

GENERAL TEACHING STRATEGIES

Strategies for Presenting, Practicing, and Reviewing Guided Conversation Lessons

The Guided Conversation Methodology

Side by Side offers learners of English a dynamic, communicative approach to learning the language. Through the methodology of guided conversations, *Side by Side* engages students in meaningful conversational exchanges within carefully structured grammatical frameworks, and then encourages students to break away from the textbook and *use* these frameworks to create conversations on their own. All the language practice that is generated through the texts results in active communication between students . . . practicing speaking together “side by side.”

Model conversations serve as the vehicles for introducing new grammatical structures and many communicative uses of English. Since the model becomes the basis for all the exercises that follow, it is essential that students be given sufficient practice with it before proceeding with the lesson.

In the numbered exercises that follow the model, students pair up and work “side by side,” placing new content into the given conversational framework. These exercises form the core learning activity of each conversation lesson.

Introducing Model Conversations

Given the importance of the model conversation, it is essential that students practice it several times in a variety of ways before going on to the exercises.

The *Teacher’s Guide* offers the following comprehensive eight-step approach to introducing the model:

1. Have students look at the model illustration. This helps establish the context of the conversation.
2. Set the scene.
3. *Present the model.* With books closed, have students listen as you present the model or play the tape one or more times. To make the presentation of the model as realistic as possible, you might draw two stick figures on the board to represent the speakers in the dialog. You can also show that two people are speaking by changing your position or by shifting your weight from one foot to the other as you say each speaker’s lines.



4. *Full-Class Choral Repetition.* Model each line and have the whole class repeat in unison.
5. Have students open their books and look at the dialog. Ask if there are any questions, and check understanding of new vocabulary.
6. *Group Choral Repetition.* Divide the class in half. Model line A and have Group 1 repeat. Model line B and have Group 2 repeat. Continue with all the lines of the model.
7. *Choral Conversation.* Have both groups practice the dialog twice, without a teacher model. First Group 1 is Speaker A and Group 2 is Speaker B; then reverse.
8. Call on one or two pairs of students to present the dialog.

In steps 6, 7, and 8, encourage students to look up from their books and *say* the lines rather than read them. (Students can of course refer to their books when necessary.)

The goal is not memorization or complete mastery of the model. Rather, students should become familiar with the model and feel comfortable saying it.

At this point, if you feel that additional practice is necessary before going on to the exercises, you can do Choral Conversation in small groups or by rows.

Alternative Approaches

Depending upon the abilities of your students and the particular lesson you're teaching, you might wish to try the following approaches to vary the way in which you introduce model conversations.

Pair Introduction

Have a pair of students present the model. Then practice it with the class.

Trio Introduction

Call on *three* students to introduce the model. Have two of them present it while the third acts as the *director*, offering suggestions for how to say the lines better. Then practice the dialog with the class.

Cloze Introduction

Write a cloze version of the model conversation on the board for student reference as you introduce the model. For lessons that provide a skeletal framework of the model (for example, Book 1 pp. 41, 70, 71, 111, 135), you can use that as the cloze version. For other lessons, you can decide which words to delete from the dialog.

Scrambled Dialog Introduction

Write each line of the dialog on a separate card. Distribute the cards to students. Have them practice saying their lines and then talk with each other to figure out what the correct order of



the lines should be. Have them present the dialog to the class, each student in turn reading his or her line. Have the class decide if the dialog lines are in the correct order. Then practice the dialog with the class.

Warning: Do a scrambled dialog introduction *only* for conversations in which there is only one possible sentence order!

Disappearing Dialog Introduction

Write the dialog on the board and have students practice saying it. Erase a few of the words and practice again. Continue practicing the dialog several times, each time having erased more of the words, until the dialog has completely *disappeared* and students can say the lines without looking at them.

Eliciting the Model

Have students cover up the lines of the model and look just at the illustration. Ask questions based on the illustration and the situation. For example: *Who are these people? Where are they? What are they saying to each other?* As a class, in groups, or in pairs, have students suggest a possible dialog. Have students present their ideas and then compare them with the model conversation in the book. Then practice the dialog with the class.

Reviewing Model Conversations

Here are some possible ways to review model conversations from previous lessons.

