

Creative Variations for Textbook Conversations

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Abstract: <http://eltn.com/6846>

Starting to listen:

- Listen first, no text (could cover text while looking at picture)
- Listen while reading
- Read first, listen afterwards
- Pre-teach items, then listen

Photos / Videos

- Show photos first to set up the conversation
- After listening, choose which of three photos matches the conversation best
- Show video with no sound; elicit responses based on the video (“How do they feel?”, “What’s happening?”, “What do you think they’re saying?”)

Grammar / Vocabulary:

- Pre-taught
- Drilled before listening
- Drilled before reading
- Explained after reading
- Examined in context

Comprehension questions:

- Open ended (“Tell me what they talked about”)
- Multiple choice
- Hybrid (Pre-listening, ask an open ended question; post-listening, provide multiple choice answers to the open-ended question.)
- Match L1 equivalents
- Choral responses
- Answer after listening, or answer after reading.

Practice:

- Read, speak
- Read, look up, speak
- Substitute words to make own version
- Photo / text hints
- “Kuroko” (a third student with a book is the “helper”)
- Gradual erasing

Follow-up:

- Performance in front of teacher / class / smaller group (see the reverse of this handout for more about performances)
- Re-examine in detail
- Short conversation rally / controlled drill in two lines of students facing each other

Dialog Performances:

Why?

- “Pushed output” (Willis & Willis; Skehan) Students try hard to use the best English they can when speaking publically.
- Pressure to do the task well
- (This pressure leads to) More effort
- Can include gestures, etc.
- Better pronunciation (Marini)

How? (Who is the audience?)

- In front of whole class
- In front of groups (half of the class, one-third of the class, etc.)
- To teacher
- To video (If video: Will the videos be shown to the class? Or only the teacher? If students use own devices, one option for collecting the videos is *Send To Dropbox*, <http://sendtodropbox.com>)

What?

- Textbook dialog as-is
- Students’ own variation of the textbook dialog
- Students’ own creation based loosely on the textbook dialog theme, language, or situation

Options

- Students memorize the conversation
- Allow text (Students can hold a paper, but must look up to speak)
- Have photo or text hints available
- Use props, gestures, movement
- “Kuroko” helper (a 3rd student whose job is to offer support, hints, corrections)
- Give a grade (points) to the pair (same grade for both) / to individuals
- Do peer feedback