

Conversation Based LEARNING

Because life is not a grammar test

Use partners, not grammar

**From First-Day Placement Test
to Last-Day Improvement Data**

**Speaking Improves 50%
And we can prove it**

GUNTHER BREAUX

Partners, not grammar

Many partners make you smoother, better partners make you better.

Test partners of similar ability gives fair and accurate testing.

This is the Class

The class is pair conversations. Speed Dating.

You get a new topic every 2 weeks, and a new partner every 7 minutes.

Everybody's speaking half the time, and half the time your partner's a better speaker.



This is the Test

Three students of similar ability have a 17-minute conversation.

Record it with your phone, transcribe what you said, and self-correct.

The first test measures your ability, the second test measures your improvement.



From first-day placement test to last-day improvement data

1 Placement Test

Gives your ability, and your first test partners.

Placement Test Score	First Test Partners
99	
92	1
90	
89	
88	2
87	
85	
83	3
80	
79	
78	4
76	
73	
72	5
68	
67	
64	6
58	
57	
57	7
54	

2 Homework

Prepares you to speak, and it's 40% of your grade. *Do it.*

Write what you will say
Writing before Speaking Improves Accuracy

Focus! This is writing practice. Put some effort into it.

- When's your birthday?** Where were you born? How many times has your family moved?
1. My birthday is on March 12. But birthdays are not big in my family, in fact, my mother forget.
2. My birthday is May 4th. We usually eat out, that's about it.
3. My birthday is November 25th. My mother makes a big deal and throws a party.
- What year are you?** What was your favorite class last semester?
1. I'm a freshman, majoring in International Trade. My favorite class was History.
2. I'm a sophomore at Pomona Community college. My major is Computer Science.
3. I'm a junior at UCLA. I'm majoring in Business Administration. I'm a minor in Accounting.
- What's your favorite movie?** Who's your favorite movie star? What's your favorite TV show?
1. My favorite movie is *Guardians of the Galaxy*. The special effects rocks me out. I've seen it seven times.
2. I like Matt Damon in the *Bourne* series. My favorite TV show is the newest one. I get obsessed before every test!
3. I'm not into movies that much. I prefer TV. My favorite TV show is *Friends*.
- What does your father do?** Does your mother work? Who's more strict?
1. My father's a computer programmer for Google.
2. My father's a businessman. He owns a few car repair shops.
3. My father works for the city. He works in city planning, but I have no clue what he does exactly.
- Are you close to your brother or sister?** Who's smarter, you or them?
1. Yes, my sister and I are like best friends.
2. My sister and I are not too close. Our age gap is five years.
3. No. My little sister is a shrewdmouth who cannot keep a secret, so I never tell her anything.
- Who's your favorite singer or group?** What kind of music do you hate?
1. My favorite singer is Beyonce. I have all her songs on my phone and computer.
2. I like Shakira because of her singing and dancing. I saw her in concert once in Bogota.
3. My favorite singer is Bruno Mars and my favorite group is Bruno Mars. I hate rap music.

Really? Me too? Why? When? Where? Who? How often?
Awesome Bummer Anyway Whatever Kind of It depends

3 Conversation Class

Speed Dating.
One topic, many partners. *Fun.*

1	2	→	24	23
	↑		↓	
3	4		22	21
	↑		↓	
5	6		20	19
	↑		↓	
7	8		18	17
	↑		↓	
9	10		16	15
	↑		↓	
11	12	←	14	13

Switch every 7 minutes

6 Ability

The 1st test gives your ability, and your 2nd test partners.

	Total Words Spoken	Second Test Partners
A	662	
	649	1
	621	
B	582	
	569	2
	552	
C	549	
	523	3
	518	
D	451	
	427	4
	423	
D	360	
	341	5
	314	
D	291	
	254	6
	225	
D-	172	
	140	7
	129	

5 Transcript

Type just what you said.
Fix your own mistakes. *Simple.*

C16 Kim, Choi-lee

I spoke 180 words ÷ 25 times = 7.2 words per utterance

- So they also good at English?
- Yes
- you love to listen music?
- I tried that class twice but all fail.
- is that class very popular to student? Is it hard to listen that class?
- Yes very popular, yes
- Why? the test is difficult?
- I failed to enter the class.
- I heard that class is really expensive.
- Yes. It's really expensive to me.
- Can you swim?
- Do you join any club or study club?
- Oh, my friend also join that club. She says it's very interested.
- Oh, yes. But I didn't go.
- I heard they went China and... What they did in China?
- I think they go there to teaching....
- Teaching Chinese?
- No. They just exchange culture things.
- They went China and met China university students?
- Um. High school.
- Oh, then gave Chinese students about Korea cultures and they introduced Chinese students.
- Yes. And then I failed off and that when I went hospital.
- Why you didn't go there?
- Because I think it is really long span.
- About 10 days? What about you?

