

Talking to Beginners So They'll Understand

Outline from Lynne Weintraub (Jones Library, Amherst, MA):
Teacher Talk: Keeping it simple, making it clear

Presented by Karin Bates, karin@intercambio.org

Agenda:

- Introduction
- Major Points
- Practice and Teacher Networking

Articulation

- Speak at moderate pace (not rushed)
- Pronounce each word distinctly

Phrasing

- Choose high frequency words (familiar vocabulary) and concrete terms (that can be demonstrated or illustrated)
- Limit the use of idioms, slang, and cultural references
- Use short, grammatically simple sentences (Noun-Verb-Object)

The Message

- Limit overall complexity/level of detail
- State ideas as directly and literally as possible

Classroom Interaction

- Support comprehension where needed:
 - repetition and rephrasing
 - synonyms, antonyms, parallels
 - Context cues:
 - non-verbal = visuals, body language
 - verbal = examples, stories to illustrate a concept
 - text = can be useful if the students are highly text-oriented (are the learners proficient in reading in L1)
 - translation = use sparingly, where appropriate

- Check frequently for comprehension, clarify where needed (Encourage students to clarify for one another.)
- Encourage students to test their understanding (“Do you mean...?”)
- Allow plenty of “wait time” (for students to think and respond)

Click the link to have a preview of our new Intro Level *Confidence and Connections* slide deck: [Intro Level Lesson 5](#)