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Strategies For Teaching Listening

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the importance of teaching listening strategies and using it during the lesson. Moreover it can define different useful ways for improving listening skills while learning foreign language.

KEYWORDS

Teaching listening, language, listening contributes, language ability, learning.

INTRODUCTION

Listening is at the heart of language development. At the moment of birth, babies have approximately twelve full weeks of listening experience and as children develop, so do their listening skills; listening becomes a

vehicle for comprehension development. Due to its importance, here are five reasons for explicitly teaching listening: Learners develop an ability to discriminate sounds. Listening involves the identification of the differences

among sounds. This identification and discrimination leads children to the understanding that sounds are grouped together to form words. Students realize the value of listening. Listening makes up a great percentage of a pupil's day, both in and out of school. Expanding their views of listening and the benefits of using good listening skills can impact how they use listening. For instance, listening precisely to verbal instructions has a direct impact on pupil's success in the classroom. They know exactly what they are to do as a result of being able to perform this type of listening.

Students learn to listen for a variety of purposes. There are many purposes for listening, such as to determine a speaker's intended message, being able to thoughtfully respond to a speaker's message, and to appreciate music. The good news is that teachers can actually teach children how to listen for a variety of purposes, which is one of the main goals of the listenwise curriculum. Teaching students how to listen is far different from simply expecting them to develop this complex language art by listening for longer periods with no specific focus.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Listening enhances children's ability to use the other language arts. Teaching listening allows students to follow directions, understand expectations, and make sense of oral communication. As children improve as listeners, they learn to use the same strategies to improve their command of the other language arts. For example, when children ask a question (speaking), they then listen (listening) for the response which might clarify what they need to do to complete a given

reading or writing task. Students understand the relationship between listening and reading. Listening, like reading, is an active process. Listening and reading require the use of similar thought processes such as predicting and self-monitoring to attend to the conveyed message for the construction of meaning. And let's remember that reading a word is much easier if it has first been heard! Given the importance of listening well to maximize success in and out of school might lead you to wonder if there are any specific guidelines for teaching it. In reviewing listening research, I was able to glean seven. They are as follows:

Set the purpose. According to Funk and Funk (1989), students need to understand the purpose for listening to get the most from the experience; they need to listen for rather than to. Having an explicit purpose in mind will help them know where to focus, enabling them to achieve success. Do they need to listen to determine which statements are fact and opinion? Do they need to understand the procedure for carrying out a specific activity? In either case, letting students know up front will make their accomplishment more likely.

Set the stage. Getting ready to listen is like getting in the zone or warming up. A good first step in setting the stage is to tell students the purpose for listening. A second step is to prepare the environment. Eliminating background noise, sitting in an appropriate configuration, and third, telling students what will transpire after they have listened are three ways to set the stage for listening.

Provide follow-up. Funk and Funk (1989) also point out the importance of providing time for follow up. Immediately after students have listened, hold them accountable for whatever

it was that they were attending to when listening. Many times this follow up will be in a written format so that there is a paper trail of pupil learning. Such follow-up enables you to see what they were able to ascertain while listening, thus serving as an authentic assessment of sorts. When reviewing their responses you can see who was able to achieve the stated purpose and who might need additional help.

Keep it brief. More students than not are expected to listen for a good part of the school day and this only increases throughout the grades. Given that some students find listening difficult, either because it is not their favored learning modality or because they are grappling with how to listen, keeping the listening experiences brief and focused will help guard against children tuning out. In telecommunications businessman David Sarnoff's words, "Make sure you have finished speaking before your audience has finished listening."

Strategies of listening skills

Listening is at the heart of language development. At the moment of birth, babies have approximately twelve full weeks of listening experience and as children develop, so do their listening skills; listening becomes a vehicle for comprehension development. Due to its importance, here are five reasons for explicitly teaching listening:

1. Learners develop an ability to discriminate sounds. Listening involves the identification of the differences among sounds. This identification and discrimination leads children to the

understanding that sounds are grouped together to form words.

2. Students realize the value of listening. Listening makes up a great percentage of a pupil's day, both in and out of school. Expanding their views of listening and the benefits of using good listening skills can impact how they use listening. For instance, listening precisely to verbal instructions has a direct impact on pupil's success in the classroom. They know exactly what they are to do as a result of being able to perform this type of listening.
3. Students learn to listen for a variety of purposes. There are many purposes for listening, such as to determine a speaker's intended message, being able to thoughtfully respond to a speaker's message, and to appreciate music. The good news is that teachers can actually teach children how to listen for a variety of purposes, which is one of the main goals of the Listen wise curriculum. Teaching students how to listen is far different from simply expecting them to develop this complex language art by listening for longer periods with no specific focus.
4. Listening enhances children's ability to use the other language arts. Teaching listening allows students to follow directions, understand expectations, and make sense of oral communication. As children improve as listeners, they learn to use the same strategies to improve their command of the other language arts. For

example, when children ask a question (speaking), they then listen (listening) for the response which might clarify what they need to do to complete a given reading or writing task.

5. Students understand the relationship between listening and reading. Listening, like reading, is an active process. Listening and reading require the use of similar thought processes such as predicting and self-monitoring to attend to the conveyed message for the construction of meaning. And let's remember that reading a word is much easier if it has first been heard!

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3. Provide follow-up.

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4. Keep it brief.

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5. Integrate it.

Using listening in a variety of subject areas is an excellent way for students to understand how it crosses all content areas. Listening for steps to conduct an experiment in science, propaganda techniques used by the media in social studies, and listening for the argument in English all are ways for students to capitalize on listening in different content areas. As noted by Moffet and Wagner “Activities that entail attention, as a preparation for action of one’s own, teach listening skills far better than special drills focusing on listening alone.”

6. Be a model.

Jalongo emphasizes that showing students how to be better listeners through our own example is more powerful than telling them. If we want children to show a speaker respect, for example, we need to do the same.

7. Avoid repeating yourself and/or pupil responses.

Probably easier said than done, nonetheless important, is to say something once and only once. Patterns take time to break, however, which is why this one guideline might be difficult. Rubin suggests that having students restate questions and answer questions posed by not only the teacher, but peers are two ways to show students the importance of listening.

All in all this high degree of meta-cognitive awareness could have partly contributed to the development of the listening competence of the group of more successful listeners since many researchers in the field of educational psychology have shown the effects on learning Success. Learners who are meta-cognitively aware are better able to control and manage their learning in terms of understanding and storing new information as well as finding the

best ways to practice and reinforce what they have learnt. More research is definitely needed in the field of second language listening to further explore the relationship between meta-cognitive knowledge and listening success. Nevertheless, based on the strength of research findings in the field of educational psychology, it would not be presumptuous to propose that activities for increasing language learners’ meta-cognitive knowledge about learning to listen should form an integral part of any listening curriculum. Language learners who know about how their listening is influenced by internal and external factors will be better placed to take the necessary measures to enhance and assist their comprehension.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that listening has an important place in learning as it is one of the four major skills in language acquisition. Even though the other skills such as reading, speaking and writing are essential to develop language proficiency, listening contributes primarily for language expertise. Listening awakens awareness of the language as it is a receptive skill that first develops in a human being. Learning to listen to the target language improves language ability. The sound, rhythm, intonation, and stress of the language can only be perfectly adapted through listening.

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