4 Conversation Test

3 students, 17 minutes.
Students record and transcribe.



After midterm, do it again.

A comparison of midterm and final test data will show 50% improvement.

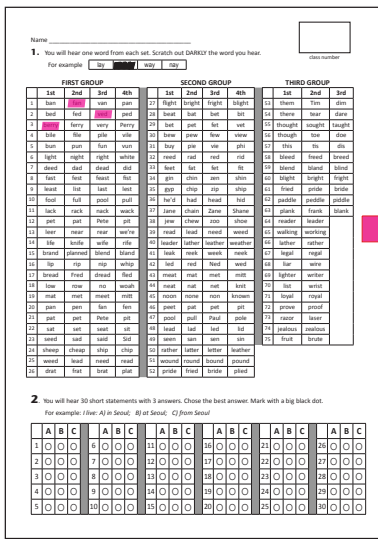
50% Improvement

	How many times I spoke	Average words per utterance	Total words I spoke
Practice test	40	10	400
Final test	27	18	480
Improvement		80%	20%

1 Placement Test

This Test Changes Everything

It changes the mindset, which changes the class from grammar based to ability based. 12 minutes to give, 5 minutes to grade. And more accurate than the 3-hour American SAT test.



The test can be Google graded. Grade hundreds in 2 minutes. Students mark their answer on paper (for a permanent record). Then, they enter answers on their phones.

1. Because you know their ability on the first day, everything after is to improve ability, not determine it.
2. You don't have to waste class time and midterm and final weeks on grammar-grades tests to determine their ability and provide a basis for grades.
3. Ultimately, *how can you improve their ability if you don't know their ability?*

The university entrance exam measures intelligence and attention span for cramming.

This test measures their ABILITY.

This is also a levels test for the first conversation test. Partners are grouped by similar ability. This makes the test fair, and accurate.

Knowing their ability on the first day POWERFULLY changes your mindset. It's like you're a superhero with magic psychic powers. You know their ability, and you have not even spoken to them yet.

On the first day of class I know their:

1. Speaking ability
2. Pronunciation problems
3. Prepositions problems
4. First conversation test partners

That's a pretty good use of 20 minutes.

Pronunciation Prepositions Score 1st conversation test partners

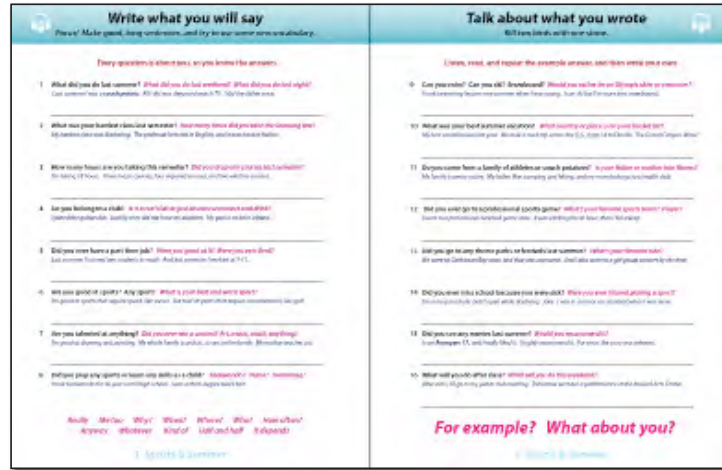
	Pronunciation	Prepositions	Score	1st conversation test partners
	74	25	99	1
	70	22	92	
	69	21	90	
	69	20	89	2
	65	23	88	
	66	21	87	
	65	20	85	
	67	16	83	3
	64	16	80	
	60	19	79	
	58	20	78	4
	63	13	76	
	59	14	73	
	58	14	72	5
	53	15	68	
	54	13	67	
	52	12	64	6
	48	10	58	
	49	8	57	
	47	10	57	7
	45	9	54	



