

Listening Across the Curriculum: Index of Handouts

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For Students

1. Do I Listen?
(Use a questionnaire/article) "An Ear-Q Test"
"Do You Know How to Listen?"
2. What's the Homework?
(Explain how to find out.) "Listening to Directions for
College Assignments"
3. What Did You Say?
(Describe how to attend.) "Attention Chart"
4. How Can I Listen and Learn?
(Provide mnemonic/guideline) "Five Principles of Listening/
Five Principles of Learning"
5. How Are My Notes?
(Give checklists and models) "Listening to Lectures"
"Lecture Note-Taking: A Checklist"
"Evaluate Your Notetaking Skills"
"Notebook Evaluation"
"Taking Math Lecture Notes"

For Teachers

1. What listening skills should be taught? "College Board Listening and
Speaking Basic Competencies"
"Listening Across the Curriculum"
2. What are good and poor learners/listeners like? "Characteristics of Effective
Learners"
"Characteristics of Good and Poor
Listeners"
3. How can we improve listening? "Listening: Learning Tool and
Retention Agent" by M. Conaway
4. How can we assess notetaking? "Note-taking Skills"
5. How can I learn more? A Bibliography for:
*Listening Texts and materials
*Writing Across the Curriculum
and Partnerships
*Writing/Thinking Process:
Listening Is the Key

As a college remedial teacher during the past decade, I have often felt like a combination of Jesus Christ Superstar ["Heal my eyes, I can hardly read!"] (SUNG) and the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired [from partying], your poor [poor writers, poor thinkers, poor test-takers], Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. [free of the classroom], the wretched refuse of your teeming shore [high schools]. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me!"

They are no longer homeless; our campuses are teeming with them. Euphemisms to describe them include: "the new students," "the now students," "underprepared," "developmental," "non-traditional," and the list goes on. They are as omnipresent as Moby Dick, but they do not know who that is. In fact, remedial language skills courses or centers flourish among the ivy at Harvard and Yale, also at Stanford, and expectedly at Cupcake Community College.

Why? And what can we do about it? As my contribution to our panel, I plan a whirlwind coverage of four points:

1. I will briefly comment on why American colleges need learning specialists (often a euphemism for remedial teachers) behind their open doors and on podiums at conferences such as this one.

2. Then we will see if listening is or can be taught and assessed across the curriculum. Do standards for instruction and assessment now exist? What approaches have failed in the past, and what are we trying now?

3. I will explore promising interdisciplinary research projects --all of which feature listening as a vital research or teaching technique.

4. Finally, I will leave you with practical suggestions, some handouts, and a bibliography. This list of references covers the three major areas of my presentation: locating listening texts and materials, exploring across-the-curriculum movements and partnerships, and investigating and teaching the writing and thinking process - with listening as the key.

Let's return to the Statue of Liberty. Why do we need a learning specialist like me in our colleges and speaking to you today? A 1984 Carnegie Foundation Special Report entitled School and College: Partnerships in Education, claims:

across the board, not just at the community college, college entrance requirements place little, and in some cases no emphasis on the substantive content of what high school students should have mastered as the necessary prerequisite to college study. There is no common body of knowledge, no specific set of intellectual skills against which students can measure their own readiness or on which colleges can base admission and placement decisions. (p. 7)

Why has this happened? Partnerships between schools and colleges have drifted apart since the 1960s, they say, when many colleges abandoned or weakened their entrance requirements or instituted "open door" enrollment; high school graduation requirements similarly declined. Today these requirements - along with the drinking age - are being raised. How will this affect my topic: "Listening Across the Curriculum"? Will these higher standards specify and then assess listening competencies? Will LATs join SATs?

Back to the Statue of Liberty again to find an answer. While I was paraphrasing Emma Lazarus' poem in my World Book under "Liberty, Statue of," I looked up "Listening." I found nothing between "LISPING" and "LIST SYSTEM" - not even a "See _____." I found no mention of listening in the index either; however, they do list seven articles for reading, fifteen for speech, and sixteen for writing, the other three language or communication skills.

