



## TEACHING THE FOUR SKILLS - LISTENING, SPEAKING, READING AND WRITING

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### **Abstract:**

In the traditional teaching, emphasis tends to be on the students doing reading and writing, probably because it seems to keep them quiet and it is easier to organize. Most teachers probably do most of talking in the class whereas the students listen to them. So their amount of understanding is under a question. In our conversation, it is difficult to separate these four skills because all these four skills are connected with one another or it is preceded or followed by a different skill. This integration is constant and confusing for language learners to understand and practice themselves. However these teaching guidelines for the skills of language do separate the skills. The students do not have to do all the suggestions, nor in the order represented. The main reason for this is to organize learning activities into some order, and to assist teachers in deciding exactly what the aim of their lesson is, and choices, as to how to do it. Each skill is sub-divided into several sub-skill activity, listening, speaking, reading or writing is emphasized in the paper. The following pages contain many different activities to improve the four skills. However, it is to be emphasized that they represent a range of possibilities.

### **Listening Skill:**

Listening is more than merely hearing words. Listening is an active process by which students receive, contrast meaning from and respond to spoken and or nonverbal messages. (Emmert, 1994) it forms an integral part of the communication process and should not be separated from the other language arts. Listening comprehension complements reading comprehension. Verbally clarifying the spoken message before, during and after a presentation enhances listening comprehension.

### **Jigsaw Listening:**

Another kind of listening activity is called jigsaw listening. In this the teacher divides the class into groups. Each group listens to a different part of the story on the audio cassette. In the next stage the leaders of the groups send one or two members from their groups to other groups. They will be asked several questions and will have to respond and give information. Likewise various groups collect the missing sequences of the story. Now in their original groups they speculate on the last part or the ending of the story. Usually a mystery story is most suitable for jigsaw listening. Each group then reports to the class their version of the story what their point of view or conjecture is. Other groups are free to react, question and comment. Finally the teacher plays the final part of the recording which resolves the mystery.

### **Conversation Skill:**

Hornby (2005) defines Speak as the act of talking to or having a conversation with somebody. According to Hadfield (2008), this presents the necessity of interaction among people, which is not only "putting a message together" but also the response that the listener can give to the speaker. However, this interaction presents a difficulty for learner of English as a foreign language, since "they need to think of something to say and feel confident enough to try to express it. Then, they have to use what they have learned in terms of vocabulary and grammar to produce a message that other people can understand.

### **Dictation:**

One of the common listening exercises which is usually practised in the earlier years of school education is dictation. It is primarily used to test spelling, therefore is found less useful in later years. However, research has shown that performing well in a dictation activity requires an integrative knowledge of the phonological, syntactic and semantic system of a language.

Davis and Rinvolueri (1998) suggest several reasons why we should continue with dictation

- ✓ The students are active after and during the exercise
- ✓ Correcting a dictation is a straight forward task which students are quite capable of doing for themselves
- ✓ Dictation leads to oral communicative activities
- ✓ Dictation fosters unconscious thinking about the language
- ✓ Dictation can engage large group of students
- ✓ Dictation often serves to call groups
- ✓ Dictation gives a good idea of the linguistic proficiency of the students

**Role Play:**

There may be role play between two or three or four students. They may be asked to play role of somebody. The dialogue may be between a doctor and a patient, an instructor and a clerk, a policeman and a shopkeeper etc.

**Seminars:**

Seminar means a class of students in a class studying a problem and meeting for discussion with a teacher. Students present papers on the topics under the guidance of an expert. The purpose is to study a subject in detail. The participants prepare the topic well in advance. They can have hand-outs and aids for explaining their points. After the paper is read, there will be a systematic discussion about the topic handled and the students acquired skill of speaking and making use of explanatory remarks.

**Ipods:**

Ipods are one of the multimedia devices which helps the users to generate, deliver, exchange texts, image, audio and video messages as per the requirement. The teachers send text messages and the learners can read and answer to them. In addition to this, the learners can record and listen to their speeches, pronunciation, poems, news, short stories, dialogues etc. Thus, the ipods supports the learners of English to enhance their listening, speaking, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, sentence formation and also writing.

**E-Learning Tools:**

There are three important types of E-Learning tools: (i) Curriculum Tools, (ii) Digital Library Tools and (iii) Knowledge Representation Tools. Each type of tools emphasis different parts of the process. Curriculum tools provide a systematic and standard environment to support classroom learning; their functions are particularly helpful in the initiation and selection stages. Digital library tools facilitate effective and efficient access to resources to support exploration and collection while knowledge representation tools focus on formulation and representation.

