

Interpretive Communication Strategies

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Listening Strategies

For the Teacher: Providing Comprehensible Input to Students

- [Stephen Krashen](#): This site explains comprehensible input.
- **Visual Cues:**
 - Use body cues such as gestures, facial expression, whole-body language.
 - Provide visuals and props.
 - Show realia, graphs, photos, multi-media representations.
 - Model tasks and provide sample products.
 - Attach a specific gesture (TPR) to make a kinesthetic and a visual connection to the meaning.
 - Use video, technology and anything else that will help students create their own mental image of the meaning of the structure.
- **Language:**
 - Use language that is consistent and organized.
 - Use rephrasing and paraphrasing to assist with meaning.
 - Define words by example not by translation.
 - Slow the delivery of speech, but do not exaggerate sounds.
 - Speak clearly.
 - Use familiar structures and simplified sentences at lower proficiency levels.
 - Repeat key words and phrases more than once and in different contexts.
 - Use tone of voice to emphasize key part of message.
 - Use written directions to supplement oral directions.
- **Context Clues**
 - Activate background knowledge of the subject.
 - Ensure that students know the purpose of the class.
 - Use [Advance Organizers](#) to give students an outline preview of what they will hear or view.
- **Total Physical Response:** [Total Physical Response](#) is a classroom activity in which students have a physical response attached to vocabulary. To see a video of this technique, click [here](#).
- **Language Acquisition Projects (LAPs, p. 28):** Developed by Dwight Gradin, an LAP is a technique to use structured and ever expanding comprehensible input.

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- **Story Telling:** Tell a [common story](#) that teacher and student both know. Think of childhood stories, folktales, etc. You could also give your students props they can use to make up and tell a story.
- **Re-Telling:** Re-tell or have students re-tell something that you both saw — last night's football match, a TV show or movie. It has to be something that you watched as well. This will give you the background knowledge to will help create comprehensible input.
- **Speaking to a Topic:** Chose a common topic and talk about it for a few minutes. Have your students then tell you about their family, their favorite team, their favorite food, etc.
- **Personalized Questions and Answers (PQAs):** ([Carol Gaab](#), *Language Magazine*. *March 2014*): PQs are level-appropriate questions that are personally relevant to specific learners (or learner groups) and that revolve around a target language word or structure. The teacher uses PQs to elicit an engaging conversation that will provide the context and repetition that language learners need as they begin the acquisition process.

Pre-Listening/Viewing:

- **Background Knowledge and Prediction:** Help contextualize listening. Have students discuss what vocabulary, features and events they predict will be in the selection based on the title or subject.
- **Purpose for Listening (Mendelsohn, 1998):** Give students something to listen for, such as an idea, an opinion, or a surprising twist. Let them know that a future task will be dependent on their listening for certain items. Explain to students the pedagogical purpose of using the aural/viewing segment.
- **Anticipation Guide:** Write four to five statements that focus on main ideas or themes that are found in the passage. Ask students to agree or disagree with the statement and predict what the listening passage will be about. As the students listen, allow them to make notes as points are revealed in the passage. After listening, the students should review the statement to see if their original thinking has changed. They can also be asked to explain the statement in the context. (Laura Terrill)
- **Visualization:** Provide visuals that illustrate major concepts in the listening passage, and then ask students to predict what the passage will be about.
- **Eavesdropper:** Tell students that they're going to overhear a conversation and their job is to try to pick up tidbits of information. The whole class can then work together after listening to try to construct as much of the conversation as possible.

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- **Advance Organizers:** Use advance organizers so that students are aware of the “big ideas” to be taught. Click [here](#) for information on KWL charts.

During Listening/Viewing:

- **Note-Taking:** Teach students to summarize ideas while taking notes. Click [here](#) for Marzano’s note-taking strategies.
- **Listing:** Have students make a list of words they recognize and a list of words they could hear, but not comprehend.
- **Labeling:** Provide drawings to label, based on the conversations or descriptions.
- **Segments:** Play audio/video in parts to check for comprehension of different segments.
- **Signaling:** Establish a signal for recognition of different features (I hear this word, I hear this grammar structure).
- **Conversation Gaps:** Students listen to two or three lines and then provide what they think the next line will be.
- **Split Viewing:** Some students watch a video sequence without sound, others listen without the video, and they compare notes to build a complete picture (Stempleski & Tomalin, 2001).
- **Variety in Viewing and Listening to Videos:**
 - Watch a video silently and make inferences and predictions about the story, characters, or events.
 - Watch a video silently and predict what is happening, based on gestures and facial expressions.
 - Listen to the audio portion of a video (without showing the screen), then ask students to predict what they will see.

