with him?"

She sighed. "Because he doesn't let go easily. And because we need his help. Now, do you want to hear our news?"

"What news?"

"I am going to have a baby, Kai!"

"We aren't married, Mizuki."

"That doesn't matter anymore, Kai. When I was studying abroad in France, I saw so many couples who have children without being married. Besides, Japan is changing, and Japan needs children. We'll be fine."

Kai wanted to believe her. He did. But now Mizuki was with child, and Kai could not let go – of his more traditional mindset, and his fear that just maybe, this was not his child. *He remembered his mother's English bedtime stories, and how she always said, "Tell me the truth, no matter what." That way of thinking had never left him.*

He looked at her and said quietly, "Hey... Do you want to come with me today? For deliveries?"

She blinked. "Really?"

"We've been talking about building a life together. It's a good time to start."



Mizuki smiled. "I'd like that."

After breakfast, they rode together in Kai's truck. Kai's doubts still echoed in his mind. *She's smiling next to me, and I should be happy. But I can't stop thinking about the question.* They had just finished delivering several crates of rapeseed to the processing plant when Kai pulled into the alley behind the izakaya to drop off a box of yuzu. It was still early, before opening time. There were crates stacked by the kitchen door.

Ryo was there, smoking. His eyes landed on Mizuki first, then Kai.

Kai stepped out of the truck and walked up slowly.

"I want to know something," he said, voice low.

Ryo scoffed. "What now?"

Kai glanced back at Mizuki, who had also gotten out. "Could the baby be yours?"

Mizuki gasped. "Kai..."

Ryo gave a short laugh. "Well, she never said no to me. You figure it out."

"Don't," said Mizuki sharply. "Don't say another word."

"I need to know," Kai said, his voice cracking. "Tell me the truth."

Mizuki stepped forward. "It's not his. I swear to you. It's yours."

Ryo sneered. "You're pathetic."

Then, turning toward Kai, he added with a smirk, "You think someone like her would really choose someone like you?"

That's when Ryo raised his hand. "I ought to knock some sense into you."

Mizuki reached out, trying to intervene, "Stop it!"

Kai's hand moved by instinct. He grabbed a beer bottle from the crate beside him and struck. Once. Then again. Ryo fell. Blood ran with the rain into the cracks of the pavement.

*He had never hurt anyone. Not until that day,* thought Mizuki.

Ryo died a week later in the hospital.

At the trial, the prosecutor looked at Mizuki. "How would you describe Kai's jealousy?"





Mizuki hesitated only for a moment. "Dark as the darkest night," she said sadly.

Her words sealed his fate.

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Now, so many years later, Kai stood before Mizuki's house.

A girl opened the door.

She had Mizuki's eyes.

"Is your mother home?" he asked.

"Not tonight. She is reading her poetry at a café downtown."

A train zoomed past. The rain began again.

"Come inside," she said. "At least until the rain stops."

He hesitated. "No, I should go."

"Then take an umbrella. You can return it tomorrow."

She smiled, warm and quiet. And in that moment, something in her face caught his breath.

It was in the curve of her nose, the quiet way she tilted her head when she spoke. A small, familiar habit. She had *his* nose.

*He had been wrong—not just in what he did, but in what he didn't believe. Mizuki had told him the truth. She always had. But he'd let the wind and doubt carry him away.*

Kai exhaled, watching the sky. The storm was passing. Tomorrow will be a new day.



### Crime Evaluation & Sentencing Reflection

Category	Details from the Story	Your Judgment (Choose / Write)
<b>Type of Crime</b>	What crime happened? (e.g. Assault, Manslaughter, Murder)	
<b>Weapon Used</b>	Was there a weapon? Was it brought intentionally or used impulsively?	
<b>Was it planned?</b>	Did the character plan to hurt or kill someone?	
<b>Was it provoked?</b>	Was the main character provoked? How?	
<b>Did the character run away?</b>	Did they try to escape, hide, or lie afterward?	
<b>Was there remorse?</b>	Did the character feel sorry or show guilt later?	
<b>Any past crimes?</b>	Has the character done anything illegal before?	
<b>Effect of the crime</b>	Did someone die? Was anyone injured or traumatized?	

### Recommended Sentence Options

(Choose one or discuss alternatives)



Option	Explanation
♦ <b>5–8 years</b> (Manslaughter)	Heat of the moment, provoked, not planned
♦ <b>10–15 years</b> (Severe Assault)	Some provocation, but reckless or repeated violence
♦ <b>15–20 years</b> (Intentional Harm)	Pattern of jealousy, dangerous weapon, avoidable outcome
♦ <b>20+ years</b> (Murder)	Premeditated, extreme force, no sign of remorse
♦ <b>Other</b>	(Write your own suggestion and explain why)

### Reflection Questions (Optional Discussion)

1. What do you think the fairest sentence is for this character? Why?
2. Did the character deserve a second chance?
3. If someone close to you was involved, would your opinion change?
4. How much should emotional stress or jealousy affect the sentence?