

# Creating Listening Activities That Work

***Randall Davis***

***Presented at  
Carolina TESOL Conference  
and the International  
TESOL Annual Convention  
March & April 2007***



***Presentation Handout  
<http://www.esl-lab.com/handouts>***

# *Purpose*

- ◆ Highlight factors that affect comprehensibility for ESL students
- ◆ Discuss keys to teaching listening
- ◆ Demonstrate classroom activities that teach listening and encourage more student engagement in the learning process.

*Presentation Handout*  
<http://www.esl-lab.com/handouts>



# *General Concepts*

- ◆ Listening and speaking are reciprocals skills.
- ◆ **Testing** listening is not **teaching** it.
- ◆ Just because you can't remember something doesn't mean you didn't understand it at the time you heard it.

# Comprehensibility Factors (1)

- ☉ Rate of speed (learner is a "limited processor")
- ☉ Vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and grammatical structures
- ☉ Ambient noise
- ☉ Acoustic blur (word reductions due to unstressed syllables)

- Keep your **nose** clean
- Have your **nose** in a book
- Keep your **nose** to the grindstone
- Keep your **nose** out of something
- Thumb your **nose** at
- Pay through the **nose**
- Follow your **nose**
- Stick your **nose** in something
- Be on the **nose**
- Have a **nose** for something

# *Acoustic Blur*

◆ Jeet yet?

◆ *No, Joo?*

## *Comprehensibility Factors (2)*

- Lack of background schemata or knowledge

Familiarity with topic helps learner draw on that knowledge; however, it can distort perceptions, leading to misinterpretation.



## *Comprehensibility Factors (3)*

- ◆ Lack of cultural understanding
  - *I saw Bigfoot last night rummaging through my garbage. Here's the fuzzy picture I took of him as he was running away.*
- ◆ Paralinguistic utterances, feedback signals, and false starts
- ◆ Limited exposure to decontextualized speech (unpredictability factor)
- ◆ Amount of redundancy, number of pronoun referents



## *Comprehensibility Factors (4)*

- ◆ No visual or multisensory support

Richness of environmental cues (images, sounds, smells, tone of voice) play key roles in deciphering the message.





## *Comprehensibility Factors (5)*

- ◆ Test items sometimes distort and exaggerate the amount of information that even native speakers could process.

*What is the man's name and . . . if one train is heading east at 60 miles an hour and another one westbound with only 28 lbs of pressure in the back left tire, what is the probability that blah blah blah blah blah?*



## *Comprehensibility Factors (6)*

- ◆ Inability to clarify, restate, and use circumlocution to indicate a need for a modified version of the utterance.

*Give up, pretend,  
or ask for clarification*

- ◆ I don't understand.
- ◆ Sorry. The number is 581-23 . . .
- ◆ What are you trying to say about \_\_\_\_\_?
- ◆ I didn't catch that last point about \_\_\_\_.
- ◆ So, what you're saying is that \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ In other words, \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ Let's see if I got that straight. You said that \_\_\_\_\_.