Post-Listening/Viewing:

- **Questions With Higher-Level Thinking Skills:** Ask post-viewing comprehension questions that require higher-level thinking skills. See Bryce Hedstrom’s matrix of [Bloom’s Taxonomy and Foreign Language Instruction](#).
- **Title:** Ask students to give or select a title based on what they heard.

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- **Jumbled Sequences:** Show a number of video sequences out of order, and have students order them.
- **Show Me You Understand:** Have students draw or use visuals to demonstrate understanding, rather than the teacher asking, “Do you understand?”
- **Question Sequencing:** Use yes/no question ➔ either/or question ➔ open-ended questions.
- **Confirmation of Understanding:** Students hold up fingers to show level of comprehension (Fist of Five) or show Thumbs up/down/sideways. Students can summarize or rephrase/retell what they understood.
- **Outline:** Alone, pairs or whole class, students make an outline of the conversation.
- **Graphic Organizer:** Choose or create an appropriate [graphic organizer](#) for students to complete, using information that they understood.
- **Say Something:** After the students have listened to a section of the text, students work in pairs and must say something to the other. They can make a prediction, ask a question, make a comment or make a connection. (Laura Terrill)
- **Illustration:** After listening to a selection, have students work independently or with a partner to create a representation of their own interpretation of the text. As students draw symbolically, they are required to think at an abstract level. A follow-up is for the students to write about or explain orally why they drew what they did.
- **Questions:** Have students develop questions for their peers to answer, based on the audio/video.
- **Check-Offs:** Have students complete a checklist for viewing/listening tasks; too many tasks can often overwhelm students; assign only three to five tasks at most. ([Brandl, 2007](#))
- **Extension of Tasks:** Integrate other tasks (presentational, interpersonal) that correspond to the original audio or video. (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005)
- **Interpersonal Conversation:** Conduct a conversation (not just question-and-answer) with the students about the video/audio.
- **Transcripts:** Provide transcripts after listening. Students can listen again and read along. The transcript can also be used for reading comprehension, and interpersonal or presentational writing/speaking activities.

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- **Information-Gap Activities:** Technology allowing, provide students with two to three podcasts/videos to choose from, on a given topic. Then they can work with a student who has watched a different podcast/video in order to share information that he or she needs. Provide specific information that students need to obtain from their partner.

For Diverse Learners:

- **Skeleton Outlines:** Provide outlines for students who have trouble with auditory or reading processing.
- **Cooperative Learning:** Have students [work together in small groups](#) to accomplish a task based on the audio/video.

Reading Strategies

Pre-Reading:

- **Greet and Go/Tea Party:** The teacher selects phrases or sentences from the text. Each student is given a card with a different phrase or sentence. Students circulate around the classroom as they read their cards to each other. Students then return to their groups to write a prediction on what the passage will be about.

Each group shares their prediction and explains their group's reasoning. As the students read the text, they should make a note each time they adjust their predictions, indicating the information that caused the change. (Laura Terrill)

- **Anticipation Guide:** Write four to five statements that focus on main ideas or themes that are found in the text. Ask students to agree or disagree with the statement and predict what the reading passage will be about. As the students read, allow them to make notes as points are revealed in the text. After reading, the students should review the statement to see if their original thinking has changed. They can also be asked to explain the statement in context. (Laura Terrill)
- **Logographic (Pictorial) Cues:** Use simple pictures to represent or symbolize key ideas in a story. These images can be used to predict the story prior to reading. As students read, they should be asked to explain orally or in writing the connections that each image has to the text. (Laura Terrill)

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- **Purpose for Reading:** Give students something to look for as they read, such as an idea, an opinion, or a surprising twist. Let them know that a future task will depend on their looking for certain items.
- **Prediction:** Brainstorm vocabulary and features that would be in a text before reading.
- **Monitoring:** Teach students to [monitor their reading](#) (re-reading a passage that they don't understand, using context clues to figure out word meaning).
- **Preview Text:**
 - What kind of text is it?
 - How is it divided?
 - Think of questions about titles, pictures, graphics.
 - Read the first sentence of each paragraph.
 - Read the last paragraph or last sentence.
 - Look for cognates, discourse markers such as conjunctions, words that stand out, dates, and numbers.

