

# *Introduction*

This book is a collection of activities for pair and small group conversation practice. It is designed to be used with a wide range of intermediate level students of English as a second or foreign language. The format of the activities puts the focus on the students, rather than the teacher. At the same time, the activities are designed to be nonthreatening to even the most reserved students. They are also enjoyable for both students and teachers, and they are easy for any teacher to implement.

A special feature of these activities is that they will develop strategic conversation skills. These are skills that go along with linguistic and sociolinguistic skills (grammar, vocabulary and usage). Strategic skills help the speaker/ listener keep a conversation going to its natural or desired conclusion. These skills include:

- ◆ beginning a conversation
- ◆ clarifying something
- ◆ interrupting someone
- ◆ rephrasing something
- ◆ correcting someone
- ◆ eliciting information
- ◆ soliciting attention
- ◆ repairing a conversation
- ◆ summarizing a conversation
- ◆ escaping from a conversation
- ◆ ending a conversation

The format of this book is quite simple. Each activity has three parts: a teacher's introduction, a student's introductory exercise, and pair or small group practice.

- ♦ The teacher's introduction is very short. It is located in the Appendix.
- ♦ The student's introductory exercise focuses on the words and expressions students need to carry out the activity. The students can do this individually and then check it with a partner.
- ♦ The pair or small group practice makes use of information-gap and other interactive formats.

It is not necessary to follow the order of the activities in this book. Each activity is complete and does not depend on another activity. However, Activity 1, "Rejoinders," is a good place to begin, because the rejoinders can be used in virtually *all* of the other activities. So jump in and start talking, OK?