Preparing for the Conversation task – ISE IV

Aims:

◗ To review the format of the task
◗ To examine the nature of the discussion of the Portfolio
◗ To evaluate language appropriate for the level

Activity 1: Knowing the Conversation task

What do you know about the Conversation task?

Look at the following statements and circle True or False:

1. The task consists of discussion of the Portfolio and a conversation area.	True / False
2. This task lasts for up to 5 minutes.	True / False
3. It is the candidate's responsibility to maintain the discussion.	True / False
4. The examiner will ask you questions about one portfolio task.	True / False
5. The candidate then decides on the topic for the conversation.	True / False
6. You should try to include the ISE IV functions from your presentation.	True / False
7. The examiner is likely to make comments that challenge your opinions	True / False

Look at the ISE IV Exam Information booklet to check your answers:
trinitycollege.com/ISE-IV-exam-information

Activity 2: Discussing the Portfolio

What is the nature of the discussion of the Portfolio in the Conversation task?

When discussing the Portfolio, the candidate will be expected to discuss both the content of one or more of the portfolio tasks and also the actual process of the writing.

Content	Process

Look at the following questions and decide whether they are directed towards information on content or on process:

1. To what extent is your writing based upon some form of personal experience?

2. To what extent did you need to draw upon other sources to complete the tasks?

3. How did you go about considering points for inclusion?

4. Can you provide greater detail as to how you came to the conclusions you did for … ?

5. What would you say are the key differences in style for your portfolio tasks?

6. What are the organisational factors you had to consider?

Activity 3: Thinking about appropriate language for ISE IV

Remember that ISE IV is a C2 qualification and you will need to demonstrate control of language at a level that reflects this. While naturally there will be occasions when simple responses are suitable, much of the interaction is likely to be of a complex or abstract nature: candidates will need to make use of a broad range of lexis/demonstrate consistent control of highly complex grammatical forms.

Below are the functions you should try to demonstrate at ISE IV, along with some exemplifications on the topic of individual rights. Which examples would you consider to be using language most appropriate for the level?

Asserting

▶ I'm of the strong opinion that the evidence points to the arbitrary nature of government controls…

▶ I think that the government doesn't always do the same things…

Denying

▶ It certainly is not the case that restrictions are imposed…

▶ It's just not true that…

Softening

▶ I wouldn't go so far as to claim that the evidence is conclusive…

▶ Well, I'm not really saying that – sometimes it can be a good thing.

Contradicting

▶ While there are multiple reasons for supporting this, nevertheless, the consensus indicates…

▶ But I think people are wrong about this, whatever they say.

Implying

▶ I don't think I have to point out the consequences of going down that road…

▶ Because of this, you might think that it's not a problem…

Affirming

▶ The threats to freedom are self-evident; we cannot walk away from these issues…

▶ So, that's why I'm saying that we must be careful…

Preparing for the Conversation task – ISE IV Answers

Activity 1

1. True

2. False – The task lasts 6 minutes.

3. True

4. False – The examiner chooses one or more tasks to discuss.

5. False – The examiner decides on a conversation topic.

6. True

7. True

Activity 2

Statements 1 and 4 refer to content. Statements 2, 3, 5 and 6 are process.

Activity 3

Clearly, the first example for each function demonstrates a higher level of English. Note differences in range of lexis/complexity of grammar/use of idioms and fixed phrases/precise linking devices.

While you will sometimes use direct terms to express basic points, generally the language used in the second example is too simple to demonstrate the level required for ISE IV. However, also, remember that accuracy will be taken into account, even when you are using complex language.