During Reading:

- **Skim and Scan:** *Skimming* is used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text. *Scanning* involves moving your eyes quickly down the page, seeking specific words and phrases. Scanning is also used when you first find a resource to determine whether it will answer your questions.
- **Graphic Organizers (Semantic Maps):** Choose appropriate [organizers](#) to help students organize thoughts about reading, both before and after.
- **Note-Taking:** Teach students to summarize ideas while taking notes. Click [here](#) for Marzano's note-taking strategies.
- **Titles:** Have students assign titles to each paragraph, based on the main idea.
- **Outline:** Assign students alone, in pairs, or as a whole class, to make an outline of the passage they read.
- **Main Ideas:** Identify and/or infer the main ideas of the text. Students could work in pairs first, to discuss what they think are the main ideas.

INTERPRETIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- **Contextual Support:** Help students develop skills in finding contextual clues to understand unfamiliar words in the text..
- **Jigsaw:** Divide students into groups of two, three, or four, and have each person in the group read a different part of the text. Then have each person share his or her section with the others.
- **Think-Aloud Strategy:** Describe or model your thought process while reading a passage so that students can understand how to figure out meaning when they have trouble understanding a passage.
- **Marking Text:** Have students write their thoughts next to the words or phrases in the text that resonate with them. They may use sticky notes so as not to ruin the text. They might ask a question, make a connection, give an opinion, draw a conclusion or make a statement. Teachers who want to check the work can ask students to write the page number and paragraph on the post-it and then attach the post-its to a paper to turn in. (Laura Terrill)
- **Say Something:** Pair students and have them read a predetermined amount of text silently. When they reach the designated stopping point, they each need to say something. They can make a prediction, ask a question, make a comment or make a connection. If one person can't do one of the four choices, he or she needs to reread. Students may record their response under the following column headings: prediction, question, comment, connection. (Laura Terrill)
- **It Says, I Say, And So?:** Write three to four questions that require the students to make an inference about the text. Have students respond to each question based on what the text says (It says ...). Then, have the student give his or her opinion (I say ...). Finally ask the student to explain the inference that was made (and so ...). (Laura Terrill)
- **Sustained Silent Reading or Free Voluntary Reading:** Encourage reading in the target language by providing authentic or other resources at the appropriate level (hard copies, magazines, websites). Allow students to make their own reading selections.
- **Online and Blended Environment:** Most strategies can be applied to these environments. Include a video with specific instruction on the strategy or conduct instruction in a synchronous environment (Blackboard Collaborate, Skype, Adobe Connect, Elluminate, Wimba). Discussions can be conducted in break rooms during synchronous sessions or by discussion forums, wikis, Schoology, Edmodo, etc.

Post-Reading:

- **Graphic Organizers (Semantic Maps):** Choose appropriate [organizers](#) to help students organize their thoughts about the reading, both before and after.
 - Use comparison/contrasts activities to show similarities and differences (Venn diagrams, T-charts, etc.)
 - Use flow-charts for cause-and-effect type readings.
 - Teach students organizational patterns (first, next, as a result, finally).
 - Ask students to arrange paragraphs or sequences in the correct order.
 - Ask students to arrange cartoons with captions in a logical order.
- **Summarizing:** Have students work in pairs, groups or individually to summarize in the target language.
- **Generating Questions:** Have students generate questions about the whole text to ask their partner or classmates. Students could also be assigned a specific section of the text to write a question.
- **Most Important Word:** Have students read and discuss the story. Ask students to choose three to five words that they believe are the most important words, based on evidence in the text. Ask them to explain why they chose each word. Then ask each student to choose the most important word and explain why.

Students share their choices in small groups and then choose the most important word, again explaining why they changed their opinion or why they kept their original word. (Laura Terrill)

- **Special Interest Area:** Identify a student's Special Interest Area (SIA) by taking a multiple-intelligence inventory or including activities that incorporate visual/spatial, linguistic, logical/mathematical, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, or artistic learning. This special interest can be used to motivate students and to teach academic and social skills.
- **Reflection Questions:** Have students reflect on self-performance or achievement and set goals. Possible questions: What did I do right? What did I learn? What do I still need to learn? What is my goal for next week? How can I achieve my goal?
- **Portfolio:** Have students keep track of their work in a portfolio so that they can track their own growth and successes (e.g., [LinguaFolio®](#)).

INTERPRETIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

For Diverse Learners:

- **Skeleton Outlines:** Provide outlines for students who have processing weaknesses.
- **Cooperative Learning:** Have students [work together in small groups](#) to accomplish a task based on the reading.
- **Repeated Reading:** Read the passage to the student (student may first read silently). Student reads the same passage three to five times per practice session trying to increase the number of words read correctly. ([NFLRC Hawaii, 2010](#))