**Listening and Note-taking unit 1**

**Introduction: Lecture styles and note-taking techniques**

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**Aims of this unit**
To reflect on your experience of lectures
To compare different note-taking techniques
To introduce three Macrostrategies for listening

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**Lecture styles**

There are different types of lecture. In a university setting, a lecture is normally one of a series given by the same speaker as part of an academic degree course. The lecturer usually talks for about an hour, but longer in some cultures.

The purpose of a lecture may be the presentation and understanding of facts and ideas, rather than an exchange between lecturer and students. (At Edinburgh, a class where the emphasis is on interaction and discussion of ideas is usually called a *seminar* or *tutorial*).

**Your experience of lectures**

Lecturing styles vary from place to place, and even from person to person in the same place. In Britain there are three main types:

- reading style
- conversational style
- presentation style

In the *reading* style, the lecturer either reads aloud from a script or speaks as if they were reading it.

In the *conversational* – or *interactive* – style, the lecturer speaks from brief notes, using relatively informal language, and probably encourages the students to contribute by asking questions or responding to points in the lecture.

The *presentation style* involves the lecturer using some form of projection – especially PowerPoint or the Net – and may also have issued the students with handouts.


**Reflection Points 1-2**

1.  In your country, do you find all three of those lecture styles?

2.  Do you think one style is easier to understand than the others?


To see what lectures are like at other British universities, click on this link:
http://www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk/listening_to_lectures.html

After you have worked through Activity 1 on the *Prepare for Success* page, check your answers against the Feedback given there.


**Note-taking in lectures**

As you know, in Britain **students are expected to make notes** on lectures, even if the lecturer gives out a handout. Normally a handout provides some but not all of the information the students need to have understood.

For many of us, what makes lecture listening difficult - and tiring - is having to listen and write notes at the same time, as shown below:

*The listener has to decide…*

_____

Step 1          what is being **said**

Step 2          what it **means** (how it relates to what has been said)

Step 3          whether it is **important** and whether to note it down

Step 4          how to write it **in note form**

_____

In that process, the most important part is **Step 3** – evaluating the importance of information. Notice that it depends on your <u>knowledge of the subject</u>, rather than your knowledge of English.

**Note-taking techniques**

Note-taking is a personal thing and there is no single best system. But there are three basic rules that can help to make your note-taking quicker and more efficient:

**Rule 1: Be selective** -  decide what's important

**Rule 2: Be brief** -  use abbreviations and symbols

**Rule 3: Be clear** - show the relationship between the speaker's points

## Rule 1:  Be selective

Imagine that a Year 1 undergraduate and a postgraduate studying the same academic subject have attended the same lecture. In what ways do you think their notes would differ?

Think about that question and then compare you answer with ours by clicking <mark>here</mark>.

## Rule 2:  Be brief

What do these conventional **Latin abbreviations** mean?

> *e.g.*

> *N.B.*

> *i.e.*

> *etc.*

> *cf.*

What do the **initials** below stand for? Which others are common in your academic subject?

> ILO                            WHO

> OPEC                        ABC

> UNESCO

As well as using 'official' abbreviations, you can of course invent your own. Which words  <u>could</u> you shorten to the abbreviations below?

imp                                         bt

int'l                                       ess'l

fut                                         est

prob                                        S

Check your answers by clicking <mark>here</mark>


**Symbols**

Symbols are another very effective tool in note-taking, enabling us to express complex ideas in a time-efficient way. Decide on a symbol for the meanings below, and vice versa.

| *symbol* | *meaning* |
|---|---|
| = | 'is the same as' |
|  | in addition, what is more |
|  | 'causes' or 'leads to' or 'results in' |
| ?? | something you… |
| > |  |
|  | falls; goes down; decreases |


Check your answers by clicking <mark>here</mark>

**Rule 3:  Be clear**

The relationships between the ideas in a lecture are important, and notes need to reflect them. There are two common ways of representing these relationships: traditional **linear** notes and the alternative **mind map**.

