

Active Listening: More Than Filling in Blanks

Too often a listening classroom is too teacher-centered. This was the emphasis of Peadar Callaghan's June Chapter meeting presentation. A listening classroom should be a task-based learning classroom. He demonstrated how a teacher can utilize task-based learning in a listening class. He first asked the audience if they used fill-in-the-blank or cloze exercises in classes. He then described that if little strips of paper with made-up words on them were distributed to an audience or class, they could listen to a recording or reading by a teacher and correctly fill in the blanks. This could be done without knowing what the words meant, showing that filling in the blanks doesn't demonstrate comprehension.

The audience was then asked to answer the following two questions: "What is hearing?" and "What is listening?" David Shaffer replied, "If you have a listening problem, you go to your English teacher. If you have a hearing problem, you go to the doctor." The general conclusion was that hearing is passive and listening is active. Peadar explained what fluent listening is and why meaningful context is important to achieve fluent listening. Peadar then demonstrated ways to develop activities for fluent listening. One innovative idea was having the students create a listening activity in class: give the students a topic and have them write five sentences about it, record it on the classroom computer, listen to it, and answer questions about it. Another idea was to use graphic organizers to categorize various parts of a text that they are listening to. In addition, a teacher can use mind maps to see if the students really comprehend the listening material. Peadar also emphasized the use of "language chunks," making sure that the language chunks are short and giving the students multiple opportunities to listen to them.

Another technique presented was the setting up of listening stations with inexpensive MP3 players and having groups of students listen to material and answer questions about the material. Headphone splitters can be used so that a number of students can listen at a single station. A running dictation was also explained: Tape a dictation behind the board and have the students work in teams of two. One is the runner and one is the writer. The runner reads and memorizes, and then dictates to the writer what he had read. The final activity that was introduced was a jigsaw listening activity. The students listen to different parts of a text and then put it together in the correct order. Just another of Peadar's activities to make listening an active, and effective, classroom activity.



Mr. Callaghan facilitating one of his active listen classes.

Peadar Callaghan presented this topic at the June 11 Gwangju Chapter Meeting. He presently teaches at Kyungpook National University in Daegu and is President of the Daegu-Gyeongbuk Chapter, presently serving on KOTESOL's National Council in that capacity. Mr. Callaghan has master's degrees in TEFL and history, and presents regularly at KOTESOL events.

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- Bank transfer to **KOTESOL**, Korea Exchange Bank account number: 630-006952-841
- Payment in cash to the Chapter Membership Officer at a Chapter Meeting

The Need for Extensive Reading in Korea

By Scott Miles

Many scholars argue that extensive reading is the most practical way for students in an EFL environment to receive the crucial input needed to reach intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency. Extensive reading has amassed an impressive array of studies that show strong benefits not just for reading skills, but for vocabulary, grammar, and writing skills as well.

What is Extensive Reading?

Extensive reading is simply reading a lot at a fairly easy level. The following is a summary of the main principles and features of extensive reading:

1. Students read easy books which can be comprehended without the need of a dictionary or the help of a teacher. Generally, students should already know at least 95% of the vocabulary in the book.
2. Students read a lot. Students read as much as possible, both in the classroom and out. Reading for 1-2 hours a week can be enough to develop significant language gains.
3. The texts should be chosen by the students and read primarily for their enjoyment. Students should be encouraged to read just like real readers do: reading only what you want to read and enjoying it. Extensive reading discourages “tests” and burdensome reading reports as these practices serve only to take the pleasure out of reading.
4. The practice needs to be continued long-term in order to realize the full benefits. Though some studies have shown measurable results in as little as a few months, the benefits of extensive reading become truly impressive after the practice has been sustained for at least one year.

Why does extensive reading work?

Extensive reading of interesting and comprehensible material gives the recycling of language required to ensure that learned vocabulary and grammar is retained. Continued exposure and repetition play a crucial role in language acquisition, and in an input-poor EFL environment, this kind of daily exposure to the language is generally lacking.

How to set up an extensive reading program?

1. Get the books. For most students, graded readers are needed for extensive reading. These are books which are tailored to specific reader levels, ensuring that all beginning to intermediate learners can find

interesting materials to match their level. Generally, it is best if the institution’s library can make these books available to the students.

