roles. Students should not be interrupted or corrected during a presentation unless there is a breakdown† in communication. Otehwise, wait until after they have finished to point out any errors.

After several students have presented at least once from each of the various assignments, the students are immediately regrouped for the next topic. At this point, teacher talk-time is discouraged and student talk-time is encouraged, so the more time they spend in pairs or groups, the better.

The rewards of creative assignments

Carefully prepared lessons that put the student in the center of the learning experience while the teacher is relegated to the role of a "mere" facilitator can greatly improve students´ speaking skills. In addition to assigning a topic for discussion, teachers should create a communicative situation complete with topic, audience, and purpose.

With creative assignments that focus on the students´ interests and needs, teachers can avoid the frustrations of a noncommunicative conversation class and enjoy the rewards of lively, active discussions.

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GLOSSARY
(words marked by a† in the text)

have their work cut out for them: have a lot of work to do

work: operate effectively

primacy: the state of being first

skits: short, usually humouous, acted-out scenes

podium: a small raised platform for a speaker, musical conductor, etc.

loosen up: make relaxed

out loud: aloud; in a voice that can be heard

go over: review; repeat

what's up: what is the matter; what is happening

plunge ... into: begin (an activity) suddenly

springboard: something that supplies the impetus or begining point for action

framework: a plan, structure, or enclosure

rush hour: one of the two periods in the day when people are traveling to and from work in a city and the streets are crowded

at fault: in the wrong; rightly blamed

paralinguistic: relating to features that accompany speech and contribute to meaning but are not generally considered to be part of the language system

downplayed: treated as not important

abroad: in another country

persona: character; mask; personality

inveighing: protesting strongly

protagonist: the chief character in a play or story

melancholy: sad; gloomy; depressed

buzz: am atmosphere of intense and busy excitement

breakdown: a sudden failure and stopping

involved in an accident ___ each accusing the other of being at fault.† Since paralinguistic† behavior is an important element of communication, I encourage my students to act out the scenes with appropriate actions and voice intonations.

Now the students have a topic (traffic) and a specific audience (the mayor or a police officer) and a purpose (to give advice or to explain their side of an accident). The students then create and practice these dialogues with their partners.

The time that students spend in groups is very important and should not be rushed or downplayed.† if guided properly, even the most reticent student can formulate real phrases and sentences with one or two classmates that s/he may have been unable or unwilling to say in front of the whole class. During this time, the teacher should circle around the room monitoring each group, discouraging native language use, correcting a little, and encouraging a lot.

Adding a focus

Each presentation needs not only a topic, audience, and purpose, but also a focus the students can relate to and understand. This focus can be a real or imagined problem. For example, high-school and young college students enjoy talking about their friends, hobbies, passing exams, shopping, goals, parental pressures, etc. So it is best to create problems that need to be solved in these or similar areas.

Instead of asking the students to talk for five minutes about the weather or to describe a bad storm, have a "mother" or "father" try to convince the teenager not to go out as planned tonight because of bad weather. Not only do these situations give the students a real purpose for communicating and a real problem to solve,

they also allow the students to assume various roles, expreiment with the language, and have fun.

As they focus more on their roles in a given situation and less on their own identities as students, they become more willing to practice English and less intimidated about speaking in front of their peers. Roles also allow students to express themselves more freely behind another persona.†

More creative dialogues

Given enough flexibility, students will even create their own "problems" to solve. During one class, the students were to interview a famous person who had died years ago. One student found herself inveighing† with "William Shakespeare" for making Hamlet too long, the protagonist† too melancholy, and his friend too weak. "When you rewrite the play, you should give Ophelia more personality," the student advised. "Let her have a career or study abroad or something!"

With the proper setup and interesting topics, the students will soon have the classroom in a buzz† of excitement and language practice. After about 10 minutes of pair work, I usually ask some (not all) of the pairs to present their dialogues to the whole class. Memorized dialogues are discouraged. The purpose here is twofold: in-class presentations hold the students accountable for their group work; presentations also give the other students a chance to practice their listening skills and to hear how other students handle the same topic. Mostly, students enjoy listening to the more creative dialogues, and this keeps the classroom atmosphere light and relaxed.

The classroom atmosphere is as important as the setup itself. Students should feel relaxed and encouraged to use new words, phrases, or

Although drill exercises may help students achieve grammatical competence, they aid little in the development of the other three components of communicative competence. To accomplish these goals, students need to participate in conversational situations, both real and simulated.