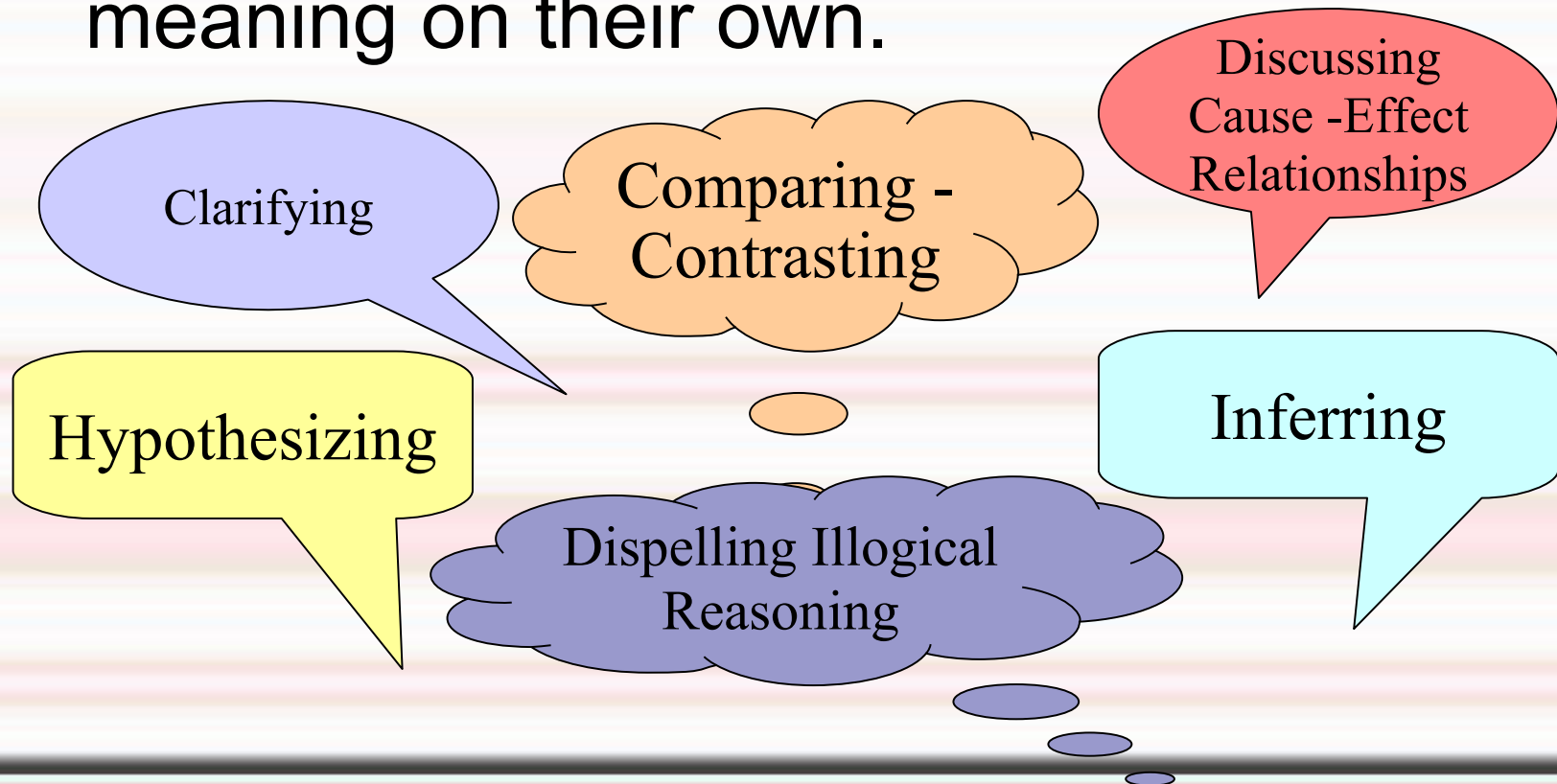
# *Keys to Teaching Listening (1)*

- ◆ Create tasks (and use live speakers) that approximate real-life situations.
- ◆ Progress from semi-authentic speech to genuine authentic speech.
- ◆ Don't use tasks that result in cognitive overload.
- ◆ Design tasks that are success-oriented.
- ◆ Build upon learners' background knowledge.
- ◆ Allow time for collaborative listening and discussion to clarify and restate ideas.



## *Keys to Teaching Listening (2)*

- ◆ Progress from finding the gist of the conversation, to main ideas, to critical-thinking skills where students construct meaning on their own.

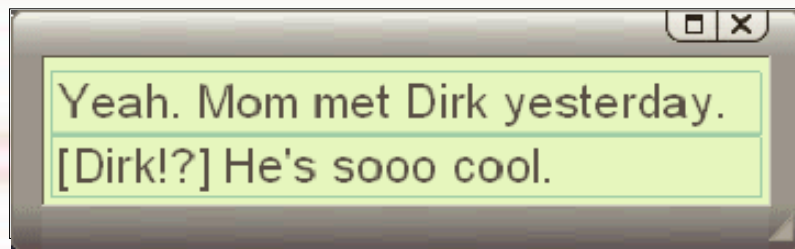


# Keys to Teaching Listening (3)

## Digital Voice Journals - Sanako Media Assistant



- Handles all major media types including .rm, MP3, and .wma
- Displays captions or other text
- Bookmarks files for easy review
- Controls speed of media files
- Records/saves files in various formats including MP3 and .wma



*Designed specifically for language learning. Commercial stand-alone or lab product.*

# Giving Appropriate Feedback

- ◆ Objective: To help students learn how to give and received clarification questions or feedback signals
  - ◆ Oh, really?
  - ◆ Uh-Huh.
  - ◆ No kidding.
  - ◆ What's that?
  - ◆ Why do you feel that way?
  - ◆ I feel the same way.
  - ◆ I couldn't agree more.
  - ◆ What do you mean by *generous*: time, money . . . what exactly?
  - ◆ I don't follow you.
  - ◆ In other words?



# Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab

- Pre-listening activity to stimulate background knowledge
- Idiomatic expressions to improve comprehension and fluency
- Post-Listening exercises to improve problem-solving skills.

Internet Explorer

Address <http://esl-lab.com/like1/like1.htm> Go

[ Quiz Script | Text Completion Quiz ]

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DVD Movie Rentals

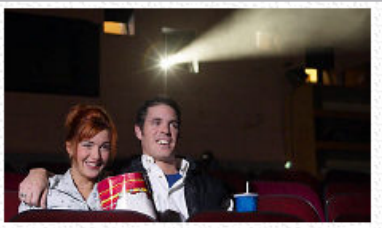
- I. Pre-Listening Exercises
- II. Listening Exercises
- III. Post-Listening Exercises

Level:	Topic:	Type:	Speakers:	Length:
easy	preferences	conversation	man - woman	00:30

### I. Pre-Listening Exercises [Top]

Many people like to rent DVDs or videos for entertainment. Others like to buy DVDs either at a store or online. Write down as many types of movies that you can. Discuss your preferences for each type of movie (e.g., *love, like don't like, can't stand, hate*).

