
Splendid Speaking Podcasts



Topic: Working Together to Reach Agreement

(Interview 18: March Archives)

This show can be listened to at the following address:

<http://splendid-speaking.com/blog/?p=35>

Comprehension Questions

As you listen, decide whether according to Joao and Werner, the following questions are true or false.

- 1) Joao doesn't think some of the options are useful.
- 2) Joao would like to run courses about the Internet.
- 3) Werner has experience of being in a similar community group.
- 4) Werner spends more time on the computer now than when he was younger.
- 5) According to Werner it's pretty easy to find sports facilities for young people in Germany.
- 6) Joao wonders whether the facility would need managing.

Transcript

Introduction

Welcome to the Splendid Speaking podcast. My name's Pete Travis and this week we're listening to Joao from Brazil and Werner for Germany, who is currently living in Poland. A reminder that transcripts for all podcasts including this one are available to subscribers of our mailing list. You can sign up to the newsletter from www.splendid-speaking.com. Joao and Werner were sent the following question shortly before the interview:

“Imagine you both work for a local community group for young people. The group have been awarded 10,000 Dollars in funding and you have to decide how the money should be spent. Suggestions include the following:

Computers

A games room with facilities such as a pool table and TV

Sports facilities
A series of trips
A mini library
Inner City Farm

Talk together about the benefits of these facilities and decide which ONE would be most appropriate. The discussion should last approximately 4 minutes."

This task requires the speakers to show they can discuss, evaluate, express and justify opinions. As this is a collaborative task they also need to show they can also invite their partner to give opinions and ideas, listen and respond to their partner's views, and finally move the discussion towards a conclusion.

As you listen decide how well Joao and Werner do this. Is their discussion delivered clearly and within the 4-minute time limit? If you have access to the transcript, listen a second time and answer the comprehension questions. Finally, make a note of Joao and Werner's use of English, which we'll look at in the feedback session.

Let's listen to Joao and Werner.

Werner: Joao, are you going to start?

Joao: Yes, sure I think I would ... I would like to have a sort of computer lab ... for young people ... well all of these ... I think all of these options are really great but I think the ... computer lab would benefit most of all cos from the computers you can ... go ... well you can do so many things with computers especially when they are connected to the Internet and you can provide ... a series of courses when you have a computer lab.

Werner: Well I basically don't agree because I think more important are sports facilities for example a half pipe for skating or some places where to play soccer because I ... I've been basically ... in such a group before and we always made ... always some kind of trips to ... to near ... interesting places and stuff but basically we most of the time we spent skating on the half pipes so ... well I don't really needed a computer back in that days ... back in those days.

Joao: OK I see ... so you mean nowadays the computers are mostly everywhere so ... you would have sports facilities instead of a computer lab?

Werner: Well, I think ... no, well I think computers are nice but they basically prevent you from going out.

Joao: Yes, ... that ... yeah that's another point which ... is interesting and ... they have differences you can use them in different ways and ... well for you sports facilities such as ... half pipe or soccer fields would be ... the best option?

Werner: I guess so because that's what I'd like to do when I ... when I was young you know. I just always went out and never stayed at home ... It's like now OK ... I'm just a little bit older and I'm sitting a little more in front of the computer but back in those days I think young people should do more sports do like more going out getting social contact stuff like that you know? Not sitting at home playing Ego Shooters.

Joao: Oh yeah ... yeah ... I agree with you on this point ... but don't you think there are enough ... facilities where people would be able to ... like young people would be able to hang out and do ... things and play sports ... what do you think?

Werner: Well ... are there in Brazil? In Germany it's ... it's not like that because you can hardly find those ... whether they are in such a bad ... state that you can't already ... that you just can't use them or you just don't find them ... at least in my city it's pretty hard to find a soccer field which is like worth playing on.

Joao: So it's not so easy?

Werner: No it's not really easy or they're restricted because they belong to some ... to some clubs or something like that.

Joao: OK ... but let's if we had ... let's say we agree on these sports facilities and ... do you think we should just have them and have them available for people to go and use them or we should have ... someone like managing it and ... providing different ... different activities and different times on certain days of the week?

Werner: Well ... the basic thing is that everything can go and play there as long as he wants when he wants and stuff but ... well basically I think some courses would be nice of course but who's gonna pay that? It's gonna be some additional costs.