Mind maps are also known as *spider notes* or *web notes*. To see an example, click **here**

**Practice in note-taking**

You are now going to watch several students talking about their experiences at the University of Edinburgh. You will need to listen carefully and decide what they think are the key points about starting a university course at Edinburgh.

Play the whole video once <u>without stopping</u>. It takes about 6 minutes.

The video is called Coming to Edinburgh?

FIRST VIEWING

Watch and **make notes** on the main points.

SECOND VIEWING

Watch the students again and **add to** or **correct** your notes.

**Evaluating your notes**

On the next page you will find some sample notes made by a British listener, who also watched the *Coming to Edinburgh?* video twice.

First, compare the <u>form</u> of your notes with the British listener's.

Look for differences between the ways in which you may have used
- abbreviations
- symbols
- spatial layout (e.g. linear or web)
- emphasis  (e.g. underlining, capital letters)

Next, compare the <u>content</u> of your notes. Are there points where you and the British listener **disagree** as to what was said? Are there any points that **you left out**, but the British listener included, which you think are important?

## Macrostrategies for listening

In this unit, we have looked at note-taking techniques at the **micro**-level which can help make note-making quicker. But effective listening to lectures in English also requires **broad** general strategies, called *Macrostrategies*, before, during and after listening.

### Predicting
Thinking about the possible content of the lecture before you listen

### Monitoring
Noticing your problems as you listen and identifying areas of uncertainty

### Responding
Giving your own opinion on the ideas presented by the lecturer

In Units 2-4 we focus on these Macrostrategies and how they can help you get the most out of lecture listening.

## Sample: A British listener's notes

Clare
Diff from school: so much resp for own learning
Large classes, so nobody notices if you miss

Amy
Get to know the lib system (a bit daunting); some Ss scared of it
Ask Ss and staff for help

Alyssa (N. American)
UK = 'hands off' system = nobody checks up on you
Imp to get help early

Clare
Diff forms of support:
Tutorials (Ts = lecturers or PGs ): focus on readings
For more serious problems, ask DoS

Alyssa
Recommends Advice Place run by Student Union (= EUSA). Offices in Potterow and at KB

Clare
Initial shock: managing money in her bank account

Ben
Be sensible. Take care over spending. Easy to get part-time job.

Amy
If you want p-t job, do it from beginning (of your studies) because more free time then.

Clare
Daunting: how to make friends, how many socs to join

Ben
Freshers' Week – acad fairs – fun events

Clare
Fs' Week not representative: new people, new faces. Coffee crawls. Interesting tours

Ben
Societies Fair (at the Pleasance) – BRILLIANT
Join lots of socs

Clare
Also soc life within your subject
Follow own hobbies/ints

Amy
Main advice: get involved, in diff ways:
- as class rep
- through (Student) Council – make your mark on UoE
- Socs – to meet new people & learn new skills

## Study Notes

Here are some answers for you to compare yours with.

## #Rule 1: Be selective

The quantity of notes depends partly on individual preference and on the ability to write (re-code) fast, but mainly on knowledge of the topic. So one might expect the **postgraduate** to make **fewer** notes, assuming they knew more about the topic and therefore had less need to make full notes.

To return to the page you were on, click here

## #Rule 2: Be brief

> *exempli gratia* = for example;
> *Nota Bene* = (note well) it's important to bear in mind;
> *id est* = that is;
> *et cetera* = (and the rest) and so on;
> *confere* = compare this with;
> *vice versa* = the other way round.

International Labour Office
World Health Organisation
Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
Australian Broadcasting Corporation
United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Personally, I use those abbreviations to mean *important, but, international, essential, future, estimated, problem* or *probable*, and *student*.