**HELPFUL TIP:** Try renting a movie and watching the captions on movie DVDs as a way of helping you improve your listening skills. There are some great Websites where you can find DVDs.



**redbox \$1 DVD rentals**  
All new releases-No late fees ever. Rent at one, return to any other!

**All the movies you want**  
\$9.99 with no late fees or s/h. Start with 14 day Free Trial.

**IDIOMS!**

"movie buff" = someone who knows a lot about movies

*"If you want to anything about the movie industry, ask Phil. He's a real movie buff."*

"chick-flick" = a movie that appeal to women, often about love and romance

*"Can we please watch something else besides a chick-flick? I really prefer something with a little action and less drama."*

Ads by Goooooogle

**Clean Films not running?**  
Come to FamilySafe Movies for your edited dvd rentals.  
[www.familysafemovies.com](http://www.familysafemovies.com)

Ads by Google

**Net flick movie**  
Netflix DVD Rentals Free

Internet

# *Sample Lesson: Dating & Marriage*

- ◆ Vocabulary Exercise – *Descriptive Adjectives*
- ◆ Grammar Focus – *Adjective clauses and modals of advice, past obligation, and speculation*
- ◆ Asking Questions – *Giving feedback*
- ◆ Pre-Listening Task – *Relying on students' background knowledge*
- ◆ Listening Task – *Checking main ideas and making conclusions based on scripted conversations*
- ◆ Post-Listening – *Making predictions and dispelling fallacies*





# Grammar Focus

- ◆ Objective: To help students learn to form adjective clauses and explain their reasons.
- ◆ I'm looking for a partner who/that is \_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ I like people who/that are \_\_\_\_\_ due to the fact that \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ I enjoy dating people who/that \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ I prefer going out with people whose \_\_\_\_\_.

# Vocabulary Building

- ◆ Objective: To help students increase their productive use of descriptive adjectives.

honest, sociable, intelligent, wealthy, attractive

Positive		Neutral	Negative	
easygoing	tolerant	serious	arrogant	dogmatic
reliable	frank	unconventional	egotistical	greedy
hardworking	sensible	old-fashioned	judgmental	selfish
motivated	supportive	innocent	cynical	sly
reliant	generous	shy	closed-minded	gullible
optimistic	organized	ambitious	intolerant	
pragmatic	romantic	persistent	pessimistic	_____
resourceful	sociable	_____	impatient	_____
sensitive	sympathetic	_____		
patient	_____	_____		
	_____			

## *Pre-Listening Task*

- ◆ You hear a car honking in the driveway. Who might it be?

math tutor

date

[ [Watch Video](#) ] - Who is it?

# Modals of Speculation

- ◆ Objective: To teach modals of speculation and apply them in a conversation
  - ◆ Must / has to / could / may / might
    - *It must be her date.*
    - *A guy might be there to pick her up.*
    - *The car could be at the wrong house.*
  - ◆ Couldn't / can't / might not
    - *It couldn't be her mother.*
    - *It can't be good.*

# Modals of Necessity / Advice

- ◆ Objective: To teach modals of necessity / advice, the appropriateness of each according to context, and apply them in a conversation

[ [Watch Video](#) ] - George

- ◆ Have to / need to

- *You have to step in and say something.*
- *You need to accept the situation.*

- ◆ Must / had better / should / ought to / could / might

- *You'd better follow her in your car.*
- *You could invite the guy in and get to know him.*

# Possible Questions

Discrete Point

- ◆ Where are you going?
- ◆ How old is that guy?
- ◆ What's his name?
- ◆ Where did you meet him?
- ◆ What time will you be home?
- ◆ Does he have an earring in his nose?
- ◆ Can I follow you in my car?
- ◆ Do you need a chaperon?
- ◆ You're not going to marry that guy, are you?
- ◆ Would you rather stay home and play Scrabble?

# Possible Questions

## Critical-Thinking

- ◆ What do you like most about the guy and why? --- reasons
- ◆ If I don't let her go out with the guy, what will she do? --- cause and effect / condition
- ◆ What happened to your last boyfriend, Ronald? How is date, Dirk, different from the last guy? --- compare and contrast
- ◆ If you could plan the ideal date, where would you go and what would you do? --- hypothesize

# Modals

- ◆ Objective: To teach modals of advice, past obligation, and speculation and apply them in a conversation.

[ [Watch Video](#) ] - Korrin

- ◆ *You should spend more time with the family.*
- ◆ *You'd better think over your decision, or you might regret it.*
- ◆ *My sister shouldn't have gone to that party.*
- ◆ *She could have saved more for college.*
- ◆ *My parents must have known about my grades, but they didn't say anything.*
- ◆ *The dog could/might have eaten the cookies.*



# *Summary*

- ◆ Create engaging activities that teach listening, not just test it.
- ◆ Provide rich content that is within the linguistic reach of your students.
- ◆ Encourage the use of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills that are needed in and out of the language classroom.