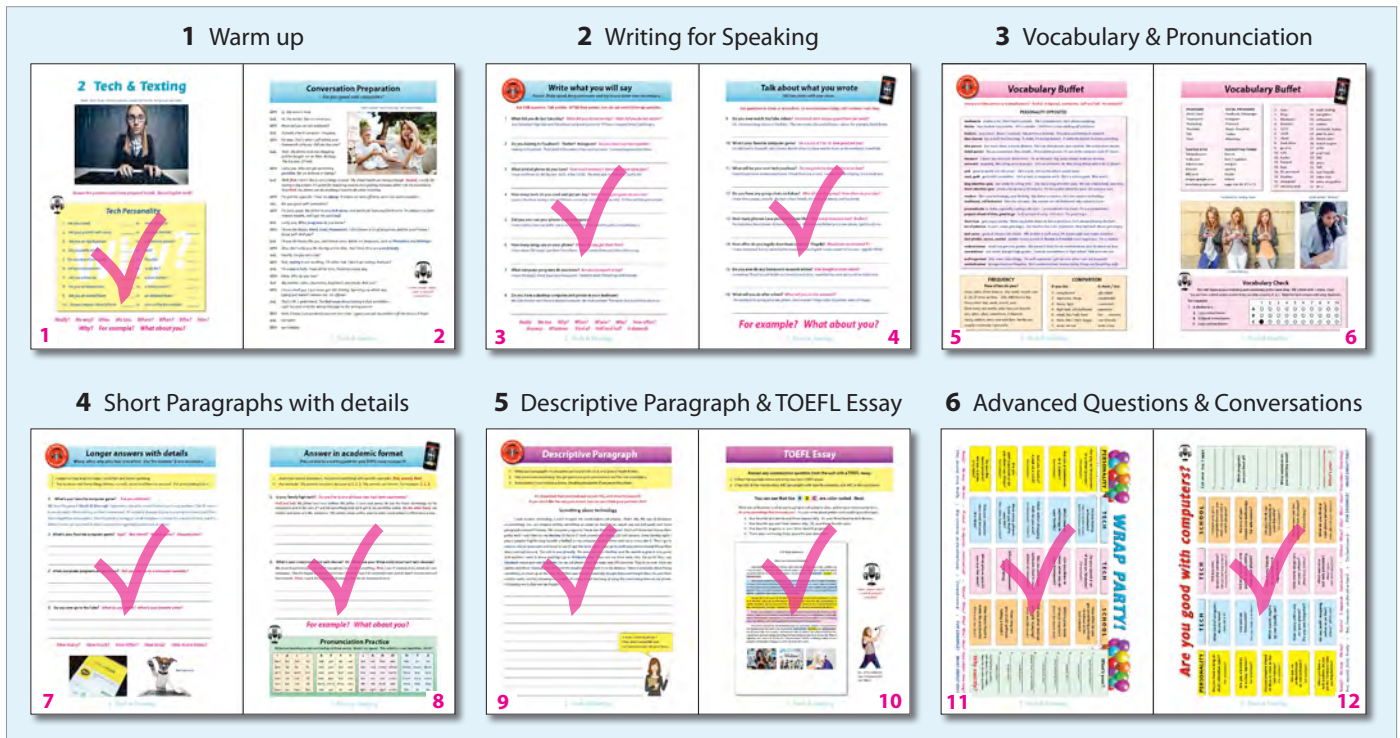
2 Homework

Homework is important. It's what makes them speak. Therefore, it's worth 40%. They do it or they fail.

Homework is simple: they write what they will say. There's no read and guess. Every student knows the answer to every question, because every question is about them.



