

<i>900 exercises for vocational communication</i>	Notes for teachers	A / 31
<i>General aim</i>	A: ORAL TECHNIQUE	
<i>Level of difficulty</i>	2	
<i>Intermediate aim</i>	3: ADOPT A MODE OF BEHAVIOUR APPROPRIATE TO THE SITUATION	
<i>Operational aim</i>	1: Take into account space and environment.	
<i>Pre-requirements</i>	None	
<i>Number of exercises offered</i>		
<i>Comments</i>		

The first part of this module will essentially be based on each person's experience, what each learner has to say about it, what the group has to say.

The teacher can first point out that, most of the time, we perceive space instinctively, automatically. For example, when walking in the street, we don't necessarily look at the ground and yet we automatically go round an obstacle that is in our field of vision.

In the first part of this module, the teacher will encourage the learners to take more notice of the way they move, perceive their environment and manage their space.

The teacher can bring up a series of situations that are familiar to all the learners because they concern the space and environment in which they are. To do this, the teacher will ask questions about the way each learner comes into the classroom.

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- How do you usually come into the classroom and sit down? Describe yourself orally in detail. One or more volunteers will do an impersonation of themselves coming into the room and sitting down, just as they think they usually do.
- In the classroom, each person most often has his or her own “particular” seat where he sits at each lesson. Describe where your seat is in relation to the classroom, to the immediate neighbourhood (people, and the arrangement: windows, doors, etc.), and to the teacher’s seat.
 - Do you ever change seats?
 - Often? Always? Never?
 - Do you change because you want to or have to?
 - Why this seat in particular?
- How do you arrange the space on your table in the room? How much space on the table do you use for the things you need to work with? (The teacher can continue the discussion with the workstation if appropriate.)
- When you are in the classroom, how did your first exchanges with the other learners take place? Try to remember whom you spoke with when you first arrived here and what sort of exchanges you had: looks, smiles, verbal communication (one-to-one, group). Describe yourself. One or more volunteers can try to impersonate themselves coming into the room on that day and having their first conversations.
- When a learner (or the teacher) speaks to you, how do you look at them? Describe the way you look at them. Conversely, when you speak to a learner (or the teacher), how do they look at you? Describe them.
- How does the teacher look at the learners when he/she is addressing the whole group? Describe the teacher (one learner can also do an impersonation of the teacher’s attitude and way of looking at people).
- When you have to go to the blackboard to explain your work (or an idea) to the group, how do you speak to the group of learners? Impersonate yourself.
- When you have to write on the board to reinforce your oral work, how do you go about it?
 - How do you think the others see you?
 - According to them?
 - Is it difficult to speak to the group while writing on the board?
 - If it is, what do you do to get round it?

Feeling at ease ... or not

The second part of the module concerns the impression we may have of **feeling at ease** or **not feeling at ease** wherever we might be.

- For you, what does *feeling at ease* somewhere mean? Find other words to say it.
- For you, what does *not feeling at ease* somewhere mean? Find other words to say it.

Situation:

A new learner has to join the group several sessions after the group has been formed.

How can you greet this learner to make him feel “at ease” in the classroom? The teacher will write down the different suggestions given on the board. If suggestions run out rather quickly, the idea can be turned round: what might make the newcomer feel ill at ease? How can it be avoided?

NB. The learners can think about this question according to the arrangement of the room they are in when they do this exercise.

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Simulation of this situation:

One learner takes the role of the newcomer as he enters the room. The group must make sure that the newcomer feels at ease by every possible means – but without overdoing it either!

NB. If the simulation seems difficult or ends too quickly, the opposite situation can be simulated: how could you make someone feel uncomfortable. The problem after this simulation would be to avoid this.

In the different suggestions and during the simulations, space and environment were taken into account as “facilitators” of communication.

The learners are now invited to relate their experience: they will talk about a dialogue situation, a one-to-one conversation or a contact with a group in which they felt uncomfortable because of the given space and environment and will try to determine how and why.

Conversely, they will be asked to relate a situation in a space and environment where they felt immediately at ease. Again, they will try to determine how and why.

Variation:

You are welcoming someone to your home for the first time. You don't know this person very well and you want to make him/her feel at ease. What can you play on?

- your attitude
- your environment
- the place of this person in your environment

Conversely: you are receiving someone you would like to impress, whom you would like to make uncomfortable. How will you go about it?

- your attitude
- your environment
- the place of this person in your environment

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Second variation:

The group will suggest ideas to arrange the classroom for different situations, which might be, for example:

- invite a company director for an hour to give a speech
- have a brainstorming session (the teacher will explain the term)
- organise a buffet to celebrate a special event concerning one of the learners
- receive a group of musicians for a demonstration
- organise a dance show
- etc.