## Sample answers to Symbols

| symbol | meaning |
|:---:|:---:|
| = | 'is the same as' |
| + | 'in addition' |
| → | 'causes' or 'leads to' or 'results in' |
| ?? | 'not clear to me' or 'is that true?' |
| > | 'is greater than' |
| ! | 'important point' |
| ↑ | 'grows', 'rises'; or 'raises' |
| ← | 'is caused by', 'results from' |
| ≡ | 'varies with' or 'changes according to' |

### #Rule 3: Be clear

Personally, I take linear notes when I'm listening or reading, but I use mind maps when I'm **planning** something to write or **preparing** to give a talk.

But the use of mind maps seems to be spreading. I generally find that at least one student per class (of 15 students, in my case) uses them when they are listening to lectures.

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<mark>The best way to use the material in this unit is to find **another student** who is also interested in watching the video lecture and making notes. You could then watch the lecture – together or separately - and then **compare your notes** with theirs after the second viewing.</mark>

## **Listening and Note-taking** unit 2

## *How to solve traffic jams*
## **(Macrostrategy: Predicting)**

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| **Aims** |
|:---:|
| To introduce and practise Predicting |
| To practise note-taking |
| To engage in critical thinking |

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## **Macrostrategy 1: Predicting**

We make predictions all the time. For example, we might predict how long it will take to write an email, or how a friend is going to react to some news we have to give them, or what will be the morning's news headlines.

When listening to a foreign language we can use two main types of information to help predict what is going to be said next: **background** knowledge and knowledge of **context**.

### **Background**
- general knowledge of the world

- knowledge of the foreign culture

- specific subject knowledge

### **Context**
- the situation (**who** is speaking, **where** and **when**)

- the 'co-text' – what has been said so far

Guessing ahead in this way is a crucial part of effective listening to lectures. In particular, you can use your **subject knowledge** to help you predict what the lecturer is likely to say.

In this unit you will be using what you know to help predict what might be included in a lecture on urban problems.

**Pre-listening reflection**

Think about your answers to the six Background and Content questions below. (Try and do your thinking in English!)

**Background**

1.  Is road congestion a common problem in your home country?

2.  From what you have seen so far, do you think Edinburgh's traffic problems are worse than those of the city you come from?

3.  Why do people prefer to use their own cars than to travel on public transport?

**Predicting from content**

1.  What are the negative effects of traffic congestion?

2.  The title of the lecture in this unit is *How to Solve Traffic Jams*. From the use of the word *solve*, do you expect to hear a story of (A) <u>success</u>, (B) <u>partial success</u>, or (C) <u>failure</u>?

3.  Do you expect a lecture about specific cases or general situations?

## Predicting from language

Here are six key expressions selected from the lecture:

   *capacity*              *insight       into…*              *bottleneck*


   *nudge*              *referendum*          *congestion charge*


Are you confident you know their meanings? (If you are working with another student, ask them).

If not, check them in a dictionary such as the Macmillan Online:

http://www.macmillandictionary.com/

Then think about what you **predict** the lecturer is going to say about each of the expressions, in the context of urban traffic problems.


**The lecturer: Dr Jonas Eliasson**

Dr Eliasson is Director of the Centre for Transport Studies at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Sweden. He has researched transport topics such as how small charges on crowded bridges affect traffic, what makes a person choose to cycle to work, and how far people opt to live from public transportation. He helped design, plan and evaluate Stockholm's congestion tax, which was piloted in 2006 and made permanent in 2007. He is frequently brought in as a consultant by other cities that are considering similar charges for rush-hour use of crowded roads.

Dr Eliasson has modelled and appraised several major infrastructure investments in Sweden, and chairs the committee for transport modeling of the country's National Transport Investment Plan.

**FIRST LISTENING**

**Listening and note-taking**

Watch the lecture straight through, without stopping.

Make notes - but don't worry if you don't have time to note down all the information you need to. You will get another chance.

