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AUTHOR Head, Mary K.  
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ABSTRACT

Suggestions are offered on the use of animated lectures on CD-ROM into the curriculum of an upper-intermediate-level course in English-as-a-second-language speaking and listening. The technique is recommended as a means of sharpening student listening skills and preparing students for real-life lectures in college. Animated lectures were drawn from the "Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia" for this purpose, but additional sources are cited. Guidelines for classroom presentation of the lectures and related class activities begin with the first lecture and become progressively more advanced for the second, third, and fourth lectures. Lecture five and subsequent lessons are considered optional, depending on the ability of the student to work independently. The activities teach note-taking, outlining, and question-predicting skills. Some testing techniques are also offered. (Contains 17 references.) (MSE)

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# Using Animated Lectures to Improve Listening Skills

by  
Mary K. Head

A demonstration presented at the TESOL Convention  
Seattle, WA  
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In this demonstration, the presenter offers suggestions on how to incorporate the use of animated lectures on CD-ROM into the curriculum of an upper-intermediate level speaking/ understanding class which includes the teaching of notetaking, outlining, and question-prediction skills.

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## Using Animated Lectures to Improve Listening Skills

The activities described below were developed for students in an upper-intermediate level speaking/understanding class and were designed to be used either as extra listening activities entirely independent of the regular in-class curriculum or as a supplement to other class materials to reinforce the teaching of notetaking, outlining, and question-prediction skills.

Many of the students in my classes always seemed anxious for the opportunity to sharpen their listening skills and better prepare themselves for real-life academic lectures in their university classes. Available to them were a generous selection of audio-taped lectures which they could check out from the language lab. These provided them with some good practice, but they found it difficult to grasp unfamiliar concepts, especially when listening to lectures on topics related to science. In these cases, the addition of visuals greatly aided comprehension. In addition, the presence of both visuals and narration was likely to help students to retain what they had learned because separate visual and verbal codes were activated, so if one form of the information was lost, there was a good chance it would remain in the other (Paivio, 1986).

Having found appropriate animated lectures on the *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* CD-ROM, I looked to Nelson (1991) to help me incorporate the animations into my teaching. I loosely modeled the following listening activities on her ideas of moving her ESL writers from complete dependence on the teacher through a stage of interdependence on peers and finally to independence. Just as she wanted her students to become independent writers, I wanted my students to develop the confidence to judge the importance of information in a lecture and to predict the kinds of information they would be expected to know on a test.

Even though the particular activities that I developed were based on a now outdated version of the *Grolier* CD, animations with narration and captions can be found on current versions of a number of companies' multimedia encyclopedias. Among them are Dorling Kindersley's *History of the World* and *Encyclopedia of Science*. DK has a number of other titles available that may also contain animations. The 1998 version of *Grolier* is on the market, but I have not had a chance to examine it as yet. It is not my intention to endorse any one product. I want only to introduce the technology and to share what little knowledge I have of particular CD-ROMs.

### Guidelines for Using the *Grolier* Animated Lectures

#### Lecture One

It is suggested that all of the lectures be viewed as homework assignments. Four of those lectures will be discussed and students will subsequently be tested over the content in class. With each succeeding lecture the students will receive less

structured support from the teacher. Students will be taught how to take notes, choose main points, outline, and summarize throughout the semester, so they will have at least some knowledge of the skills required for the following assignments before doing them. In completing the following activities, students will have an opportunity to both improve their listening and to practice the above mentioned skills.

While viewing the first animated lecture, students need to complete a skeleton outline provided by the teacher. The model shows clearly the number of main topics and subtopics in the lecture guiding the students to listen for those points. They will be given one week to complete the assignment after which time the completed outline will be presented on an overhead projector and discussed in class. In addition to the discussion of the content of the outline, acceptable abbreviations and other notetaking techniques will also be discussed. On the following day, students will take an in-class quiz over the lecture using their notes and outlines.

#### Lecture Two

Unlike the first lecture, a skeleton outline will not be provided with the second lecture. Students will listen to the lecture outside of class, taking notes and making their own outlines. A week after the assignment is given there will be a class discussion about the lecture during which time students will consult with classmates in small groups. During this activity one member of each group will write out that group's outline on a transparency. Afterwards those outlines will be shown on the overhead projector and commented on by students and the teacher. On the following day, a quiz covering the lecture content will be given. Students will once again be allowed to use notes.

#### Lecture Three

An important academic skill is being able to predict test questions. Therefore, after they have listened to the lecture and taken notes, the class will work in small groups to develop a list of questions which might appear on the quiz for the third lecture. As an introduction to this question-writing activity, the teacher will guide the students in formulating questions based on what they determine is pertinent information presented in the lecture. The quiz taken the following day will include questions from both the students and the teacher. Notes will be used during this quiz as well.

#### Lecture Four

The in-class activities for the fourth lecture will be the same as those for the third. The difference will be that the quiz will be taken without notes, to better replicate a test taken in a regular university class in which the students must study their class notes ahead of time, decide what information they think is important, and anticipate what questions the professor might ask.

#### Lecture Five and all subsequent lectures

Listening to all of the remaining lectures will be optional, and quizzes will be taken outside of class time. By this point, it is hoped that students, through their

work with the *Grolier* lectures as well as their other class lecture practice, will be proficient enough in their notetaking and question-prediction skills to work independently on extra academic listening activities.

The quizzes on these lectures will be in two formats. The first will be similar to the preceding lessons in that students will first listen to the lectures and take notes. They will then study and finally take a quiz without notes. The second group of quizzes will involve the skills necessary for success on the proficiency test students take at the end of each semester. Students will answer questions as they listen to the lecture. All of these quizzes will be optional and ungraded. They will be provided for those students motivated enough to seek additional academic listening experiences.

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Organization/Address: <i>Baker University ESL Department P.O. Box 65 Baldwin City, KS 66006-0065</i>	Telephone: <i>785-544-8341</i>	FAX:
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