

TRANSCRIPTION OF PODCAST #1

Hello and welcome to the podcast series on Listening strategies for French Immersion students, produced by the faculty at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa.

This podcast is part of a series to help you improve your listening strategies and to provide practical tips on note taking in the context of academic courses in your second language.

PODCAST #1: Introduction: Applying the strategies of good listeners

Hello. So would you like to improve your listening skills? Do you want to understand lectures better and take clearer notes? This podcast will introduce you to the strategies used by good listeners and outline how you can apply these same strategies to better prepare for and understand academic lectures.

Research on listeners learning another language shows that good listeners use three types of strategies to facilitate their listening and to make their learning more effective: metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies.

Student: What are metacognitive strategies?

Prof: Metacognitive strategies are important because they regulate or direct the listening and note taking process. You're using metacognitive strategies whenever you prepare for a lecture, or when you anticipate or predict some of the main points the professor is going to discuss during the lecture, or when you clear your mind so that you can focus on the lecture.

Student: What about cognitive strategies?

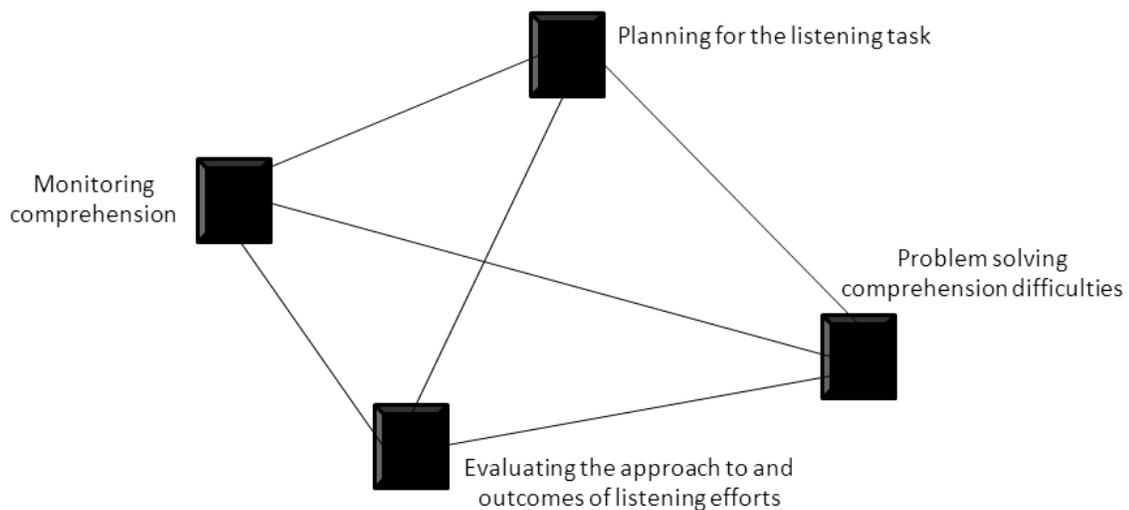
Prof: Cognitive strategies are what you use when you apply a specific technique to a listening task. For example, when you hear the professor use a word you've never heard or read before, you use your knowledge of the words around the new word to inference or guess what that word might mean.

Student: And socio-affective strategies?

Prof: Socio-affective strategies are what you used when you collaborate with others to check the meaning of a word or study lecture notes together. They also include asking the professor to explain an important word that you didn't fully understand. Using techniques such as self-encouragement to lower your level of anxiety is another example of a socio-affective strategy.

Now, research shows that skilled listeners use more metacognitive strategies than less-skilled listeners do and, most importantly, that they know how to orchestrate all the different strategies to accomplish a listening task. Here's an illustration of a metacognitive model for learning, as it applies to academic listening.

Listening processes and their interactions



Student: Can you tell me more about the first metacognitive strategy, Planning for the lecture?

Prof: Yes. Planning for the lecture is an extremely important part of the listening process. Before attending a lecture, you need to anticipate some of the main ideas that you think your professor will develop and discuss. This will help you focus your attention while listening. During this critical phase of the listening process, you're essentially preparing yourself for what you will hear. You can prepare for the lecture by reviewing your notes from the previous lecture and by doing the assigned readings for the new lecture. You can also prepare for the lecture by choosing where you sit and by readying your state of mind so that you can focus. Using all the available information, you can make predictions to anticipate what you might hear and then focus your attention. All of these strategies will help you become more deeply engaged in the lecture. The podcast 'Preparing for the lecture' deals in detail with this crucial component of successful academic listening.

Student: I'm not sure I understand what you mean by Monitoring comprehension and problem solving during the lecture

Prof: Well, during the lecture, as you listen and take notes, you need to monitor, or check, your comprehension. This means that you continually think about what's going on, checking to see whether what you are hearing is consistent with what you anticipated. You're actively engaging your mind, checking for consistency with your predictions and also noticing that the professor is diverging and, if so, trying to determine why. To enhance your comprehension, you can ask the professor for clarification. And, you can

also engage in self-questioning, signaling areas in your notes for later review or for discussion in your FSL support class. When you do this, you are engaged in the problem-solving component of this phase of academic listening.

The podcast ‘Monitoring and problem solving during (and after) the lecture’ and the two podcasts on note taking give more specific tips to help you during this phase of the listening process. IN addition, the podcast “New technology and note taking” will introduce you to useful tools.

Student: What about the last metacognitive strategy, Reviewing and evaluating the lecture notes?

Prof: Reviewing and evaluating the quality of your notes after the lecture is a great way to help you synthesize and remember the lecture content.. You can do this in several ways: by reviewing or sharing notes with a partner, by comparing your notes with the assigned reading for the lecture, or other reading suggested by the professor, and then by filling in missing information. This review may result in further questions about points you didn’t fully understand. These unclear points can be clarified at the beginning of the next class lecture or in your FSL support class.

The podcast ‘Reviewing the lecture’ gives you more tips on how to review your notes and consolidate your learning.

To conclude, listening attentively and critically to lectures is a skill that can be developed. But it’s hard work,. Going to class doesn’t mean just sitting back and listening. Preparation for the lecture and active mental engagement during the lecture are required in order to listen well. When you prepare for the lecture and actively engage yourself during the lecture it is much easier to take really good notes.

We hope that you will find these strategies useful for changing your approach to academic listening and that you will experience greater academic success. The cycle of metacognitive strategies presented in these podcasts can help you do three things: one, better prepare for your lectures, two, actively engage in listening by verifying and further anticipating lecture content and, three, thoroughly review your lecture notes. These strategies will not only help you become a more proactive listener, they'll also help you consolidate your learning. We wish you great success in your academic listening efforts. Research demonstrates that your efforts will pay off!

Thank you for listening to this podcast on effective listening strategies brought to you by the faculty at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa. This podcast was developed by Larry Vandergrift from the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa.

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