As you listen, focus on the **Predicting** macrostrategy:

- Keep in mind **the six questions** you reflected on

- Use what **you know** and what Dr Eliasson **has said** to guess at what he will say next

- Use **his Russian story** (about the planner who rang a planner in London) to predict how the story is going to link to his main point

To watch the video, click **here**

**SECOND LISTENING**

**Detailed note-taking**

As you may have noticed, the lecture webpage provides a **transcript** in English and may also offer a **translation** into your language. You might want to use one of them as you play the lecture again, or you could wait until the end before checking your notes against the transcript.

(To think about: Is it better to use the transcript or the translation, if you want to improve your English listening skills?)

Now play the lecture a second time, again without stopping.

As you listen and/or read, study your notes carefully and add new notes at points where during the first listening

- you didn't catch what Dr Eliasson said

- you didn't have time to note all the details

- you misunderstood what she said

## Comparing notes: Content

Compare your notes with the transcript on the lecture webpage (or if possible with the notes of another student).

Have you identified and noted the main points?

If there were points (or words) that you could not catch as you listened, study the transcript (or see whether the other student can help).

## Comparing notes: Form

If you have been working with another student, compare the <u>form</u> of your notes with theirs. Look for differences between the ways you have expressed the same information.

Have you used any of the following in your notes:
- abbreviations
- symbols
- emphasis  (e.g. underlining, capital letters)

**Reflection (or discussion with another student)**

1    How did you do with your predictions? On page In session 1 you and
     another student predicted the points you thought might be mentioned in
     the lecture. Did Jonas Eliasson include any of them?  (For example, was his
     lecture about <u>success</u>, <u>partial success</u> or <u>failure</u>?)

2    Have congestion charges been tried in (any part of) your own country?

3    Edinburgh City Council held a referendum some years ago on a plan to
     bring in a congestion charge for the city centre. Would you have voted for
     or against?

**Critical thinking**

What was the connection between the Russian story and the Stockholm case
study?

Dr Eliasson's central point is the importance of **nudging** people into changing their
behavior. What exactly do you think he meant?

Do you think 'nudging' would be effective in your home country? What are the
alternatives to nudging in public policy?

Here is what one viewer, Jen Oh, commented on the TED website:

Dec 17 2012:

As an urban transport specialist, I am of the view that Jonas Eliasson over-

simplified how the congestion problems might be addressed and understated

the role (and importance) of planning. It is true that Stockholm is one of the

more successful examples of similar schemes, but its success was possible

because of the "alternative" options that had been made available to the

citizens. People could choose to use public transport that is reasonably fast, reliable and safe, or adjust their departure time flexibly as the system (employers or other services that they need to travel to) allowed them to do so. And good planning is essential to provide those good alternatives and fundamentals of urban development that determine the patterns and flexibility of trips. In many developing and emerging cities, this is not the case.

Also the notion that you can "nudge" people with a relatively small incentive, such as 1 or 2 euros, also depends on how willing the users are to pay. How much extra cost would it take for a commuter to give up the privacy, independence and comfort of driving their own car and instead use public transport? In many other places where public transport is not well developed, it would take a lot more than a "nudge" to alter behaviors.

Do you think any issues about congestion are left **unanswered** after the lecture? If so – and if you can - discuss them with another student.

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**Listening and Note-taking** unit 3

## *The Future of Lying*
## (Macrostrategy: Monitoring)

| **Aims** |
| :---: |
| To practise Macrostrategy 2 – Monitoring |
| To interpret cultural references in a lecture |
| To focus on helpful signalling in a lecture |

**Monitoring**

Monitoring means 'checking' or 'observing' that you have understood someone is saying to you. It is an important part of effective listening, especially in a foreign language.

When reading, we can always go back and read something again if we are finding it hard to understand. Listening is more difficult in this respect. In a conversation we may be able to ask the speaker to repeat or explain, but that is not so easy in a lecture.

In a university lecture, you can expect the lecturer to keep more or less to the same subject. But there may be points where they 'change direction' – for example, presenting contrasting opinions on the subject, or giving examples that contradict each other.