**Reading Skill:**

According to Hadfield (2008), reading in the own language is very different from reading in a foreign language, because the mother tongue has different ways of reading depending on what is being read and why. To use students' background knowledge of certain topic could help to predict the content of a text and also to understand it easily because students already know how different texts are structured. Harmer (2007) states that there are two types of reading: extensive and intensive reading.

**Skimming:**

The dictionary meaning of skimming is to take off cream of scum i.e. to take the best part of anything as we say skimmed milk which means milk with cream removed. In the same way skimming of a lesson mean gathering together salient facts contained in it. In this method the reader is able to take out the best contained there in the lessons or paragraph.

The main purpose of practise of skimming's that through it senior students get a lot of confidence. It is because that students learn to assemble the main things contained in the lesson and their organisation ability is also develops.

**Intensive and Extensive Reading:**

The pupils at the secondary and higher secondary levels are prescribed intensive readers called detailed text book. They have extensive readers called non-detailed text or supplementary readers. The main focus of intensive readers is on language activities and a very detailed comprehension of the content. Extensive readers consist of simple and interesting- adapted as well as original short stories read for pleasure and the main objective is a general not a detailed comprehension. The pupils are to be encouraged to do most of the reading by themselves silently and rapidly without for teachers help

In general any intensive reading would mean a careful reading as total comprehension of the context is in top priority. Extensive reading of any material would mean reading for gathering general information where the reader is expected to gear up his rate of reading speed. Reading anything for pleasure too would come under this category. The purpose and the difficult level of the material would help us decide how we are to read.

**Digital Library Tool:**

While curriculum tools support class functions, digital library tools focus on locating resources. These functions support the exploration and collection phases of information search. Digital library tools help users find the right information amidst a huge amount of digital material. Digital library features usually include search, browsing, and discovering special collections or exhibits. Search and browsing are used to locate resources and explore related topics. Special collections or exhibits contain organized materials representing a unique treasure for interested users.

**Writing Skill:**

Out of four skills of language learning writing is a very important skill, as it serves as the medium through which we communicate our ideas, thoughts and feelings to other people who are at a distance from us. Language learning is incomplete without developing the skill of writing.

**E-Mail:**

The learners can communicate with native speakers of the foreign language using E- mail by creating an email account (g-mail, yahoo, hotmail, etc) free of cost. The learners can correspond or send their assignment to the teachers concerned and get it corrected. The teacher can also provide revisions, feedback, suggestions for the betterment of every work and send them back.

**Blogs:**

A blog is a personal or professional journal frequently updated for public consumption. The blogs enable uploading and linking the files which is very much suited to serve as on line personal journals for students. Pinkman (2005) indicates blogging becomes communicative and interactive when participants assume multiple roles in the writing process, as readers/reviewers who respond to other writers' posts, and as writers-readers who, returning to their own posts, react to criticism of their own posts. The readers in turn can comment on what they read, although blogs can be placed in secured environments as well.

Writing is need to communicate to the other persons it is used to make a record of events in a specific field. It is used to prepare documents, records etc. which may be used as reference in the future. Writing trains our mind through our senses particularly through eyes and ears

Reasonable speed in writing is an important skill

- ✓ Pupils practice the correct strokes in writing the letters of the alphabet
- ✓ Pupils copy single words from the blackboard, flashcards or from the text book
- ✓ Pupils copy sentences from the text books and substitution tables
- ✓ Pupils rearrange scrambled sentence e.g. there on the table a book is etc.
- ✓ Pupils transform sentences: positive/negative, active/passive, declarative/interrogative etc.
- ✓ Pupils match parts of sentences and write them out.

**Outline Before You Write:**

Writers come in all shapes and sizes, and each has their own style, but I believe this to be true. If you outline each chapter before you sit down writing, it will make your work stronger. You'll also be more organized, work more quickly, and be able to better communicate your ideas.

**Avoiding Overuse of Camouflaged Verbs:**

The writer should avoid using camouflaged verb in writing. An action verb is changed to a camouflaged verb by changing it to a noun and then adding action verb. Since camouflaged verbs are abstract nouns and they frequently require passive form of sentence, they should be avoided for ensuring concreteness and active form of sentence in writing.

**Selecting Words for Precise Meanings:**

Certainly, writing requires knowledge of language. In fact, the greater our knowledge of language, the greater we are likely to write. Knowledge of language enables the writer to use words that carry the meaning that the writer wants to communicate.

**Choosing Short Words:**

Short words generally communicate better than long words. Use of wordy sentences even these are understood give an impression of difficulty that hinders communication. But it is not always true that all short words are easy and all long words are hard. Suggestion is that in most situations the writer should concentrate on short words and use long words with caution. It is suggested further that long words can be used when the writer think the readers know them.

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