Teachers and students can become bored with meaningless, repetitive drills like *Mrs Jones went shopping on Friday* if these are not directly associated with purposeful communication.

So what other methods can we use to encourage our students to talk in class?

Practicing English creatively

A major portion of any oral English class should involve the students practincing English in pairs or small groups. To prevent classroom chaos or rampant native- language use, the teacher should carefully direct each activity, giving the students enough format for direction, yet enough room for creativity.

Here is a typical class setup to promote communicative competence. Before each class, the students rearrange their chairs into a circle facing each other, with their desks against the walls. The center of the room remains clear for skits,† dialogues, and other presentations. The teacher should be a part of the circle itself, not distanced from the students behind a desk or a podium.†

The class begins with a "personal" story, anecdote, joke, or question to loosen up† the students and to encourage a relaxed atmosphere. Then we read aloud a short passage or dialogue from the text or a xeroxed article for content focus. The students then respond to my questions about the text by answering out loud† in complete sentences.

We then briefly discuss the content of the text in terms of the topic itself not just the grammar or vocabulary. Then we go over the grammar drills, where we learn or review sentence pattens that the students will use in their own dialogues; i. e., "What's up† with him?" "He looks upset." "Marty was disappointed when...."

In pairs, the students practice the drill sentences both slot- and - fill examples from the text to monitor accuracy and original sentences to test understanding. Any errors at this point are immediately corrected and explained.

Time spent on drill work should be minimal if the course objective is conversation. After a few minutes of oral drill practice, we plunge right into† preparing "real" conversations. Using the text as a springboard† for oral topics and the grammar "lesson" as a framework† for sentence patterns and idiomatic expressions, I then give each pair or group of students a specific situation with specific roles. For variety, each topic has three or four different situations, so the students are all practicing different types of dialogues.

Topic, audience, and purpose

Each situational activity must have a purpose and an audience, not just a topic. For example, if I want the students to discuss the traffic problem in Shanghai (or New York, Mexco City, etc.), I do not merely ask them to talk about traffic or even to describe a typical traffic scene during rush hour.† Instead, I assign the topic, audience, and purpose.

I might tell student A that she is a foreigner who has missed an important business meeting because af heavy traffic and is now giving advice to student B, the mayor of Shanghai, on the traffic situation.

Another group might consist of three students _____ a police officer and two people

Getting the Students to Talk

Barbara M. Malinowski

مقاله حاضر برگرفته از مجله Forum اکتبر ۱۹۸۹ شماره ۴ جلد ۲۷ می‌باشد .   این مقاله نویسنده سعی کرده است به منظور ایجاد توانش ارتباطی در دانش آموزان شیوه های مختلفی را ارائه و توصیه نماید . هیأت تحریریه مجله رشد آموزش زبان مطالعه این مقاله را به همکاران محترم توصیه می نماید .

South Lakes High School, Reston, Virginia
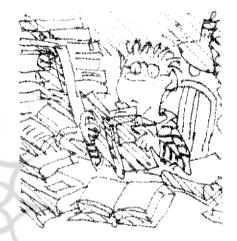"At least you don't have to grade papers."

Though seldom lost under a stack of ungraded essays, conversation teachers do have their work cut out for them.† It takes a lot of energy to make a converation class work and to improve students' speaking skills and overall communicative competence.

A common complaint among teachers today is that "My students won't talk." To avoid the frustrations of a noncommunicative conversation class, teachers should work at setting up the students for "real" communication.

According to theories of behaviorism and the primacy† of speech, we have the tendency to develop speech before writing both on a social level in terms of civilizations and language communities and on an individual level in terms of native language learners.

Thus we have the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) order of teaching language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing. Though second in command, speaking is often the least developed skill for language learners. Even with an integrated curriculum, students can often read or even write better than they can speak in a foreign language.

Nonnative speakers often know more grammar or least grmmatical terms than the average native English speaker. So how do we encourage our students to use the knowledge in their heads to make "real" communication with their mouths? In other words, how do we develop communivative competence, as opposed to mere grammatical competence? According to Hymes (in Corder 1977: 92-93), communicative competence involves four characteristice: *possibility*, *feasibility*, *appropriacy*, and *occurrence*. The students' communication should be grammatically possible semantically feasible, socially and contextually appropriate, and idiomatic or actual in occurrence.

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سال چهاردهم ۵۷

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