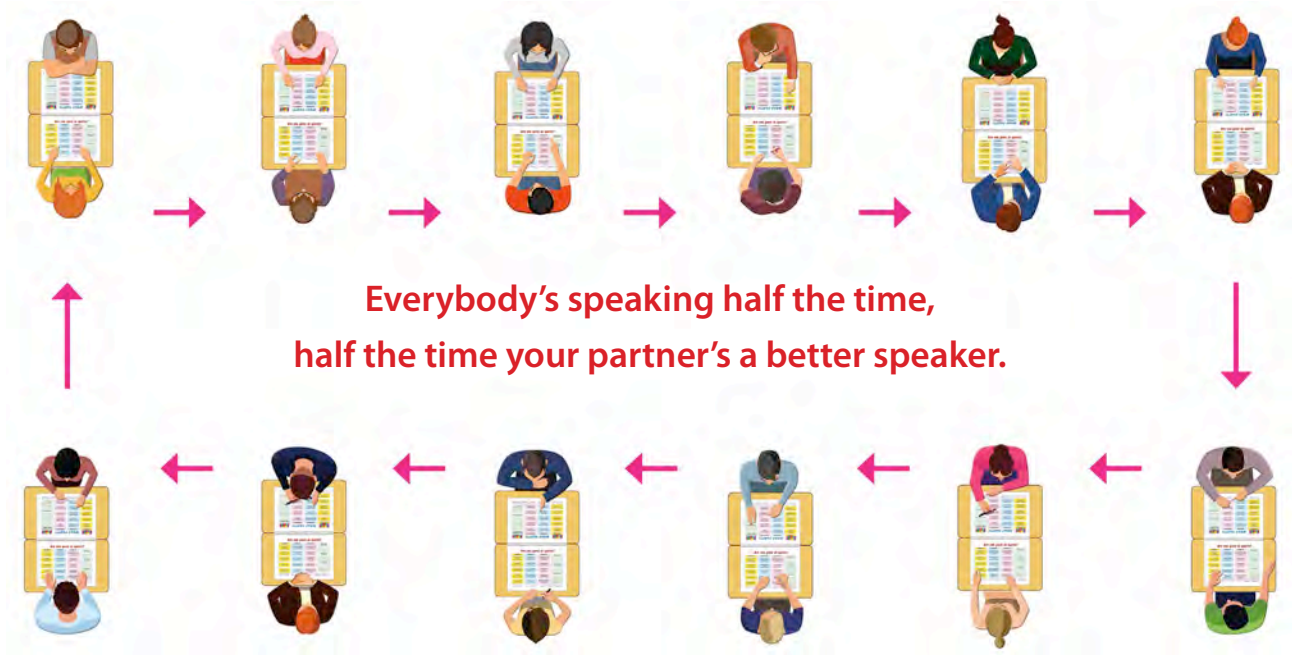
Each unit has 12 pages, 9 of them require student input. Each page is worth 1 homework point. Grading homework is quick and easy: Count how many pages they fill in. Quantity, not quality.



There's no more pulling teeth to get them to talk. They wrote it, they want to use it. 30 minutes of homework generates 2 hours of conversations. Just add partners.

3 The Class: Speed Dating

A new topic every 2 weeks, a new partner every seven minutes



Many partners make you smoother, better partners make you better. *Simple.*

1. Meet, greet, introduce yourself, and chat. After 7 minutes, the teacher yells, **SWITCH!**
2. Students seated on the inside say, **Bye, Gotta go, Nice meeting you, See you later**, and move on.
3. Next class you'll do it again, better, smoother, with new partners.



How do you get better at something? You do it more than once.

4 Conversation Test

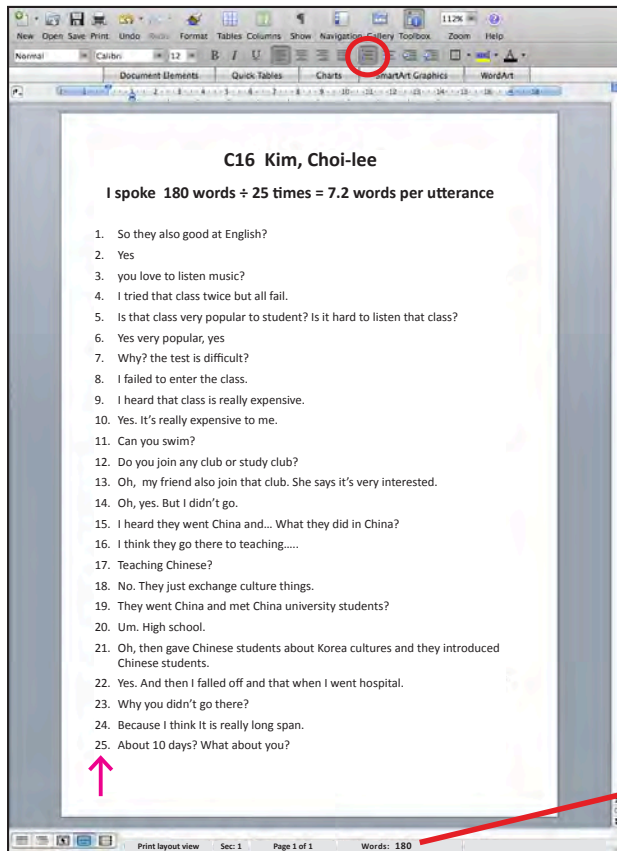
MS Word can measure speaking ability.
It's as easy as 1, 2, 3.



