**Simulate a talk show with “actors promoting a play or movie”**

As a teacher, it’s sometimes difficult to  investigate students’ progress in a productive (holistic) way. Simulations can help by providing a culturally familiar scaffolding that can guide a fluency experience. They’re also a lot of fun!

While the talk show simulation described below can be done outside the context of a staged production or Readers Theater version of a play, it can be especially interesting to include as part of the production process.

Specifically, the improvised talk show  energizes students in the days leading up to a public performance. Also, because the “actors” have been working on the characters and themes, they have “stored content” that they can use in a purposeful way. Through the task of explaining the plot or relationships among characters, they may gain new insights into the play.

In either case, the talk show format affords you, the teacher, a snapshot of potential transfer of skills from focused pronunciation or script work to a more spontaneous public performance.

Activity

You can do all the steps or cut it down to suit your purpose. It can work in one class period or over two days.

1. Introduce the format of talk shows, and possibly watch a clip of one to notice details about how it is structured. Elicit the guest actors’ purpose, which is to promote a movie. Talk show guests should be enthusiastic about the project, not say little, but show enthusiasm and give details.
2. Tell student actors that their “play” has been made into a movie. They will go on a talk show as a group to promote the movie.
3. Elicit/suggest questions that filmmakers get asked in an interview as examples.
* What is the show about?
* How did you prepare?
* What do you like or not like about your character?
* What do want people to understand about the show?
* Is there anything that has surprised you while you developed your story?
* What was it like to work with the other actors?
* What was your favorite moment?
* What did you learn while working on this project?
1. Put students into their production teams if they are doing different plays, or otherwise put them in at least two groups to prepare. You’ll need an audience as well as performers.
2. Give them index cards or slips of paper and have them write down a set of questions they would like to answer (in character) about their experience, one on each card. Tell them these questions will be asked during the “show,”
3. Have the groups put the question cards in a pile. Then have the members of the team take turns as host. The host picks a card, reads the question and invites one or two of the actors to respond. They can ask a follow up question if they like. Tell actors they should try to answer for at least one minute. Suggest they use their phone timer as a tool to work on elaborating. Give them time to work through their questions. (Here, you can also give them a night to prepare, but it’s not imperative.)
4. Bring the class together and collect the questions from each group and prepare for the talk show.
	* Tell them how long the show will last. (I generally multiply the number of actors by 2 minutes.)
	* Ask for a volunteer from another group to be a host. Give the host a minute to go through the questions with their cast to make sure they understand and can read the questions.
	* Arrange chairs at the front of the room to look like a studio.
5. Start the Talk Show. Have the host come on stage and introduce the show using their name, e.g., “Welcome to the Sandra Garcia show!” The host then introduces the actors, invites them to sit and conducts the interview. - Tell them that they must continue until the timer goes off. Then set your timer.                                              Watch and take notes. You can examine the prosodic elements (the way they use stress and intonation to communicate feelings and intentions), other pronunciation features, vocabulary and grammar, or simply general fluency.  (See feedback form below)
6. Repeat with the next group.
7. Use your notes to give a general feedback session to the whole class and/or give individual feedback to the students.

**Talk Show Feedback**                                                 Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| Going well | To work on |
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**Variation:** If you want to do this as a stand-alone activity, you could have students pretend to be the cast of a popular film.