So in the process of lecture listening, Monitoring involves asking yourself:
- *Have I heard that correctly?*
- *Have I understood what the speaker meant?*
- *Have I understood why the speaker said it?*
- *Has the speaker changed topic?*
- *Where is this leading to?*

Sometimes what makes it difficult to understand parts of a lecture is not the language the lecturer has used, but the **cultural knowledge** they assume the students have.

That is particularly true when a speaker makes a **joke**, or mentions a **recent local event**, and expects the students to make the appropriate connections. We have some examples of that in this lecture, which is why it is good listening material for practising Monitoring.

**Pre-listening reflection (or discussion)**

**Content**

The lecture is about lying – mainly the small lies (<u>white lies</u>) that we tell every day. Or do we?

1.  Define the word <u>lie</u>. What are lies for?

2.  Have you told a lie in the last 24 hours?

3.  Is it a bad thing to be a **good liar**?

**Language**

The lecturer mentions three types of lying that are common in today's electronic communication:

*The Butler*

*The Sock Puppet*

*The Chinese Water Army*

What are the <u>literal</u> meanings of those words/expressions. (You could check them on Wikipedia) That will help you understand why the lecturer uses them with particular meanings to in his talk.

**The lecturer**

Dr Jeff Hancock, from Canada, is an Associate Professor of Cognitive Science and Communications at Cornell University, USA. His academic research focuses on how people use deception and lies when communicating digitally - sending texts, composing emails, writing online profiles, and so on.

Dr Hancock believes that, although the impersonality of online interaction can encourage mild fibbing (those white lies), the fact that it leaves a permanent record of verifiable information keeps us honest.

**Monitoring your understanding of the lecture**

Professor Hancock has a very informal style. He smiles a lot, uses colloquial language and, as you will hear, makes the audience laugh throughout his talk. You will probably understand **some** of his jokes, but not others. Don't worry! We will be taking that into account in the Listening tasks.

**FIRST VIEWING**

**Monitoring**

For this first viewing, <u>just watch and listen</u>. **Don't make any notes. Don't read the transcript.** Play the video without stopping – roughly 18 minutes.

Each time you hear the audience laugh, <u>write down a percentage </u>to indicate **how sure you are that you have understood** why they are laughing. For example, if you had absolutely no idea what Professor Hancock has said, you would put 0%. If you are confident you have understood perfectly, you would put 100%. If you knew he was making a joke about Canada, but not more than that, you might put 30%.

In most cases, you can expect your understanding to be somewhere in the middle, between 0% and 100%.

To watch the video, click **here**

**SECOND VIEWING**

**Note-taking**

This time, watch the whole video and <u>make notes</u> on what you think are the main points. **Don't read the transcript yet**.

## Comparing notes

Now compare your notes with the transcript on the lecture webpage (or, if possible, with the notes of another student).

## Content

- Do you agree how many **main points** there were in the lecture?
- If you missed other points, has your partner made notes on them?
- If there were points (or words) that you could not understand, check in a dictionary or ask someone else to help.

## Form

(For this you need another student). Look for differences between the ways in which you have used
- abbreviations
- symbols
- layout (e.g. linear notes or spider's web)
- emphasis  (e.g. underlining, capital letters)

**Monitoring**

Compare the 'confidence' scores you gave yourself during your first listening. Did they vary much from point to point during the lecture? (Are they similar to the other student's?

**Focusing attention in a lecture: Signalling**

In your lectures at Edinburgh, you will probably find that some lecturers are more difficult to follow than others.

One way to help yourself is to listen out for words signalling that the lecturer is summarizing or reformulating what they have said so far, or that the next point is important.