1

1. Three students of similar ability have a 17-minute conversation.
2. Students record with their phones.
3. Students transcribe just what they said on MS Word (about 2 hours).
4. MS Word gives the total words spoken, and how many times they spoke.
5. Simple division gives their average words-per-utterance.

2 Students go home or to the computer lab and type just what they said. It takes 2 hours or less. *Easy.* They email or upload it, and go meet their friends.



3

Total Words is their speaking ability

	Total words
1	695
2	668
3	643
4	582
5	564
6	544
7	521
8	509
9	453
10	421
11	421
12	398
13	367
14	345
15	321
16	288
17	267
18	245
19	180
20	167
21	149

← After 10 years of English education, and two hours after the test, the speaking ability of everyone in class is known.

← Total words on the first test determines partners for the second test. This ensures fair and accurate testing.

← For example, these three students will be partners on the second test.

They are beginning speakers, speaking as fast as they can.

It's a communicative test, and MS Word measures precisely how much they communicated.

The second test gives their improvement

Their second test partners are determined by their total words spoken on the first test. This makes the test fair and accurate.



C24 Park, Lee kim

2nd conversation test

	How many times I spoke	Average words per utterance	Total words I spoke
Midterm test	25	8.4	210
Final test	22	15.4	285
	Improvement	84%	36%

Thus, my speaking improved 60% this semester.

VOCABULARY

MOVIES	FOOD & FITNESS	SUMMER BREAK
Love at first sight	Pig out	Weekend warrior
Crush on someone	Appetizer	Couch potato
Soul mate	Freebie	
Steady girlfriend		
Outdoor person		

The top 5 mistakes and how to fix them.

- No, I didn't heard about that.**
No, I didn't hear about that.
- I have never been gone to there.**
I've never been there.
- I am interesting in that.**
I am interested in that major.
- What is your best favorite movie?**
What is your favorite movie?
- Will you go to a festival or them park on this winter vacation?**
Will you go to any festivals or theme park this winter vacation?

- Usually I'm weekend warriors, but last weekend I stayed at home because this week is midterm exam, so I was staying at home and studying for midterm exam. What did you do last weekend?
- No, I didn't heard about that.
- Last weekend I was couch potato. What about you?
- I don't like gory films. I like superhero movies, like the Avengers and Ironman.

Each semester every student has about 100 conversations with about 25 different partners. Of course they improve. *But, exactly how much?*

There. That's how much.

Their utterances are 84% longer.
Longer speaking is smoother speaking.

They spoke 36% more. That means shorter pauses and fewer pauses.

This is a **direct measure** of speaking ability, and improvement.

What about mistakes?

They find and fix their own mistakes. This is a new world, and finding mistakes is no longer part of the teacher's job.

Get a hobby.

Measure how much students do, not how much they do wrong.

That's it. It's a communicative test and MS Word gives you **precisely** how much they communicated. And, how much **more** they communicated on the second test. *What about mistakes?* It's not a mistake test, it's a conversation test. You let your students speak. They improved, and you can prove their improvement.

3 Partners are Best, 3 Tests are Best

Week 4



THE FIRST TEST is to get them speaking.

It's a low-stress, low-stakes, practice test.

Everybody gets an A+, and teachers get students' ability before they start improving too much.

The only instructions they need is to watch a 3-minute example test video. Simple.

Week 8



THE SECOND TEST is to get them speaking longer and academically.

At least once during the test they use *first*, *second*, *third* with their specific examples.

This forces students to prepare and results in longer, smoother speaking.