Clap and Listen

Leave out words from the dialog while clapping your hands for the missing items. Students listen and fill in the missing words.

Sample Review Activity for Side by Side 1 page 46

- a. With students' books closed, read the model conversation.
- b. Read it again, this time clapping your hands or tapping on the desk to indicate missing words. For example: "[clap] is he?" Have students respond, "Who."
- c. Read, "He's [clap] father." Have students respond "my."
- d. Continue in the same way with the other lines of the conversation.



Different Emotions

Students present the model conversation using different emotions.

Sample Review Activity for Side by Side 2 page 98

Have students practice reading the model conversation, using any combination of these different emotions:

- Speaker A is upset that she can't help her friend.
- Speaker A isn't upset that she can't help her friend.
- Speaker B is disappointed.
- Speaker B isn't disappointed.

Scrambled Dialogs

Write the lines from two or more model dialogs on separate cards and have students put them in the correct order.

Sample Review Activity for Side by Side 3 pages 70 and 72

- a. Write each line of the three model conversations from pages 70 and 72 on a separate card. Scramble the cards.
- b. Give the cards to eight students. Have them unscramble the lines and put together the three conversations.
- c. Form pairs and have each pair read a conversation.

VARIATION

- a. Divide the class into three groups.
- b. Make three sets of the model conversations from pages 70 and 72, writing each line on a separate card.
- c. Give each group one set of the cards, and have the group members reorder the conversations.
- d. Have each group read one of the conversations aloud while the others listen to check for accuracy.



Disappearing Dialogs

Students practice reading the model conversation several times, each time seeing fewer and fewer of the words.

Sample Review Activity for Side by Side 3 page 104

- a. Write the model conversation on the board.
- b. Ask for two student volunteers to read the conversation.
- c. Erase a few of the words from each line of the dialog. Have two different students read the conversation.
- d. Erase more words and call on two more students to read the conversation.
- e. Continue erasing words and calling on pairs of students to say the model until all the words have been erased and the dialog has *disappeared*.

Side by Side Exercises

The numbered exercises that follow the model form the core learning activity in each conversation lesson. Here students use the pictures and word cues to create conversations based on the structure of the model. Since all language practice in these lessons is conversational, you will always call on a pair of students to do each exercise. Your primary role is to serve as a resource to the class—to help students with new structures, new vocabulary, intonation, and pronunciation.

The *Teacher's Guides* recommend the following three steps for practicing the exercises. (Students should be given thorough practice with the first two exercises before going on.)

1. Exercise 1: Introduce any new vocabulary in the exercise. Call on two students to present the dialog. Then do Choral Repetition and Choral Conversation Practice.
2. Exercise 2: Same as for Exercise 1.
3. For the remaining exercises, there are two options: either Full-Class Practice or Pair Practice.

Full-Class Practice: Call on a pair of students to do each exercise. Introduce new vocabulary one exercise at a time. (For more practice, you can call on other pairs of students or do Choral Repetition or Choral Conversation Practice.)

Pair Practice: Introduce new vocabulary for all the exercises. Next have students practice all the exercises in pairs. Then have pairs present the exercises to the class. (For more practice, you can do Choral Repetition or Choral Conversation Practice.)

The choice of Full-Class Practice or Pair Practice should be determined by the content of the particular lesson, the size and composition of the class, and your own teaching style. You might also wish to vary your approach from lesson to lesson.

Suggestions for Pairing Up Students

Whether you use Full-Class Practice or Pair Practice, you can select students for pairing in various ways.

- You might want to pair students by ability, since students of similar ability might work more efficiently together than students of dissimilar ability.
- On the other hand, you might wish to pair a weaker student with a stronger one. The slower student benefits from this pairing, while the more advanced student strengthens his or her abilities by helping a partner.

You should also encourage students to look at each other when speaking. This makes the conversational nature of the language practice more realistic. One way of ensuring this is *not* to call on two students who are sitting next to each other. Rather, call on students in different parts of the room and encourage them to look at each other when saying their lines.

Presenting New Vocabulary

Many new words are introduced in each conversation lesson. The illustration usually helps to convey the meaning, and the new words are written for students to see and use in these conversations. In addition, you might:

- write the new word on the board or on a word card
- say the new word several times and ask students to repeat chorally and individually
- help clarify the meaning with visuals.