Here is example from Jeff Hancock's  lecture:

> **But I think there's actually something much more interesting and fundamental going on here. The next big thing for me, the next big idea**, we can find by going way back in history to the origins of language. Most linguists agree that we started speaking somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 years ago. That's a long time ago. A lot of humans have lived since then. We've been talking, I guess, about fires and caves and sabre-toothed tigers. I don't know what they talked about, but they were doing a lot of talking, and like I said, there's a lot of humans evolving speaking, about 100 billion people in fact. What's important though is that writing only emerged about 5,000 years ago. So what that means is that all the people before there was any writing, every word that they ever said, every utterance disappeared. No trace. Evanescent. Gone. So we've been evolving to talk in a way in which there is no record. In fact, even the next big change to writing was only 500 years ago now, with the printing press, which is very recent in our past, and literacy rates remained incredibly low right up until World War II, so even the people of the last two millennia, most of the words they ever said -- poof! -- disappeared.

Underline what you think is Jeff Hancock's **main point** in that extract. When you have decided on your answer, have a look at mine on the next page.


**Further discussion**

I'm sure there will be issues arising from the lecture that you would like to discuss. If so, talk about them with the other student – or with someone else.

## My answer

> **But I think there's actually something much more interesting and fundamental going on here. The next big thing for me, the next big idea**, we can find by going way back in history to the origins of language. Most linguists agree that we started speaking somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 years ago. That's a long time ago. A lot of humans have lived since then. We've been talking, I guess, about fires and caves and sabre-toothed tigers. I don't know what they talked about, but they were doing a lot of talking, and like I said, there's a lot of humans evolving speaking, about 100 billion people in fact. What's important though is that writing only emerged about 5,000 years ago. So what that means is that <span style="color:red">all the people before there was any writing, every word that they ever said, every utterance disappeared. No trace. Evanescent. Gone.</span> So we've been evolving to talk in a way in which there is no record. In fact, even the next big change to writing was only 500 years ago now, with the printing press, which is very recent in our past, and literacy rates remained incredibly low right up until World War II, so even the people of the last two millennia, most of the words they ever said -- poof! -- disappeared.

Dr Hancock signals that a main point is coming by saying "What's important though is…" and begins the next sentence with "So what that means…"

So I think the part I've shown in red is the main point in his mind.

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<mark>As before, the best way to use this unit is to find **another student** who is also interested in watching the video lecture and making notes. You can then watch the lecture – together or separately - and then **compare your notes** with theirs after the second viewing.</mark>

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**Listening and Note-taking** unit 4

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## *Keys to language learning*
**(Macrostrategy: Responding)**

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| **Aims** |
|---|
| To present and use Macrostrategy 3 – Responding |
| To exploit rhetorical questions |
| To round off the Listening and Note-taking course |

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**Macrostrategy: Responding**

Being an effective lecture listener involves not simply <u>receiving</u> what the lecturer says but also <u>responding</u> to it. *Responding* here means relating the lecture content to your knowledge and personal experience, and forming your own opinions. Responding involves asking yourself questions such as these:

- Do I accept that what the lecturer says is true and relevant?

- Can I think of other examples that support – or don't support - what is being said?

- Do I think the lecturer's opinions are reasonable?

The topic of this unit provides a good opportunity for this sort of responsive listening. The lecturer is a well-known researcher into the ways in which very young children learn their own language and how they have the potential to learn others.

You will able to use your own experience of learning English to respond to what you hear her say in her talk.

**Introduction to the topic: How babies learn language(s)**

**Pre-listening reflection (or discussion): Content**

1. What do you remember of your very first lesson in English?
2. Do you remember learning your mother tongue? What are your strongest memories of mother tongue lessons at primary school?
3. What do you believe is the best age for learning a foreign language? Why do you think that?

If you can, discuss those questions with another student. If not, think about what your answers would be.

**The lecturer**

Professor Patricia Kuhl is Co-Director of the University of Washington Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences, and Professor of Speech and Hearing Sciences. She is internationally recognized for her research on early language and brain development, and studies that show how young children learn. Her work has played a major role in demonstrating how early exposure to language alters the brain. It has implications for critical periods in development, for bilingual education, and for research on computer understanding of speech.

FIRST VIEWING

**Listening and note-taking**

Professor Kuhl's talk lasts about 11 minutes.