Is this omission surprising? How does it relate to my question about the future of listening instruction and assessment? It is no surprise if you know how we allocate school time for the instruction of the four communication skills. Think of your local or state system. Do they employ a listening consultant? Do they require assessment or instruction in listening? Probably not. But I'll wager someone is lobbying for longer class periods, longer

school days, longer weeks, and longer years rather than thinking about what could be done to make those periods, days, weeks, and years more conducive to learning.

Does anyone with power or influence care about developing listening skills? I think so. Each of you is or wants to be part of the solution. Action may be beginning in your area. In addition, last year the influential College Board led the way with its publication Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do. They specified listening (and speaking) as one of the seven Basic Academic Competencies which also include reading, writing, mathematics, reasoning, and studying. College Board describes these competencies as: broad intellectual skills essential to effective work in all fields of college study. They provide a link across the disciplines of knowledge although they are not specific to any particular discipline. (p.7)

The specific listening skills are listed on a handout you will receive later. [HOLD UP TO IDENTIFY IT.]

Does a model ^{Listening} across the curriculum program now exist at the college level? I discovered one in my literature review. Charles V. Roberts, as Department Chair at Central College in Iowa, helped to establish a listening/speaking program which he summarizes as:

a series of skills courses located in every discipline at all academic levels, departmental skills endorsement policies, faculty workshops, an in-house consulting service, a comprehensive skills center, and a coding system for monitoring students' skill development. This mixture of curricular and cocurricular mechanisms is bound together by the continuing commitment of the entire academic community to improve the communication competencies of students. Each member has agreed to be responsible for the success of this effort. Without such unified and continuing dedication, the program would not function. (Rubin, p. 49)

Could this program be replicated on your campus? Would you want it to be? More about that later. First, let us be wildly optimistic and assume that within a year the College Board's

list of listening skills will become a part of the curriculum guides in every school - elementary, middle, high school, and college - and that all instructional personnel will be required to teach them. Could we then dissolve the International Listening Association? Could college faculty assume the huddled masses will begin arriving with ears in gear, and that they won't have to set up a program like the one at Central College?

Although we listening advocates are delighted at last to see listening skills in the spotlight, we know getting into the curriculum guides does not mean students will receive quality listening instruction in every class at every level. Roberts, by the way, left Central College before he described his model program. Has it survived without him? Has he been able to set up a similar program at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana? How many teachers know how to, or more important, want to teach listening across the curriculum? They have known for years that Johnny can't read or write, thanks to headlines, best sellers, and Newsweek.

In spite of media blitzes and urgings from curriculum directors, how have content area teachers responded to requests to teach basic language skills in their classes? "It's impossible!" they wail. "Our curriculum content already mandates more than we can cover. How can we teach listening (and reading and writing) in addition to _____?" (Fill in the blank: biology, western civ, algebra II, Brit. lit., etc.; they all apply.) Usually these overburdened souls think of listening and writing as another content in addition to the one they were hired to teach.

Perhaps this is because of past approaches. Remember the slogans "Every teacher is a teacher of reading" or "All teachers should correct errors on student writing"? I've been in enough teacher's lounges to know the ^{reactions. The} history department objected, "We can't get through the textbook now; when would we teach phonics?" The science department complained, "We can't diagram sentences

and frogs," and both chimed in, "English teachers get a reduced load to teach that stuff." Thus, the problem remains because we have not clearly defined it and listened to possible new solutions. In fact, we may not know that new solutions are being researched.

Meanwhile, some of us^{composition & spell^h tests} have dutifully tried the unit and lesson approach with a term paper in each course thrown in for good measure. Some sadomasochists have also Christmas-treed (red-penciled) these papers even though they may have been plagiarized or purchased. This has also failed to advance literacy in America. In fact, I once rewrote three pages of garbled prose submitted by a Michigan community college coed before I realized the godawful jargon was far better writing than any she had previously produced. A little detective work confirmed she had stolen every poorly written word from a sociologist who had published instead of perished. He, no doubt, received tenure while I got tendonitis of the hand.

No. We do not want content area teachers to teach listening or writing as subjects or coded systems or final products or separate units. Our goal is much broader and more important than that. It strikes at the very heart of learning. In fact, it is learning itself we want to teach -- "the process of an individual mind making meaning from the materials of its experience." (Knoblauch and Brannon, p.) However, we seldom teach students how to learn the content of their courses.