Joao: Sure ... sure ... so you think we just let's say we're gonna get those ... 10.000 dollars and we're gonna like build a half pipe or buy a place where soccer field could be built and just leave there for people to use?

Werner: I guess so. And what I also think is a fine idea is this pool table. Do you like playing pool?

Joao: Yes, I don't do it as much but ... it's fun.

Werner: You know if ... the weather is bad or something like that you can always play pool inside.

Joao: Yes it's all inside.

Feedback

First of all, thanks to Joao and Werner for taking part in this Skype interview and for agreeing to be recorded. If you go to the Splendid Speaking website you can leave your own comments on their conversation.

Now for some feedback. This was the first time Joao and Werner had spoken together and both embraced the topic, coming up with appropriate suggestions and reaching an agreed decision within the time limit. After the interview we spoke about the kind of strategies to adopt when you try a role-play like this. It's important to treat the task as a collaborative activity with the aim of coming to some form of agreement. This discussion

was interesting in that it highlighted both excellent practice and perhaps an example of what to avoid. Joao was very good at ensuring he was taking on board Werner's opinion and there are many examples of how he either used questions to confirm Werner's opinion or to make a point himself:

"...OK I see ... So you mean nowadays the computers are mostly everywhere so ... you would have sports facilities instead of a computer lab?"

"...well for you sports facilities such as ... half pipe or soccer fields would be ... the best option?"

"...Oh yeah ... yeah ... I agree with you on this point but don't you think there are enough facilities where people would be able to like young people would be able to hang out and do ... things and play sports ... what do you think?"

This is excellent practice. Joao might not have been entirely in agreement with Werner at this point but the language and strategy he used helped maintain a collaborative atmosphere and moved the discussion on to a conclusion. Compare this to the beginning of the discussion when Joao was far more direct in stating his opinion. This isn't a problem in itself but can lead to an equally direct disagreement:

"... Well I basically don't agree because I think more important are..."

Both Joao and Werner are extremely fluent in English with clear pronunciation and accurate language. There were several examples from Werner of how to use 'vague language' in order to express a point in general terms such as in the following extracts:

"... we always made ... always some kind of trips to ... to near ... interesting places and stuff..."

"...I think young people should do more sports do like more going out getting social contact stuff like that..."

"or they are restricted because they belong to some ... to some clubs or something like that..."

"... You know if ... the weather is bad or something like that you can always play pool inside..."

Most of the mistakes that were made were probably a natural result of spontaneous speech. However, can you correct the following?

"...the ... computer lab would benefit most of all..."

"...a half pipe for skating or some places where to play soccer..."

“...So you mean nowadays the computers are mostly everywhere...”

“...It’s gonna be some additional costs...”

“...we’re gonna get those ... 10.000 dollars...”

So, did you spot the mistakes?

“...the ... computer lab would benefit most of all...”

Two possible answers here. With an object you could say ‘the computer lab would benefit the youngsters most of all’. Or as an adjective you could say: ‘would be most beneficial’.

“...a half pipe for skating or some places where to play soccer...”

This should be ‘some places to play soccer’, or ‘some places where people can play soccer’.

“...So you mean nowadays the computers are mostly everywhere...”

No definite article here, just ‘computers’.

“...It’s gonna be some additional costs...”

Not ‘it’s’ or ‘it is’ but ‘there are going to be some additional costs’.

“...we’re gonna get those ... 10.000 dollars...”

Not ‘those 10,000 dollars’ but ‘that 10,000 dollars’.

OK. That's the end of this podcast. Once again, many thanks to Joao and Werner. Until next week it's 'Bye' from me Pete Travis. And remember that you can download the transcript to this and all previous podcasts by signing up to the Splendid Speaking newsletter a link to which you'll find at www.splendid-speaking.com

Answers to Comprehension Questions

1) Joao doesn't think some of the options are useful.

Ans: False

2) Joao would like to run courses about the Internet.

Ans: False

3) Werner has experience of being in a similar community group.

Ans: True

4) Werner spends more time on the computer now than when he was younger.

Ans: True

5) According to Werner it's pretty easy to find sports facilities for young people in Germany.

Ans: False

6) Joao wonders whether the facility would need managing.

Ans: True

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Strategies for developing your discussion skills are practised in Volume 1 of the 'Splendid Speaking Self-Study Course'. You can also find out more about using 'vague language' in this Volume.

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