

FGSR Teaching Development Week

## Teaching Strategies for International TAs and Instructors

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Thursday, September 2, 2015

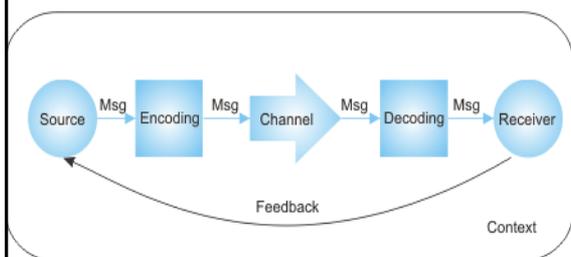


## Outline

1. The communication process
2. Linguistic aspects of teaching
  - Accent
  - Communication strategies
3. Active learning strategies
4. References for useful resources

## The Communication Process (Braun, 1971)

The Communications Process



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## Lecture format: Beginning, Middle, End

Tell students what you're going to say;  
say it;  
then tell them what you said.

## Lecture format: Beginning

- A. Tell students what you're going to say.
1. Provide an overview of the key points as an advance organizer to help students process the information.
  2. Link the lecture content to past and future classes.
  3. Explain the importance of the lecture content.

## Lecture Format: Middle

- B. Say it.
1. Identify each key point clearly.
  2. Explain the point and provide examples that all students can relate to.
  3. Use graphics, slides to appeal to visual learners.
  4. Use transitions (*first/second, in other words, etc.*) to guide listeners.
  5. Restate or summarize main points to reduce students' cognitive load.

## Lecture format: Conclusion

### C. Tell them what you said

1. Use transitions such as "To conclude" to indicate that the main body of the lecture is over.
2. Summarize the key points concisely to reinforce them in the students' memory.
3. Link the lecture to the broader content of the course and to the next class.

## Students' speech perceptions matter

(Kang & Rubin, 2009)

- up to 25% of listener perceptions can be the result of factors such as listeners' expectations, backgrounds, attitudes, and stereotypes rather than the speech itself.



## Photos accompanying lectures



## Findings

- Listeners found that the excerpt with the picture of an Asian face was more accented (although it was spoken by the same native speaker of English).
- Furthermore, the students' comprehension scores were significantly lower for the lecture that was accompanied by the Asian photo.

## University Teaching Services Study

(Derwing, Moulton, & Campbell, 2005)

- TAs and professors whose low teaching evaluations were attributed to their accents
- Researchers video-taped classes; the instructors themselves noticed issues not related to accent (e.g., need to face the students more, appear more friendly).
- Instruction focused on teaching and presentation skills.
- Pronunciation instruction was limited to word stress of the most important/frequent words in their field.

## Results of the study

- After 1 term, instructor evaluations improved; instructors were more satisfied with their performance (and one even received a teaching award).
- Conclusion: weak teaching skills, not accent, are frequently the reason for low teaching evaluations.

## Second language speech

- *Accent* - phonological characteristics of speech – everyone has an accent
- *Comprehensibility* – how easy or difficult it is for people to understand an accent that differs from their own
- *Intelligibility* – how much people actually understand of what they hear

## Accent

- Speakers with a heavy accent can be completely intelligible.
- Some native speakers of English have accents that other native speakers of English have difficulty understanding.
- Communication is a 2-way street – it requires an effort on the part of both listeners and speakers and will improve with exposure. (See *Understanding Accents* video.)



## Clear speech

**General speaking habits** – most important

- clarity
- speed
- loudness
- breath groups (appropriate pausing between phrases, sentences)
- eye gaze
- fluency
- gestures, facial expressions

## Other factors

- Intonation patterns
- Stress and rhythm
  - e.g., word stress: <http://www.howjsay.com/index.php?word=problematizing&submit=Submit>
  - \*\*\*\*\*
- Consonants, vowels (three/tree = less important than bit/bat)

## If you're a non-native speaker of English... (Freeland, 2007)

- Acknowledge that English is not your first language.
- Learn to rely on and react to non-verbal behaviors such as puzzled expressions, lack of note-taking, or other signs of frustration or confusion.
- Ask students for assistance when necessary.

## Advice (continued)

- Assign 'language assistants' if necessary — students who are responsible for correcting you or helping you out with words you don't know.
- Encourage students to let you know if they don't understand you.

## Models

- Observe very good instructors in your department.



- Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) Transcripts  
<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/>
  - Include 152 speech events: Advising Sessions, Colloquia (Public Lectures), Discussion Sections, Dissertation Defenses, Interviews, Lab Sections, Lectures (small and large), Meetings, Office Hours, Seminars, Service Encounters, Student Presentations, Study Groups....

