**TOEFL, Listening To Conversations and Listening for the Main Idea**

**Today in our time together, let’s look at conversation questions. Let’s look at how to figure out the main idea and some strategies for doing that.**

**I.First of all, how do you know you have this type of question?**

It’s the first question you will be asked and you will hear vocabulary like the following and usually the question has the words mainly or main in it.

What are the speakers **mainly** discussing?

What is the man’s problem?

What is the lecture **mainly** about?

What is the main topic of the talk?

What aspect of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_does the professor **mainly** discuss?

**II.Next, let me explain some about this skill as far as how it is wrong. The answer could be wrong if one or more of the following occurs:**

Too general: an idea that is beyond the focus of the conversation or the lecture

Too specific: a supporting detail instead of a main idea

Inaccurate: not true or partly true

Irrelevant: about something that the speakers don’t talk about

**III.Now to some Steps and Strategies in listening for the main idea and topic.**

**A.Preview and predict.**

1.Before you listen.

Before you start to listening, make sure you review handout 1 on vocabulary related to the conversations. Remember they are typically problems so you want to make sure you know the problem. They could also be about an opinion about the topic.

2.The first sentence that gives the directions. **Listen carefully to this first sentence.** “Listen to a conversation between\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Knowing who is talking can help you predict what the conversation will be about and help you determine content better.

**B.Use these strategies**

1.The main idea is in the first 1-3 sentences of the dialogue. Ask yourself are they talking about a problem? If so, what is it? If it is not about a problem, what topic are they giving their opinions on?

2.Use cohesion to help. We talked about cohesion in the reading section but cohesion means that at the end of sentences we have the new information, the most important information. SO listen to what is at the end of sentences for the main idea. If you miss what is at the end of the sentence, don’t give up because with cohesion we typically repeat that information at the beginning of the next sentence.

3. Look at your answers and rule out choices to get your best answer.

4.Observe good test taking practices.

Go with your first answer that you think and don’t change.

Also, take notes. They don’t have to be as organized as a lecture but take notes. We will talk more about that in our next post because details are what is most important to take notes on as some might forgot those but may remember the main idea.