

Transcription podcast # 3

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 #3: Monitoring and problem solving during and after the lecture

Now that you have become proactive in your listening, anticipating what you will likely hear, you can become more actively engaged in the lecture by monitoring or checking what the professor says against the predictions you have made. As you listen actively, you will be better able to pick up on the important points and fill in the outline you have either sketched on the page in front of you or mentally framed in your mind.

Student: What do you mean by “listen actively”?

Prof: As you listen and take notes, you will be monitoring (or checking) what you hear against what you anticipated hearing. When the lecture takes a different direction than the one you anticipated, you adjust and reorient your predictions. It is always important to be flexible; good listeners adjust their strategies to the direction the speaker takes, by (using the metacognitive strategy of problem-solving).

As you listen, always try to anticipate the next point, based on your knowledge of the topic and the content of the reading you did before the lecture. If you anticipate correctly, the points made by the professor will reinforce your predictions. If, however, you are wrong, and the lecture does not match your expectations, you'll have to

problem-solve to discover the reason for the difference. Either way, the likelihood of understanding and remembering far exceeds what you would have understood if you had been only a passive listener. This is why planning or predicting, monitoring or checking, and problem-solving are such powerful strategies for learning.

So, one thing you'll want to do is identify the main points. Planning will help to identify these; however, it's not always easy with every professor. Beginning from the first class of the semester, learn how the professor tends to convey main points and how he or she typically structures a lecture. Discuss this with your fellow students and the professor in your FSL support class.

Student: What sort of cues can I listen for during the lecture that can help me decide what to write down?

Prof: Well, you can pay attention to the professor's intonation and the volume of his/her speech. Louder speech usually suggests an important point is being made. Lower volume often signals the conclusion of a point and, consequently, a new point coming soon.

Paying attention to transition words can help you locate where you are in the lecture; for example, 'dans un deuxième temps' tells you that the professor is beginning the second point (among the number of points highlighted at the beginning of the lecture) and 'en guise de conclusion' lets you know that a final concluding statement is coming.

Transition words also signal the type of argument the professor might be making.

Expressions such as 'en revanche' or 'par contre' set up a contrast with an earlier

statement. The word 'si' at the beginning of a sentence always signals some kind of hypothetical statement.

Student: What if I can't understand the professor's accent?

Prof: You can always ask the professor to write out an unfamiliar word that seems to be important. Then, when you go to your FSL support class, discuss strategies for handling the unique accent of the professor.

Sit close so that when you don't understand, the professor may pick up on your puzzled face or other non-verbal language from the class. And don't be afraid to ask questions.

Student: How do I know when it's the right time to ask a question?

Prof: The professor may open up time at end of the lecture, invite questions during the lecture or solicit questions of clarification at the beginning of the following lecture.

Pay special attention to any cue that could facilitate exam study or assignment preparation. These cues will likely come at the opening of a lecture.

Ask for a copy of the power point presentation, if available.

Student: What if the professor is not willing to provide the class with the power point?

Prof: You'll have to make adjustments. There can be a memory overload if you're busy paying attention to the PowerPoint presentation, listening to the professor and trying to take notes. In those cases, you have three options: one, you need to learn to focus your attention more selectively, based on your preparation for the lecture; two, you can team up with a peer from your FLS support class and divide up who pays attention to what and then share with each other after class; and three, you can ask a Francophone student from the content course for his notes.

Finally, don't let your mind wander. Actively preparing for the class will help you to focus and become engaged in the lecture. You may need to work at this but the habit of attentive listening can be developed by using the strategies presented in these podcasts. To conclude, actively preparing for a lecture by predicting lecture content can help you become engaged in what the professor is discussing. These predictions are important for monitoring (or checking) your ongoing understanding, , and for further anticipating what the professor will say during the lecture. The confirming of predictions and the problem-solving that occurs when predictions are not met will lead to greater engagement in the lecture, better quality notes and deeper learning.

Thank you for listening to this podcast on effective listening strategies brought to you by professors from the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa.

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This project was funded by the University of Ottawa Center for University Teaching FODEFAD French fund