

Course Topic: Teaching Listening**Course Instructor:**

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Course Synopsis:

Teaching low level students is very challenging because these students have a very limited amount of language knowledge to draw upon in order to complete even the most basic of language learning tasks. When teaching listening to low level students, we have to keep two main strategies in mind. The first is to make sure that we use every opportunity in the class to provide students with exposure to the language. The more English they hear and see, the more familiar they will become with it. The second strategy is to give students ways to demonstrate understanding of what they have heard that do not require them to produce a lot of original language. Students rapidly gain confidence if they are able to successfully complete tasks. We can make students successful with listening tasks by taking away the pressure of language production. In this session, we will take a look at these two strategies in more depth.

Course Agenda:

1. The Importance of Classroom Management Language
2. Adapted Audio and Video
3. "Listen and..." Activities for Low Level Students

1. The Importance of Classroom Management Language

A lot of the listening that beginner students do in an English classroom is actually listening to their teacher speak. Students need to understand what to do and when in order to make the most of their classroom language. As teachers, we need to use classroom management language clearly and consistently so that students can quickly master this language. This includes language for:

- Taking attendance
- Starting the class
- Going through the agenda for the class
- Giving instructions for an activity
- Starting an activity
- Giving feedback
- Ending an activity
- Taking up answers
- Asking students to change their behaviour
- Working with different learning materials
- Assigning homework
- Giving information about tests or assignments
- Ending the class

2. Adapted Audio and Video

In addition to teacher generated language, students should listen to pre-recorded audio and video as a source of different voices and accents. This material must be adapted; lower level students simply cannot understand authentic listening material. The material should be slower, have simpler vocabulary and simpler grammar. The main source of adapted audio and video will be publisher produced material that accompanies the main textbook or a listening specific textbook. Whenever possible, use video rather than audio; this provides students with additional information with which to interpret what they are listening to.

3. “Listen and...” Activities for Low Level Students

Listening is an invisible process. It is hard to know if students are actually listening and if they are listening, whether they understand. This is particularly true with low level students. However, we can make listening ‘visible’ by the activities we choose. We can divide listening activities for low level students into different categories according to what we want students to do, either as they listen or after they listen. These activities can be based on the teacher being the source of the listening text (for example, teacher instructions) or an adapted audio text. We should use activities from all of these categories with our students.

A. Listen and repeat activities: Students listen to the teacher or a recorded voice and repeat what they hear chorally as a class. This may include repeating letter sounds, single words, phrases or complete sentences. Listen and repeat activities are essential at the beginner level, as students become comfortable listening to and producing English.

B. Listen and identify activities: Students listen to a word or words and either hold up or point to what the word(s) represent. Here are some sample listen and identify activities.

- The teacher gives each group of students a set of vocabulary cards. The teacher says “show me the monkey”, “show me the dog”, “show me the cat” and so on. Alternatively, each group of students gets real objects to hold up (for example, a book, pen, pencil, pencil case, backpack and so on).

- The teacher says “point to the door”, “point to the window” and so on.

C. Listen and perform activities: Students listen to the teacher and then do something. Here are some examples.

- The teacher says “You are washing your hands.... Now you are combing your hair... Now you are washing your face.” As the teacher gives the actions in the present continuous, students perform the actions.
- The teacher gives a verb and students mime the action for example, reading, swimming, and jumping.
- The teacher tells students to do what he or she says, NOT what he or she does. So the teacher says “Sit down” but jumps up and down. Students should then sit down.

D. Listen and choose activities: Students listen and then choose the correct answer out of a number of possible answers. Here are some sample listen and choose activities.

- Students circle the correct picture for the action in the listening text.
- Students circle the correct characters for the listening text.
- Students choose the correct location for the listening text.

E. Listen and categorize activities: Students listen and then fill in the rows or columns of a table to categorize information from what they heard. Here are some sample listen and categorize activities.

- Students put the vocabulary words they hear in the correct category (fruit, sports, animals).
- Students put actions they hear in the correct column.

F. Listen and make activities: Students listen to instructions to make something. Here are some sample listen and make activities.

- Students make a paper airplane following the teacher’s instructions.
- Students complete an origami (paper folding) task.
- Students build a tower or building using building blocks.

G. Listen and colour activities: Students listen and colour a picture (of a person or a building, for example) according to the colours given by the teacher.

H. Listen and draw activities: Students listen and then create some kind of picture to match what they heard. Here are some sample listen and draw activities.

- Students draw the vocabulary words they hear.
- Students draw the situation they hear (at a store, in a classroom, in the park).
- Students draw the actions they hear described (running, reading, sitting).

I. Listen and answer activities: Students listen and then answer simple short answer comprehension questions. Here are some sample listen and answer activities.

- Students listen for who is speaking in a dialogue.
- Students listen for what the speakers are talking about.

J. Listen and extend activities: Students listen and then imagine more of what they heard. Here are some sample listen and extend activities.

- Students imagine the next few lines of the conversation.

- Students listen to questions and then answer the questions using personal information.

Thanks for participating!

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