According to Elaine Maimon, a leading proponent of the writing across the curriculum movement, "The purpose of education is to initiate newcomers into the (sophisticated) conversation of... mature members of educated society," a conversation which is "highly referential, alluding to the words and ideas of other conversants, living and dead." (p. 2) Thus writers make their voice heard across the boundaries of time and space. By reading we can engage in a dialogue, that is we can listen to great thinkers outside of our time and space. These thinkers include many different sub-groups of scholars, each with its own unique epistemology, and questions asked, its different purpose, audience, and occasions. The nature

dialogue also changes according to whether they are addressing a broad, general audience or a specialized, professional audience.

How well do we initiate newcomers into these specialized conversations? Do they realize they will need to learn as many new words in Biology 100 as they would in French 100? Students are rarely taught in any course at any level to "understand concepts, to see relationships, to discover a point of view, to learn how people think in an academic discipline," avers Hashimoto and others, p. xvi). However, this may change. Specialists in communication, composition, reading, psycholinguistics, and developmental and cognitive psychology are conducting interdisciplinary research studies to determine the nature of cognitive processes --how thinking occurs and how it can be taught or enhanced.

Researchers are finding that language skills are interwoven cognitive abilities. They are inseparable from course content and are, in fact, the means of learning the content of all academic disciplines, all content areas, at all levels of schooling. Because listening, reading, and writing are essential modes of discovery and essential processes of making meaning and remembering course content, they can and should be taught holistically.

Because of time constraints, I will mention only four important ways listening is being used in language research and instruction; *I urge you to use the bibliography you will be given to learn more about other related investigations.*

1. Arthur Whimbey^e urges the use of protocols or successful models to help students become better problem solvers. After hearing a demonstration of good problem-solving, students work in pairs with one reading the problem aloud and explaining how he or she is trying to find the answer. The other listens and makes suggestions. Then they reverse roles.

2. Reuven Feuerstein, an Israeli psychologist, has acquired the appellation "the remedial thinker" because of his efforts to teach thinking by providing mediated experiences. A more knowledgeable person, usually an adult, intervenes between the learner and the environment to order and clarify the stimuli in the direction of some specifically intended goal or purpose. He believes that

neither enriched environments nor acquisition of facts will of themselves improve thinking skills. His technique, called "Instrumental Enrichment," includes over 500 pages of exercises that teachers administer individually or in groups in hourly sessions three to five times a week over a period of several years....The goal of the IE exercises is not to arrive at solutions but to understand how solutions are arrived at, not to acquire facts but to learn how facts are acquired." (p. 68)

3. Flower and Hayes employ protocol analyses to investigate the composing process. They listened to and recorded their subjects as the subjects explained their cognitive strategies while composing. Later Flower and Hayes analyzed these protocols. Similar protocol analyses are also being used in a reading study being conducted by members of the College Reading Association.

4. Listening is also vital in helping writers generate ideas and ^{ev}rise their papers. The process approach to writing is a basic tenet of the writing across the curriculum movement. Writers read their in-process papers aloud to their audience (peers and teacher) who in turn become the interpretive community who comment on each other's papers. The writer then listens to find out what he or she has done well and also why and how to revise the work to improve its clarity, organization, interest level, sense of audience, and style. Bruner suggests: "to become aware of what one has written requires that one hear it, listen to it, compare the spoken with the written version." (p. 111)

From her own research as well as twenty studies discussed in the literature since the 1930s, Clark concludes in "Listening and the Teaching of Writing": "reading aloud and listening can and should be used in the teaching of composition as a useful method of self evaluation during the revision process." (p. 127)

Once again, we listening advocates are delighted to learn that current research and theory stresses the importance of listening. But one of our own IIA researchers and panel member - Sara Lundsteen-warned us in Help for the Teacher of Written Composition

about "the lag of twenty-five to thirty-five years between the discovery of new knowledge and putting that knowledge into action." Nevertheless, how can content area teachers begin to use listening to improve their students' thinking about and learning of their subject matter?

Learners develop thinking skills (i.e. the ability to abstract, relate, and synthesize) by listening or reading and then verbalizing about concepts and problems. This talking to ourselves and others - our inner conversations - helps us put our thoughts into words. Listening to our monologues and dialogues are the beginning. But listening is not enough. Learning usually requires writing in order to capture and save complex, sophisticated discourse. Therefore, listeners need to take notes, write summaries, and use texts and supplementary reading, including journal articles or visual forms of communication.

