

compositions, Lewitt was delightfully vague and said he went in for "creative grading." Fair enough. This reviewer would give P.J. Lewitt a grade of, say, 83 on this presentation. Don't ask me why, it just had the feel of an 83. Next, please.

Reported by Brendan Lyons

CONVERSATION MANAGEMENT FOR LOWER LEVEL STUDENTS

By Kevin McClure

Rules of interaction taken for granted in L1 differ in L2, so Kevin McClure explicitly teaches conversation management skills. At this workshop he shared classroom techniques designed to teach rules of English conversation, noting that this approach may be most useful for in-company programs.

Observing awkward conversations during meals at LIOJ intensive residential programs, McClure noticed that students lacked strategies to keep the conversation going. Questions were too personal or too often repeated for native speakers to enjoy answering them. Yes/no questions were poor for conversation flow. He heard "cul de sac" conversation starters like "Do you believe in God?"

In one exercise McClure lets students decide whether certain questions are okay or impolite. The reaction may depend on the individual, but students are led to realize that personal questions are difficult to respond to and therefore are better avoided.

In another exercise students are given two transcribed conversations, and they work together to figure out that one is of the interrogation type while the other uses open questions to maintain the conversational flow.

McClure hands out lists of "Listener Expressions," which show interest or attention, surprise, sympathy, even what to say while thinking of a reply. In exercises students use the lists to write in responses to a hypothetical conversation partner. A related game pits the students against the instructor, losing points to the latter on the blackboard for inappropriate responses or over four seconds of silence, or defeating the instructor if they have a larger number of suitable responses.

Lists of often-needed expressions are posted in the classroom, and the instructor can point to them whenever applicable. One such list is "Clarifications" like "Could you repeat that?"

and "What does ----- mean?" Another, called "Conversation Tips," actually lists strategies for effective interaction: ask open questions, ask a question when you don't understand, remember balance, bring others into the conversation, avoid silence, add information to answers, and introductions of people.

In "Conversation Preparation" exercises, students use lists of, say, adjectives to describe music, along with sentence patterns to express opinions, agreement or disagreement. The students rate different kinds of music and can discuss their opinions among themselves with this preparation.

"Turn-taking" is analyzed in transcribed conversations and made explicit in the following game. Balanced participation is assured by giving each student in a group eight sticks. Whenever they take their turn speaking, they throw one stick into the middle. They end up having to draw quieter students into the conversation for their team to finish first and win.

Reported by Steve McCarty
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THE RELEVANCE OF CLASSICAL RHETORIC IN COMPOSITION CLASSROOMS

By Clyde Moneyhun

Rhetoric isn't logic, contrary to popular belief, maintained Clyde Moneyhun, a writer and a teacher of writing. While logic is abstract, more closely related to mathematics than anything else, rhetoric is essentially the art of persuasion. It is not, *per se*, the embodiment of reason or the pursuit of truth. "Rhetoric is mired in the mud of everyday life."

To prove his point, Moneyhun took us on a journey to ancient Greece and Rome, whose cultures, when viewed through the prism of their rhetorical theories and practices, appear far less profound than the image we have gotten from the Renaissance on.

Classical rhetoric was grounded not in philosophy but law — that is, in using the law to get your own way. Moneyhun cited examples of how rhetorical devices which we fallaciously equate with logic were in fact clever appeals to prejudice or intellectual tricks. Yes, even Plato and Aristotle were con men.

What does Moneyhun's delightful lecture have to do with ESL composition? Most important, if we accept that logic doesn't equal rhetoric,

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