NB. Thought must be given to questions of orientation, perspective, and how to use everything in the room usefully: furniture, objects, lighting, etc.

How do you perceive an environment that is not familiar?

If each person perceives unfamiliar surroundings completely subjectively, there are a few main tendencies, for example:

- one person might get around in an unfamiliar area by looking at the sun (he knows he has to go towards the west, for example)
- another person, on the other hand, will follow signposts.
- a third person will never go to an unfamiliar area without a detailed map
- someone else will go unprepared relying on directions from passers-by.

The learners will probably see themselves and their own tendencies in the four attitudes above, and perhaps even combine two of them.

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As a second example, taken this time from each person's experience, the teacher can ask the learners how they walk up and down a staircase. They should be asked what they look at when they go up and then when they go down.

Here again, it is a good idea to make a complete list of the different "tendencies" that the teacher will write up on the board.

Among them, you will no doubt find the following:

Going up:

- those who look at the steps they are about to walk on
- those who look towards the top of the stairs
- those who look at the banisters if they place their hand on them
- those who walk up "by heart" without looking at anything in particular.

Going down:

- those who look carefully at the steps on which they walk
- those who look straight ahead
- those who look towards the bottom of the stairs without looking at each step
- those who look at the banister

As this example shows, each person has their own way of judging distances and judging the space around them, whether they are moving or standing still.

For example each person has noticed from his own experience that it is not always easy to send someone to fetch something in an unfamiliar place. The person who is sent often searches for a while before finding what he was asked to bring back, in spite of any explanations given.

It is like this precisely because we do not all have the same way of seeing the layout of the place or the lie of the land.

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The experiment can be done in situation:

A learner is asked to go and place an object from his briefcase or bag somewhere in the building; he chooses this object without saying what it is or showing it to anyone first.

Meanwhile, the teacher – who will have in his possession a dark-coloured scarf or blindfold (black or navy blue) – will ask a volunteer to let himself be blindfolded. He will then write up on the board the place in the room (or the corridor) where the blindfolded learner must go. Another learner will then dictate the itinerary to be followed as he goes along, to reach his destination.

The observers will then comment on the performances of the person doing the guiding and the one being guided.

The learner who placed the object in another part of the building will now be back. He will tell another learner how to find the object and bring it back (he has the choice of saying what the object is or not: in which case the procedure is much more difficult).

While the learner is off looking for the object, the others tell the learner who has just come back about the experiment with the blindfold and he is asked to take this role, with another learner as his guide.

This second experiment should show improvements in the precision compared to the first. The observers will give their comments on how the two experiments compare.

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Find your bearings, find your way, make it easy to look for something
in a public building

Firstly, the teacher can ask the group the difference between:

SEE and LOOK

The suggestions will be written on the board.

The teacher can then get them to understand that we do not all see things in the same way. Attention is often selective.

The teacher will ask the learners to try to find the meaning of:

SELECTIVE ATTENTION

The suggestions will be written on the board.

The learners can then think about the ways of attracting attention to something:

- what can attract attention?

(the learners will no doubt think of an object that you indicate verbally to attract attention to it, but you can also consider the case of an object which is not in its place in familiar surroundings, or of object that you do not expect to see in that context, etc.)

- How can you attract someone else's attention to something?

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Possible exercise:

The group agrees on a place or a room familiar to everyone. In which part of the room should we leave a message for someone so that this person, who has not been informed beforehand, is sure to see it? The experience can be tried for real to confirm (or not) the suggestions from the group.

Another possible exercise:

Given that we all have our landmarks, which are part and parcel of our culture, our civilisation and our usual environment, how can we recognise one public building from another? For example:

- A school
- a hospital
- a library
- an airport
- a post office
- the town hall
- etc.

How do we represent these places?

What do we usually expect from the arrangement of the space in these buildings?

If there is a “reception” area, where is it usually? Why?

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Finally, the teacher can ask the learners to relate their personal experience on this subject:

You have had to go to one of the places mentioned (or to another public building) for some particular reason.

The learners may be helped by questions of this sort:

- What did you expect?
- What were you looking for?
- What did you find?
- Was it what you were expecting?
- What difficulties did you meet to get there?
- Which person(s) did you contact there?
- Did you obtain what you wanted quickly?
- If not, what did you attribute it to:
 - which was your fault?
 - which was the fault of the arrangement of the place?
 - which was the fault of the people you met?
- Would you be more at ease if you had to go back there?

Finally, the learners can ask about questions of this sort:

- How could you improve people's orientation and communication with the people who work in these places?
- How could you improve your own orientation and your own communication?
- The teacher will write what is said on the board and the learners will then make a summary.
- Etc.