On this first hearing, try to note down the **main points**. You will get a second chance to pick up additional information later.

As you are listening, think about your personal response to her points, by asking yourself these questions:

- Do you think that what Professor Kuhl says about identifying language sounds is true?

- Can you think of other examples that support – or don't support - what she says?

As usual, make notes on a blank sheet of paper.

To watch the lecture, click <u>here</u>

SECOND VIEWING

**Detailed note-taking**

Did you notice that Patricia Kuhl used a <u>series of questions</u> in her talk? They provide a clear structure to the topics she wanted to discuss. When a speaker asks a question in this way and then goes on to give the answer herself, it is called a *rhetorical question*.

As you watch for a second time, listen out for the rhetorical questions, which should help you identify the topic sections.

Add more details to the notes you took on first listening.

**Comparing notes**

If you can, work with another student and compare the <u>content </u>of your notes:
- Have you included the same information?
- If you missed certain points, has your partner got notes on them?

If there were points (or words, or sections) that neither of you could understand, see whether the lecture transcript helps you clear up your doubts.

Now compare the <u>form</u> of your notes. Look for differences between the ways in which you and the other student have used
- abbreviations
- symbols
- layout
- emphasis

**Responding**

- Do you know any strategies that adults can use when learning another language, to compensate for the effect of age on our ability to learn other languages?

- Patricia Kuhl ended by saying "we may be able to help **keep our own minds open to learning for our entire lives**". Do you agree?

**Reflecting on your listening**

- Of the three lectures you have now heard – on traffic congestion, lying and language development - which do you think was the clearest? What made it so, for you?
- Which aspects of listening do you need to practise further, to make your listening and note-taking more effective.

**Moving forward**

We have come to the end of this short course, so we are going to close by considering possible ways of continuing to improve your English listening skills.

Some years ago, I asked international students at Edinburgh to tell us about any techniques they had devised or adapted to improve their listening. Here is what five of them said:

**Student 1**
*I noticed that I improved much more when I got a TV, but I didn't take any conscious steps to practise listening.*

**Student 2**
*Listening to a tape and writing down exactly what you hear is very helpful. To listen very specifically and in detail means you have to pay attention to sounds which you have some problems with yourself. Seeing what the gaps are in your dictation tells you what your listening problems are.*

**Student 3**
*I listen to the news on television or radio and then try to discuss the topics with friends. This is very useful for me to know whether the news I have heard is correct and does not give different perspectives than my understanding.*

**Student 4**
*I think it's good practice to listen to other foreign speakers talking about your field. You have to get used to their accents, in the same way as you have get used to British people's different accents. In fact, there are bigger differences between British accents than between foreigners, I think. So it's all good practice.*

**Student 5**
*I have been experimenting with 'hearing' (not listening to) novels and stories on cassette, using a Walkman, just to force my mind to think in English when I am not speaking, reading or writing.*

Which of those five pieces of advice do you think is the <u>least useful</u>? Why?

### *Effective English Learning*

For practical advice on techniques and resources on informal improvement of your English, you are welcome to visit our *Effective English Learning* materials at

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/taught/learning-resources/english

There we offer advice on all the other main areas of English as a second language - reading, speaking, writing, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation – as well as more ideas on listening.

## Some listening websites

Resources you can access on Andy Gillett's website at
http://www.uefap.com/links/skills.htm

- Voices from the Archives (BBC Audio Archives)

- BBC Radio 4 (Old and new radio programmes from BBC Radio 4)

- CNN.com Video (Top news and stories from CNN)

- Euronews (News in six European languages, including English)

- freevideolectures.com (Links to lectures on a range of subjects).

- Great Speeches (Famous speeches from the History Channel)

- Listening Lab (Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab)

- Real English (Interactive Video Online)

- Reith Lectures (A selection from the historic BBC series)

- Videojug (Everything you want to learn explained on video)

- World Service (Watch and listen from BBC World Service)

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