Teaching Listening

Preparing the foundation for all aspects of language

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Use of language skills in daily life

- Listening: 40%
- Speaking: 30%
- Reading: 16%
- Writing: 9%

Legend:
- Green: Listening
- Blue: Speaking
- Light Blue: Reading
- Gray: Writing
Do school curricula reflect this use?

• “… classroom emphasis on language modes is inversely related to the time people use them: students get 12 years of training in writing, 6-8 years in reading, 1-2 years in speaking and from 0 - 1/2 year in listening.”

  - Burley-Allen

“the ‘inverted curriculum’” - Swanson
Two functions of language important to listening

Interactional uses of English-

The primary purpose for communication is social and to establish interactions between participants.

(listener-oriented)

Transactional uses of English-

The language is being used mainly for communicating information or carrying out a transaction.

(message-oriented)
Listening processes and purposes

**Bottom-up processing**
- Processing input as the source of information about meaning
- Enables listener to:
  - recognize individual sounds
  - hear word boundaries
  - understand vocabulary
  - use grammar cues to interpret sentence

**Top-down processing**
- Processing input by using background knowledge to understand
- Allows listener to use:
  - prior knowledge of topic
  - situational or context clues
  - understanding of overall structure of events and relationships
Both *interactional* and *transactional* uses of language use both top-down and bottom-up processing. Therefore it is important to teach and give practice in both in both top-down and bottom-up skills.
How do we do all of that?
Effective listening tasks are:

• For a pre-set purpose
• Require “real-time” learner (listener) response
• Success-oriented
• Motivating
• Uncomplicated
• Give an opportunity for immediate feedback
Exercises for bottom-up processing

- recognize word boundaries
- distinguish key words
- notice transitions
- note word-order patterns
- interpret stress and intonation
- retain input
- act on commands, requests, instructions
Exercises for top-down processing

• Use key words to construct background ideas
• Understand roles or participants in a situation
• Infer topic, outcome, cause/effect, sequence of events
• Distinguish between fact and opinion
• Isolate important details from non-important
• Understand intention in conversation
Purposes for Listening

• Listening for sounds
• Listening for meaning
• Listening for comprehension
• Listening for specific purpose (transaction)
• Listening in interaction
• Listening for pleasure
• Listening to improve pronunciation
Types and purposes of Listening Activities

1. Word level
2. Sentence level
3. Listening for comprehension
4. Listening and short response
5. Listening and longer responses
Word level

• Oral activities
  – repetition of words, one or two, same or different, how often do you hear it, how many syllables

• Read/write activities
  – circle which word you hear, write the right word, number words/pictures in order
Sentence level

• Oral activities
  – repetition of short phrases or complete utterances
  – How many words?
  – Q & A

• Read/write activities
  – underline stressed (or unstressed) words
  – Dictation
  – Q & A
Listening for Comprehension

• Oral activities
  – Listen to a familiar text
  – Listening aided by visuals
    • pictures, objects in the room, diagrams, maps
  – Informal teacher talk

• Read/write activities
  – Listen while reading
  – “Entertainment” - stories, film and TV

• Oral/read/write activities
  – Jazz Chants
  – Make your own music cloze: lyrics.com
Banker’s Wife’s Blues

Where does John live?
He lives near the bank.

Where does he work?
He works at the bank.

When does he work?
He works all day
and he works all night,
at the bank, at the bank,
at the great, big bank.

Where does he study?
He studies at the bank.

Where does he sleep?
He sleeps at the bank.

Why does he spend all day, all night,
all day, all night,
at the bank, at the bank?
Because he loves his bank
more than his wife
and he loves his money
more than his life.

FROM: Jazz Chants
Carolyn Graham
Listening and Short Response

- **Oral activities**
  - Obeying instructions, following directions
  - Guess what I’m describing/defining?
- **Read/Write activities**
  - Picture dictation, listen and mark off (like Bingo)
  - True/False activities, detecting mistakes
  - Aural cloze, noting specific information
  - Pictures (identify, sequence, change, mark)
  - Maps, floor plans, grids, graphs
Bloom's Taxonomy

Knowledge
Comprehension
Application
Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation
Listening and Making Longer Responses

• Oral/Read/Write activities
  – Q & A (time lapse = comprehension, not perception)
  – Restating, summarizing
  – Predictions
  – Conflicting versions
  – Problem solving
  – Jigsaw listening
  – Debate
And....... my personal favorite
(and my students’ too!)
Zeigarnik effect

states that people remember uncompleted or interrupted tasks better than completed ones.
Thank you for your attention and participation!