During my presentation
Many of you have been taking notes. Others are taping our session. Tape-recording and writing help us capture the ideas of others. They also help us capture our own ideas as we confront new experiences, make connections with other experience, and discover some personal coherence. We need to encourage across the curriculum this expressive, personal, speculative kind of speaking and writing. To improve academic listening and writing, have students keep diaries, journals, learning logs, or class notebooks which reflect their independent, critical thinking monologues. Thus, their thoughts can become visible and concrete. They can see or re-hear what they think as they talk to themselves, to each other, and to us. After they listen in literature, history, biology or psychology classes, students can use a tape recorder or written journal to raise questions and make connections and meaning of the material.

They may jump from facts to speculation to personal anecdote or to emotional outburst. This recording or journal becomes a means of listening to oneself or being listened to by a peer or teacher. It becomes an intellectual dialogue or conversation, a way of

stimulating further learning or personal discovery. It may be a way of honestly communicating the extent of one's understanding, including difficulties, inadequacies of insight, and imperfect or unproductive connections among ideas and information, so that a more experienced learner can provide, through oral or written commentary, some new directions for exploration. Best of all, the teacher listens to students not to judge and grade them but to serve as an intellectual guide toward useful lines of inquiry, next steps to take to understand and remember the information. (Knoblauch and Brannon, p. 471)

As I have been describing research studies and of necessity reading from my manuscript rather than speaking to you in oral language, you have either given up and are faking attention beautifully, or you have been concentrating harder and taking notes to compensate for the difference and difficulty in the material. Much of what college students listen to in lectures is written discourse delivered orally. This content is much harder to listen to than spoken discourse.

How can teachers who speak from written lecture notes prepare or train their students to listen actively to complicated, unfamiliar material? Here are five suggestions:

1. Teachers may need to remind students to take notes by explaining that notes are a way to capture the ideas in writing, thus turning them into a text or hand-written book which they can later process more deeply.
2. To guide students with little background or interest in the topic, speakers can provide a brief outline, including key terminology.
3. At a critical juncture of argument or after an especially complex idea, speakers can ask students to write for five more minutes, representing for themselves the substance of the speaker's point and what it means to them.
4. Speakers can then ask several students to read their statements aloud, using these readings as a basis for class discussion.
5. Teachers might collect lecture notes to gage the comprehension level of individuals and of the entire class.

If we had more time, and if I had previously warned you of my intentions, I would ask you now to summarize Knoblauch and Brannon's ideas or to read aloud your notes about protocol analysis and Instrumental Enrichment. After all, you actually paid money to hear this talk and perhaps would enjoy receiving feedback from me. On the other hand, let's return to exploring how well students understand the lectures they attend. James L. Adams of Stanford bemoans how students (even among the best and the brightest) "sit totally confused in a class in a university that costs thousands of dollars to attend" and yet do not ask a single question. Adams relates an experiment in which a speaker gave a:

totally fraudulent hour-long lecture in aerospace medicine, of which he was totally ignorant, to an audience of university students. When his true credentials (none) were revealed to the students at the end of the lecture, they...registered extreme displeasure both toward the speaker and the instructor for violating their trust and wasting their time. However, during the talk itself, the competence and facts of the speaker were not questioned, probably because of the confidence with which he spoke and his extremely articulate lecturing style." (pp.104-105)

This anecdote does not surprise the learning specialist. We have seen the senseless notes students take in class - if they attend class and remain awake for the lecture. To improve listening and learning, we know teachers across the curriculum must do more than tell (the unit approach) and more than show (the protocol approach). In addition, they must regularly collect the evidence - notes, journals, tapes - again and again until "practice makes perfect" and active listening becomes habitual. As Mortimer Adler warned us long ago in his How to Read A Book:

One thing is clear: Know the rules of an art is not the same thing as having the habit. When we speak of a man as skilled in any way, we do not mean that he knows the rules of doing something, but that he possesses the habit of doing it.

In conclusion I would like to give you now a potpourri of handouts, heuristics, and protocols for you to use yourself or pass on to "your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." May these materials be a "lamp to lift beside the golden door" of distending across the curriculum.