Students might also find it useful to keep a notebook in which they write each new word, its meaning, and a sentence using that word.

Open-Ended Exercises

In many lessons, the final exercise is an open-ended one. This is indicated in the text by a blank box. Here students are expected to create conversations based on the structure of the model, but with vocabulary that they select themselves. This provides students with an opportunity for creativity, while still focusing on the particular structure being practiced. These open-ended exercises can be done orally in class and/or assigned as homework for presentation in class the next day. Encourage students to use dictionaries to find new words they want to use.



General Guiding Principles for Working with Guided Conversations

Speak, not Read, the Conversations

When doing the exercises, students should practice *speaking* to each other, rather than reading to each other. Even though students will need to refer to the text to be able to practice the conversations, they should not read the lines word by word. Rather, they should scan a full line and then look up from the book and *speak* the line to the other person.

Intonation and Gesture

Throughout, you should use the book to teach proper intonation and gesture. (Capitalized words are used to indicate spoken emphasis.) Students should be encouraged to truly *act out* the dialogs in a strong and confident voice.

Student-Centered Practice

Use of the texts should be as student-centered as possible. Modeling by the teacher should be efficient and economical, but students should have every opportunity to model for each other when they are capable of doing so.

Vocabulary in Context

Vocabulary can and should be effectively taught in the context of the conversation being practiced. Very often it will be possible to grasp the meaning from the conversation or its accompanying illustration. You should spend time drilling vocabulary in isolation only if you feel it is absolutely essential.

No “Grammar Talk”

Students need not study formally or be able to produce grammatical rules. The purpose of the texts is to engage students in active communication that gets them to *use* the language according to these rules.



Relating Lesson Content to Students' Lives and Experiences

Personalize the Exercises

While doing the guided conversation exercises, whenever you think it is appropriate, ask students questions that relate the situations in the exercises to their own lives and personal experiences. This will help make the leap from practicing language in the textbook to using the language for actual communication. For example:

For Side by Side 1 page 102

The focus of the lesson is the verb *have*. As students are presenting the exercises, ask them about things THEY have. For example:

Model Conversation

How about you? Do you have quiet neighbors or noisy neighbors?

Exercise 1

How about you? Do you have a brother or a sister? What's your brother's/sister's name?

Exercise 5

How about you? Do you have a cat or a dog? What's your cat's/dog's name?

For Side by Side 2 pages 50 and 51

The focus of the lesson is superlative adjectives. As students are presenting the exercises, ask them about people THEY know, using those superlative adjectives. For example:

Page 50, Exercise 6

Who is the friendliest person YOU know?

In what ways is this person friendly?

Page 50, Exercise 9

Who is the sloppiest person YOU know?

In what ways is this person sloppy?

Page 51, Exercise 2

Who is the most generous person YOU know?

In what ways is this person generous?

Page 51, Exercise 3

Who is the most talented person YOU know?

What things can this person do?



Interview the Characters

Where appropriate, as students are presenting the exercises to the class, as a way of making the situations come alive and making students feel as though they really *are* the characters in those situations, ask questions that students can respond to based on their imaginations. For example:

For Side by Side 2 pages 54-55

Before pairs of students present each of the exercises, ask the salesperson in each conversation the name of his or her store. Students can either use the name of a real store in their community or invent the name of a store where that particular product might be sold.

For Side by Side 3 pages 88-89

As a follow-up after each pair has presented its conversation involving an important decision someone has made, interview that person and ask what the reasons were for making that decision.



Options for Additional Practice

These activities are appropriate as follow-ups after students have practiced the model conversation and exercises in the lesson.

Who Is It?

Make statements about characters in the exercises and have students guess which person you're talking about.

Note: This activity is appropriate *only* for exercises in which characters are named.

For Side by Side 1 page 122

Make statements about the people in the exercises. Have students respond by telling who you're talking about. For example:

This person has a toothache.	Susan	(Exercise 2)
These people are studying.	Your children	(Exercise 3)
This person has dirty laundry.	John	(Exercise 4)
These people are in the garage.	You and Tom	(Exercise 1)
This person is sick.	Michael	(Model Conversation)
These people's living room is dirty.	Your parents	(Exercise 5)

Guided Conversation Match Game

Students match sentences with their appropriate rejoinders.