## Active learning

## Quick write

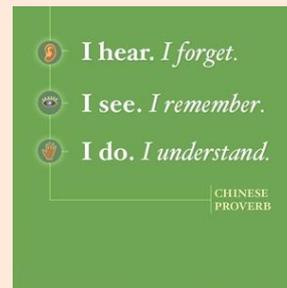
Questions:

- 1) What are active learning instructional strategies?
- 2) Why are they important?

<http://www.online-stopwatch.com/full-screen-stopwatch/>

- Active learning instructional strategies include a wide range of activities that share the common element of — involving students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing (Bonwell & Eison 1991).
- Wilson and Korn (2007) found that interactive lectures produce superior results. Students learn by becoming involved.

## Enhancing learning through active learning strategies



## Active learning instructional strategies

- The Pause Procedure** – pause 3 times during a 50 min. lecture. Students work in pairs to discuss and rework their notes
- Think/pair/share** – Pose a ? Students think about their responses, then share their ideas.
- Classroom Assessment Techniques** – Quick write or minute papers
  1. What important question remains unanswered?
  2. What was the most important thing you learned during this class?
- Questioning Purposively** – involves the frequent use of classroom questions

## Questioning

(based on Bloom, 1956)

**Recall knowledge** - to list and/or merely describe facts, information or ideas (arrange, order, define, duplicate, label, list, name, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce)

**Comprehend** - to demonstrate a firm understanding and to be able to put an idea into one's own words. (classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select, translate)

**Apply** - to use old information effectively in a new situation. (analyze, appraise, categorize, compare, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test)

## Questioning (continued)

**Analyze** - to distinguish the parts of a concept, principle or formula and to show how the parts fit together. (analyze, appraise, calculate, contrast, categorize, compare, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test)

**Synthesize** - to reassemble the parts of a concept, principle or formula in order to create a new product or propose alternative solutions. (arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up)

**Evaluate** - to make and defend judgements based on evidence by measuring facts or information against an external yard stick such as a principle, concept or formula. (appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, select, support, value, evaluate)

## Classify the following as...

knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation:

1. Explain how a snake catches its prey.
2. How are raccoons and squirrels similar and different?
3. Illustrate how you could change the body of a fish to make it fly.
4. Provide the definition of a mammal.
5. What would happen if you put a worm in the desert?
6. How would you protect the wildlife in a forest where hiking was very popular?

## Disagreeing politely

1. *I don't agree.*
2. *I disagree.*
3. *I don't see it like that / that way.*
4. *I don't think that's (quite) right.*
5. *But don't you think...?*
6. *But what about...?*
7. *I'm not sure why you chose ...*
8. *I think you've missed one important fact, which is ...*
9. *I really wouldn't put it that way, because ...*
10. *I can see your point, but ...*
11. *Yes, but don't forget / keep in mind....*
12. *Yes, but on the other hand ...*
13. *Remember...?*
14. *I know this isn't what you want to hear, but ...*

## Disagreeing Politely Roleplays

Choose a partner and decide who will play the instructor and who will play the student. Then act out the following scenarios.

- (1) A student meets with you about an assignment you graded and says "I think I deserve a higher grade", but you don't agree that it is deserved. Which of the expressions would be most appropriate in this scenario and why? Roleplay with a partner .
- (2) Think of your course content. Think of a common misconception. You ask a question in class to gauge their understanding, and a student provides an incorrect answer. How would you deal with it in class? Which of the expressions would be useful in this scenario and why?

## Tips for speaking with confidence

(based on Freeland, 2007)

- Remember that the students want you to do well.
- Remember to try and conceal any signs of nervousness or anxiety.
- Come to class prepared with an outline of the lecture.
- Think positively instead of focusing on your fear.

## Useful academic slang (nonstandard, very informal)

### Questions

1. What do these terms mean in a classroom context?
  2. Can you think of a scenario in which each of these would be used in the classroom?
- A Mickey Mouse course
  - A pop quiz
  - A makeup exam
  - To blow something/to screw up/to bomb
  - To ace
  - To cram
  - To be swamped
  - To freak out
  - To freeze

## Small group discussion

Questions:

1. Have you had or do you anticipate having communication difficulties in the classroom?
2. How did/would you deal with them?

## References and resources

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<http://www.cte.cornell.edu/documents/presentations/Eisen-Handout.pdf>

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Kang, O., & Rubin, D. L. (2009). Reverse linguistic stereotyping: Measuring the effect of listener expectations on speech evaluation. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 28*, 441–456.

*Understanding Accents* (video).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JreMY7j37q4&feature=youtu.be>

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Braun, C. (1971). *Language, reading, and the communication process*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

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