



LOOK WHO'S TALKING: MAKING THE MOST OF DIALOGUES

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Sample Dialogue, From: *Ventures 1*, Cambridge, 2007, p. 49

Talk with a partner. Take turns and make conversations.

A: I don't feel well.

B: Do you have a cold?

A: No, I don't. I have a sore throat.

B: That's too bad. I hope you feel better.



Ideas to vary presentation and practice

Controlled

- T-reads dialogue, Ss have book closed and listen
- T-reads dialogue again, Ss read along with book open or with material displayed
- T-reads dialogue, Ss repeat (back-chain long phrases)
- Ss read in pairs, using read and look up
- Double circle, with text in hand

Freer/Freest

- T/Ss (T-S, ½-½, pair) read with/without text, whole group-small group-pairs
- Change scenario – loud volume, soft volume – where? Ss in class, bad cell phone connection
- Engage Ss – have them write a set up line or add two lines to the dialogue
- T makes it authentic, personalize it, find real-life samples

Extension

- Encourage Ss to listen to natural dialogue and bring back samples of language that confirm or expand on what you are practicing
- If possible, have Ss practice this type of dialogue in a real setting and get feedback.

Extending the Dialogue

- Change names to use familiar names and settings.
- Add context

Make it interesting – who are these people? Why are they talking to each other? Provide a “set-up” line or develop one with Ss.

- Provide repetition - with variety - by using back-chaining, choral, group, pair, double circles, etc.
- Be a good listener in the real world and bring examples into class
- Teach students to use fillers, ask for clarification and repetition
- Incorporate reading, writing, and pronunciation as appropriate

Corpora Research supports that....

.....Repetition is beneficial

Ss need to “meet” new vocabulary 7 times to acquire it.

.....Practice gives Ss confidence in a safe setting.

The classroom is “safe because it is the place where you can rehearse and make mistakes without serious consequences, so that you will perform better, and feel more confident later in the real-world situation.”

.....Much of language is fixed or semi-fixed (not novel).

Helps Ss acquire natural chunks.

.....Encourages automaticity – rapid processing of language

The benefits of fixed/semi-fixed language...

*“Formulaic chunks have been called ‘islands of reliability’....Chunks which learners are sure are accurate and convey the central meaning of what they wish to say are immensely reassuring, especially when contrasted with the intimidating prospect of constructing everything you want to say word-by-word, on every occasion.
from Teaching Collocation, p. 175*

Brain processing automaticity.....

....“Knowledge of fixed items also means additional brain space is available, so the learners are more able to process other language, which enables them to communicate more complex messages, or simple messages with greater fluency or accuracy.”

Resources.....

Bitterlin, Johnson, Price, Ramirez, and Savage, Ventures 1, Cambridge, 2007

Lewis, Michael, Teaching Collocation, Thomson Heinle Language Teaching Publications ELT 2000

Lewis, Michael, Implementing the Lexical Approach, Language Teaching Publications, 1997