



Conversation Strategies: getting students to talk

Conversation strategies : who benefits?

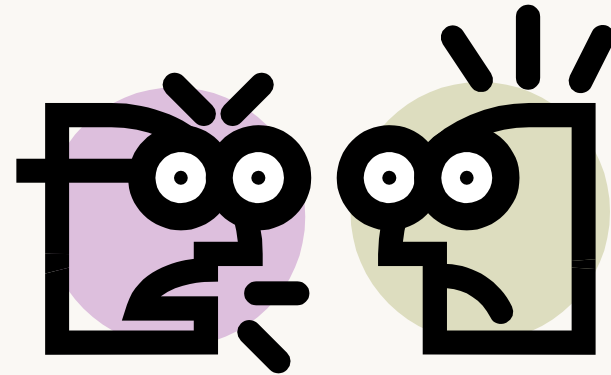
Volunteers with:

- **COBE (computerised oral *bagrut* examination)**
- **Classroom conversation**
- ***Chat Away: taking English out of the classroom***

What is the target population for *Chat Away*?

How does *Chat Away* differ from other ESRA on-line programs?

Strategies to get the reluctant student to talk



Zoomiquette



Cameras

Appropriate behaviour and
setting

General good pedagogical practices

- **Building confidence; Make it personalized; Incidental learning**

Strategies for promoting conversation

- **Question types**
- **Pre-planning**
- **Task Repetition**
- **Modelling the topic**
- **Correction**
- **Resource Materials**
- **Reflection for awareness**

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

- My name is ... I come from ...
- Before I retired I was a social worker/nurse
university lecturer/banker ...
- Now I volunteer to share my English with school children through ESRA



But keep it brief

Now tell me about **yourself** a little bit

—

They may need prompting ...

- Hobbies
- Family
- Their town, village
- Their school
- Their interests
- Their favourite things ...

..... these are the areas you are going to build on for conversation

GOOD PEDAGOGICAL HABITS

1. Build confidence

Always be **encouraging** and **non-judgmental**,
lots of positive reinforcement.

2. Focus on **fluency** not accuracy. Keep
correction to a **minimum**

- Tell your students ...
- Learning a new language is a process of making fewer and fewer mistakes!!
- If you are not making mistakes, you are not communicating enough!



- Also native speakers make mistakes.

3. **Keep a record** of each student in notebook or file.



- Note what he/she tells you in your introduction, plan how to build on this;
- Topic discussed in each session and how they could be developed **(with clips, pictures, student's photos)**
- **Vocabulary** to recycle.

Make it personalized

language functions

- **Describe** to me (your room, your town, your personal voluntary service ...)
- Give me **instructions** (how to get to your house, how to make your favourite cake, how to play basketball ...)
- Give me **advice** (on being vegetarian, selling on facebook, where to hike in Israel ...)
- **Asking questions**

Find out **what you have in common**

- Get him to **ask** you questions
(based on those you have asked him)
- **Question games:**
 1. Student describes something and you ask in order to guess.
 2. 20 questions – student asks you.

Incidental learning

- Speak **naturally** but slightly more slowly than usual.
- Use **short forms** I'm sitting; she's listening,
I couldn't hear that
I'm gonna show you a picture now
- Use **Conversation fillers**
Now let me see
What was I saying ...?

Use **expressions** naturally

Ok, let's get going

Ok, off we go.

I'm afraid I can't see you properly

All wonderfully native-like!!

Strategies for promoting conversation

- TWO TYPES OF LEARNERS:

Those who are **confident, communicative and don't mind making mistakes**

Reluctant speakers

They get good grades in class but ...

- **insufficient exposure to speaking**
- **worried about their mistakes**
- **monosyllabic answers**

How do we get them to talk?

Question types

- Do you...? Did you? Have you ...? questions elicit yes/no answers.
- **Follow them up with *wh*** questions to get students to talk
- Why...? What happened ...? How come?
- How did you get involved?
- or Tell me about.... Describe that to me ...

Now let's say ...

- You have asked him about his interests;
 - You have asked him to ask YOU questions
 - You have used stimulating question types
- ... but your student is still not really holding a conversation ...

.... So now what?



Three ways to promote a topic

1. Pre-planning a topic

The student:

- **chooses** her topic
- **researches** her topic – on google – for ideas
- revises/ thinks about **key vocabulary**
- **makes notes** (not sentences to read) even in her mother tongue

And you think about the topic too.

2. TASK REPETITION

Repeat the same topic the following week

- remind her of the vocabulary
- different questions
- different view point
- role reversal

More **confidence** so more learning achieved by repetition.

3. Modelling a similar topic

- A typical attempt:

“Do you have a pet?” “Yes... a dog”

“Tell me about it”

Monosyllabic answer or shrug

You model the conversation topic:

“I have a pet too ...” and tell her ...

*where it was found/bought, its habits,
taking care of it...*

Example 2.

- I would like you to tell me about the town/village you live in.
- But first I'm going to tell you about my town.
- Include certain features
 - its location
 - landscape
 - institutions
 - entertainment



Question time

CORRECTION

Avoid overcorrection or interrupting conversation flow

keep correction to a **minimum**.

- errors that interfere with understanding
- recurring errors

Correction on Zoom

Use the *chat* option to avoid interrupting the flow.

Grammar mistakes

- model the correct version, when student pauses
- write it on *chat*
- Send written version

... But no rules



Vocabulary 'search'

איך אומרים באנגלית

Vocabulary expansion is an important contribution to conversation sessions

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Vocabulary acquisition

- say the word (e.g. ancient)
- student repeats (more than once)
- then write on chat and send
- Get him to keep a list and spend 5 minutes a day memorizing.

Additional materials prepared in advance for screen share

- Pictures relating to your topic of the week
- Short Youtube clips to discuss
- Photograph supplied by **your student**

7



Look at the pictures below and discuss the following questions in groups of three or four. Be prepared to share your conclusions with the class.

1. What makes people do kind things?
2. What makes people ignore¹ people's needs?



My Resource materials

- **A list of topics** for two age groups
- **Video clips with questions** supplied by the English Inspectorate
- Short **Youtube clips** suitable for learners.

Reflection

allow a couple of minutes at the end

Developing language awareness and difficulties

- Do you always understand me when I speak?
- What do you notice about my speaking?
- What are you missing in your conversation?
- What activities would be helpful for you?
- Do you want to record yourself on your phone?

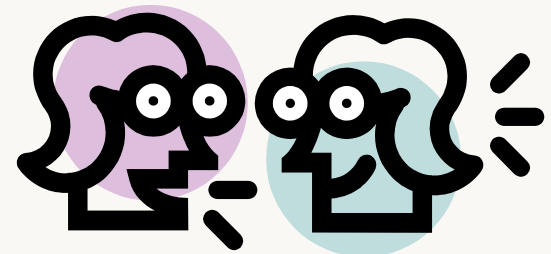
This is also the time for

Positive reinforcement of what went well.

Progress made,

Her **good accent**,

How much you **enjoyed talking to her**



*I have given tips and suggested some ideas
for getting the **reluctant speakers** to talk.*

But this comes with experience,



*so don't worry if you forget some of them at
first.*

Remember ...

...the student is getting so much more
individual talking time than he would ever
get in class !



So thank you, so much!

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