Week 14



THE THIRD TEST, they do it again. Better.

Everybody knows exactly what to do.

On the second and third test, I often have the best speakers from three different classes grouped together, and likewise the least proficient speakers.

This ensures more fair and accurate tests.

3 Partners are perfect

1. With pairs, each student has more speaking time, but a deadbeat adversely affects their partner's performance.
2. A four person test is just too many and unnecessary. I have NEVER tested four.
3. Three is perfect. Everyone has sufficient speaking time, and there's more real-world interaction.

3 Tests are perfect

1. You know their ability before they start improving too much.
 2. Early on, it shows students that homework is preparation for class, and each class is preparation for this specific test.
 3. The average of 3 tests is more accurate, and the result of 3 tests is more improvement.
- More tests = more accuracy & more improvement

5 Semester Results

You know their ability

Average of 3 tests	
Total words spoken	Words per minute
682	40
649	38
621	37
582	34
569	33
552	32
549	32
523	31
481	28
451	27
427	25
423	25
360	21
341	20
314	18
291	17
254	15
225	13
196	12
184	11
172	10

You have wide-spread grades

Homework	Conversation Tests	Attendance	Final grade
40%	40%	20%	100%
39	39	20	98 A+
38	38	20	96 A+
39	36	20	95 A+
37	35	20	92 A
38	33	20	91 A
36	33	20	89 B+
36	32	20	88 B+
33	32	20	85 B+
34	29	20	83 B
33	29	20	82 B
32	28	18	78 C+
29	29	20	78 C+
35	22	20	77 C+
28	27	20	75 C
28	27	20	75 C
27	27	18	72 C
25	29	18	72 C
24	24	17	65 D
22	17	16	55 F
12	17	16	45 F
10	15	10	35 F

They improve, and you can prove it

	Average words per utterance	Total words I spoke
4 week test	8.6	436
8 week test	13.4	482
14 week test	17.2	523
Improvement	100%	20%

Therefore, my speaking improved 60% this semester.

When Speaking Ability improves, so do Standardized Test Scores

Questions?

THE CLASS

1 ***What if students are low-level speakers? Can they handle this?***

Yes. Absolutely. They write what they will say, *My father is a teacher* and then say it in class. Speaking ability is not improved by listening to a teacher talk about the English language.

2 ***What if they don't do the homework?***

They make an **F**. This is a required course. Homework takes 30 minutes, and they are writing about themselves. *Simple*. They do homework in other classes. *What's the problem?*

3 ***What about instructions?***

Pre-class instructions and post-class feedback are sent by email or uploaded on the website. If students can read and hear it at home, teachers shouldn't say it in class.

4 ***What does the teacher do in class?***

As little as possible. If the teacher is talking, students are not. Students improve when *students* are talking. This is a new world with new technology. Input at home, output in class. *Simple*.

5 ***Are big classes really better?***

Absolutely. More partners = more variety = more repetition = more improvement. Big classes have more partners of similar ability. Big classes have more energy.

THE TEST

1 ***Is transcribing difficult?***

No. Low-level speakers speak at a low level. They're transcribing what THEY said. *I'm born in Seoul*. They're not transcribing the **BBC News**.

2 ***How long does it take to transcribe?***

It takes everybody about two hours. There is a YIN and YANG. The better speakers speak more and have more transcribing ability. The lesser speakers speak less, and have less to transcribe.

3 ***What if students aren't good at MS Word?***

They soon will be. MS Word is an academic, and real-world skill. They will not get a job without it. If they have to learn it in my class, they will. Besides, they're given a template, they just type. *Simple*.

4 ***What about feedback and error correction?***

Students hear and read their own mistakes when they transcribe, and then fix their top 5 mistakes. If they can tie their own shoes, they can find their own mistakes: *When I was a middle school*.

5 ***Does speaking really improve 50%?***

Actually, it's usually more, about 70%. When a student goes from *My hometown is Busan*, (4 words) to *My hometown is Busan. I lived there until I was eight*. (11 words), that's a 175% increase.

We use partners, not grammar



Say, this book has a wire spine. Why? It's a conversation book.

It's all about you

Write what you will say

Talk about what you wrote



Transcribe what you said

Correct what you said



Say, it looks like students do all the work.
EXACTLY. That's why they improve so much.