

Focus Questions

- ❖ *In the first part of the story the reporter tells the presenter what she has uncovered, and talks to the person who conducted the test preparation training for language teachers.*

The first test prep practice reported by Ruth Alexander is scripting oral tests. What features of the test method make it possible for teachers to do this?

Using this test prep technique, why would it be 'disaster' to depart from the set question order in the test?

Why do you think the trainer focuses on trying to get the 'less able' students through a language test by memorization techniques?

What does the trainer imply about the language testing system when he talks about the people involved "watching their backs"?

The trainer is asked directly if the test preparation he recommends is cheating. What do you think? Why do you think it is or isn't cheating? List reasons (with colleagues if possible) after you have listened to the programme.

- ❖ *Two guests join the discussion, a professor of education and a politician.*

What are the views expressed by the professor? Do you agree with him?

What are the views expressed by the politician? Do you agree with him?

We return to the reporter who tells us more about the content of the training event.

What three other "tips" were given to the participants? Do you consider these to be ethical or unethical practices?

- ❖ *Finally, we return to the discussion among the studio guests, with short contributions from a Government Minister and the Head of the Quality Assurance Agency.*

The professor and politician appear to agree that it is necessary to separate teachers from testing if a government wishes to have league tables of schools and 'targets' for success based on test scores. Do you agree?

What appears to be the position of Ofqual on this test preparation practice?