For individual teachers in a teaching environment without a library, the following options are available: (A) Having students purchase their own graded readers, and then exchanging books with each other several times over the semester. (B) The teacher puts together her own collection of graded readers (say, 40-60 books), and allows students to check them out from her or just read the books during class time.

2. Give guidance on what books to read.

Students should read books that are at their level and are enjoyable. Teachers should help students find a comfortable level. Students should also understand that if they find a book boring, they should exchange it for another as soon as possible.

3. Establish a method of assessing student reading.

If students are doing extensive reading outside of class, teachers should have a way to make sure students are really doing the reading. This can be done through teacher-student conferences in which the teacher briefly discusses the book with the student one-on-one, giving simple quizzes on the books, or by asking the students to do short book reports on books they have read.

Conclusion

Teachers generally respond favorably to the idea of extensive reading, but many find excuses as to why they don’t do it. Unfortunately, denying students the chance to recycle the language that they are taught in class means that teachers are denying students the chance to really learn the language. I hope that after this presentation you will be convinced that adding an extensive reading component to your classroom is a must, and that you will be inspired to find a way to make it work, regardless of your current teaching environment.

Scott Miles presented on the topic of extensive reading in Korea at our Chapter meeting on June 11. He has taught in Korea for many years and is now at Daegu Haany University. Scott is the facilitator of the KOTESOL Extensive Reading Special Interest Group and an executive officer of KEERA.

Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL July Chapter Meeting

- Time: Saturday, July 9, 2011, 1:30 p.m.
- Place: Chosun University, Main Building, 2nd Floor, CU TESOL Room 2123

Schedule

- 1:30 pm: Registration and Welcome
- 2:00 pm: Featured Presentation: ***Games and Activities: Not Just Entertainment***
Tory Thorkelson (Hanyang University; KOTESOL Immediate Past President)
- 2:50 pm: Refreshment Break
- 3:10 pm: Special Presentation: ***Student Impressions of NESTs: Both Sides of the Coin***
The Down Side (Kyung-hun Kang, Chosun University)
The Up Side (Karam Jeon, Chosun University)
- 4:00 pm: Teaching Idea & Activity Share-time: Open to Everyone
Bring your favorite activity or idea to share with us. (3-5 min. each)
- 4:30 pm: Announcements
Drawing for Prizes
Closing

(Admission is free. Membership is encouraged.)

Upcoming Chapter Events

August 6, 2011. Mid-Summer Chapter Meeting

- Swap-Shop: Teaching Ideas & Activities
Bring your ideas and activities to share.
- TEFL Question & Answer Session
Bring your questions for the panel.
- TEFL Abbreviation & Acronym Quiz
Bring your thinking caps to become a contestant.

September 3, 2011. Chapter Meeting

- *Teaching, Learning, and Developing*
Brian Heldenbrand (Jeonju University;
Past President of united Jeolla Chapter)
- *Writing Emotion into Writing*
Julien McNulty (Chosun University; 2011
KOTESOL International Conference Chair)

October 1, 2011. Suncheon Outreach Workshop

Upcoming KOTESOL Events

August 27, 2011.

Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter Symposium

October 15-16, 2011.

The 2011 Korea TESOL Intl. Conference

Pushing our Paradigms; Connecting with Culture
Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

For KOTESOL, Korea & Intl. ELT Events:

<http://www.koreatesol.org/ConferencesAndEvents>

For Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter Events:

<http://www.koreatesol.org/GwangjuNews>

Upcoming Korea ELT Events

Asia TEFL 2011: The Asia TEFL Intl. Conference

Teaching English in a Changing Asia

July 27-29, 2011 (Wed.-Fri.)

Hotel Seoul Kyoyuk Munhwa Hoegwan, Seoul

The 2011 KEES International Conference

English Education in Asia: Issues & Possibilities

August 3, 2011; Chungbuk Natl. Univ., Cheongju

KELTA 2011 International Conference

Impacts of High Stakes Exams

August 20, 2011; KICE, Seoul

MEESO 2011 Annual Conference

A New Horizon for English Language

Teaching, Learning & Testing

August 20, 2011; Myungji University, Seoul

21C AELL Autumn Conference

September 17, 2011; Gwangju

Gwangju National University of Education

KAFLE Conference 2011

September 17, 2011; Konkuk University, Seoul

PKETA International Conference 2011

September 23, 2011; PUFs, Busan