Note: This activity is appropriate *only* as a review for lessons in which the conversations consist of two-line exchanges.

Sample Review Activity for Side by Side 1 page 161

- a. Make a set of cards with Speaker A's and Speaker B's lines from the following conversations:

Did you sleep well last night?

Yes, I did.
I was tired.

Did Roger sleep well last night?

No, he didn't.
He wasn't tired.

Did Tom have a big breakfast today?	Yes, he did. He was hungry.
Did Jane have a big breakfast today?	No, she didn't. She wasn't hungry.
Did Mrs. Brown go to the doctor yesterday?	Yes, she did. She was sick.
Did Mr. Brown go to the doctor yesterday?	No, he didn't. He wasn't sick.
Did Timothy finish his milk?	Yes, he did. He was thirsty.
Did Jennifer finish her milk?	No, she didn't. She wasn't thirsty.
Did Susan miss the train?	Yes, she did. She was late.

- b. Distribute the cards to students.
- c. Have students memorize the phrase on their cards and then walk around the room, saying their phrase until they find their match.
- d. Then have pairs of students say their matched sentences aloud to the class.

Tell More About It

Students invent additional information about a situation in the text.

Sample Review Activity for Side by Side 3 page 3

Have students look at the illustration for Exercise 6 (a woman reading poetry) and ask the following questions:

- What's Mrs. Anderson doing?
- Does she read poetry?
- Does she read other books (such as plays and novels)?



Does she go to the library often?
What types of books does she read?

Have students use their imaginations to tell more about Mrs. Anderson.

Continue the Conversation

Students create role plays in which a conversation continues.

Sample Review Activity for Side by Side 1 pages 134-135

- a. Divide the class into pairs.
- b. Have each pair choose one of the conversations in the lesson—either the model or any of the exercises—and create a role play in which that conversation continues.
- c. Have the pairs present their role plays to the class and compare their continuations of the situation.

Surprise Situations

Students are presented with a new situation and must create a conversation using that surprise information.

VARIATION 1: USING A SKELETAL FRAMEWORK

Sample Review Activity for Side by Side 3 pages 74-75

- a. Put a skeletal framework of the model conversation on the board:

A. You look tired. What _____ doing?
B. I've been _____ since _____.
A. Really? How many _____?
B. Believe it or not, _____ already _____.
A. _____?! No wonder you're tired!

- b. Ask for a pair of student volunteers to come to the front of the room.
- c. Give them word cards such as the following and have them create a conversation based on the framework on the board, using the information on their cards. They should feel free to modify the conversation any way they wish.

Speaker A:
Your friend looks tired.

Speaker B:
You've been making cookies since
_____.

Other possible pairs of cards:

Speaker A:
Your friend looks tired.

Speaker B:
You've been doing grammar
exercises since _____.

Speaker A:
Your friend looks tired.

Speaker B:
You've been filling out job
applications since _____.

VARIATION 2: USING KEY WORDS

Sample Activity for Side by Side 3 pages 76-77

- a. Write key words from the model conversation on the board:

A. nervous
B. Why?
A. going to
never/before
B. Don't worry!
for years
Believe me!

- b. Ask for a pair of student volunteers to come to the front of the room.
c. Give them word cards such as the following and have them create a conversation based on the model conversation from the text, using the key words on the board and the information on their cards. They should feel free to modify the conversation any way they wish.



Speaker A:
You're nervous!
You're going to go skydiving!

Speaker B:
Your friend is nervous.
Give your friend some encouragement.

Other possible pairs of cards:

Speaker A:
Your friend is nervous.
Your going to sing in a karaoke club!

Speaker B:
Your friend is nervous.
Give your friend some encouragement.

Speaker A:
You're nervous!
You're going to climb Mt. Fuji!

Speaker B:
Your friend is nervous.
Give your friend some encouragement.

We encourage you to try some of these approaches as well as the communication activities that follow. In keeping with the spirit of *Side by Side*, they are intended to provide students with a language learning experience that is dynamic ... interactive ... and fun!

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