EXPERIENCES FOR TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS IN GRADES FOUR THROUGH EIGHT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The communication skills are four in number: writing, reading, speaking, and listening. The adult spends about 75 percent of his communications time engaging in the last two of these four skills.[1] The child in school spends the greater part of the school day listening. In the elementary school this is as high as two-thirds of the day.[2] Since the elementary school day contains many periods of physical activity, the portion of the school day spent in listening by the high school and college student would tend to be even greater.

All this practice in listening should produce good listeners. On the contrary, people in general are poor listeners. A check of the listening done by school children at various grade levels showed that 90 percent of first-graders were listening to their teachers when checked, and over 80 percent of second-graders were also listening. But the percentages kept dropping as the grade level increased until on the highschool level the percentage stood at a low 28.[3] In the world of

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[1]Cooperative Extension Service, "The Art of Listening" (Bozeman, Montana: Montana State College, March 2, 1962), (Mimeographed.)

[2]State Department of Public Instruction, "Listening in the Language Arts," South Dakota Curriculum Guide in the Language Arts, Pre-publication Copy (Pierre, South Dakota: State Department of Public Instruction, 1963), p. 9.

[3]Ralph G. Nichols and Leonard A. Stevens, Are You Listening? (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1957), p. 13.

business and industry communications must be put in writing if there is to be any assurance of their being transmitted correctly.[4]

Listening can be taught, and students taking such training on the college level have improved in ability to understand the spoken word by at least 25 percent and by as much as 40 percent.[5]

The Problem

The school curriculum has undergone many changes since the mid-fifties. These changes have been for the purpose of improvement of instruction and learning by means of new approaches to subject matter. Concurrent with the work of the National Science Foundation in science and mathematics were the efforts of the National Council of Teachers of English in the area of language-arts instruction. The curriculum commission of this organization reported in 1953 and "emphasized the need to give equal weight to listening in conjunction with reading, writing, and speaking in classroom instruction."[6]

The purpose of this study was to discover what means were being used to give equal weight to listening in classroom instruction.

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[4]Ibid., p. 4.

[5]Ibid., p. 15.

[6]Ibid., p. 16.

Limitations

This study was limited to the means being used to improve listening skills in grades four through eight. It was also limited to the means being used in thirteen western states.

The first limitation was originally placed at grade five, but the data which were returned used grade four as the separation level. The second limitation was deemed sufficient inasmuch as these states contain the diversity of culture necessary to insure a representative sample.

Procedures Used

Classroom teaching employs two principal means to achieve its ends. These means are the use of published textbooks and the use of supplementary materials. The supplementary materials are frequently the products of individual teachers, local school systems, college education departments, or state departments of education.

A sample[7] of recent editions of language-arts textbooks by leading publishers was selected from the curriculum laboratory in the library at Montana State College. These books were examined to determine the attention they gave to developing and improving listening skills. Most, if not all, such texts approached the teaching of listening skills in an "integrated"

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[7]These textbooks are listed in Bibliography, Section B.

manner, that is the listening activities were scattered, placed in conjunction with other language skills and understandings, and then put into the program wherever they happened to be appropriate. Many texts did not present listening skills systematically at all, and some paid almost no attention to listening skills.

In order to determine what supplementary materials were being used in the area of teaching listening a letter[8] was sent to the Elementary Curriculum Supervisor in each of the following states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. This letter requested the names of persons or schools in the state who had done work in the area of teaching listening skills.

Another letter[9] was sent to each of the persons whose name was supplied by a curriculum supervisor. These persons were asked to supply information about their procedures or to send samples of the materials they were using.

Sources of Data

Eleven of the thirteen state supervisors acknowledged the request for names of persons or schools having done work in the area of teaching listening skills. Three of these supervisors

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[8]See Appendix A

[9]See Appendix B

sent materials directly, one admitted that he could be of no help, and the remaining seven submitted a total of twelve names. Of these twelve persons, seven complied with the request to send copies of the supplementary materials they were using.

CHAPTER II

LISTENING

In order to use the experiences for teaching listening in an efficient way the teacher should know the definition of listening, the several kinds of listening, and the factors that influence listening.

Definition

Listening involves hearing, but listening and hearing are not synonymous. Listening is much more than the hearing of words just as reading is much more than the saying of words. Any inclusive and accurate definition of listening must include the idea of perception followed by comprehension.

> Listening involves giving conscious and active attention for the purpose of gaining some meaning from what we hear. It means understanding and interpreting what we hear, and requires the development of skills and attitudes comparable to those used in reading.[1]

De Boer[2] puts it more simply by defining listening as hearing with comprehension.

Listening, as defined above, is sometimes called auding. "Auding is to the ears what reading is to the eyes."[3]

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[1]State Department of Public Instruction, op. cit., p.1.

[2]John J. DeBoer, Walter V. Kaulkers, and Helen R. Miller, Teaching Secondary English (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1951), p. 198.

[3]Eleanor TeSelle, et. al., Language Arts (Phoenix, Arizona: State Department of Public Instruction, 1962), p. 9.

Kinds of Listening

Since listening involves attention it follows that there can be different kinds of listening based upon the amount of attention demanded. This amount of attention can range from the almost unconscious to that of high concentration. The National Council of Teachers of English has classified listening into five types.[4]

Passive or marginal listening comes close to contradicting the definition of listening, for the amount of attention exercised is minimal. In this type of listening the sound is in the background and is actually "tuned out" of the hearer's consciousness. Yet, a change in this background of sound will bring about an awareness in the listener. People engage in listening of this nature whenever they attend the movies, the theater, or shop in a store where background music is being played. The student working independently in school hears the teacher's voice in this way. Note that such a student is brought to attention by a sudden change in the volume or the tone of the teacher's voice.

Listening for enjoyment or appreciation takes place whenever a person relaxes and settles back to listen to music, poetry, or a story. Attention is not in great demand here either. However, the attention which is being given is both conscious and active.

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[4]Com. on the English Curriculum of the Nat'l Council of Teachers of English, Language Arts for Today's Children (New York; Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954), p. 81.

At the sound of the first notes of the national anthem the audience rises. The listeners are actively and emotionally engaged. Thus responsive or creative listening is taking place. The actors in a play, the participants in choral reading, the square dancers, and even he who taps his foot to the beat of martial music are all listening responsively.

Passive, appreciative, and responsive listening all take place in the schoolroom. In the intermediate and upper grades another kind of listening takes on increased importance. It is given various names: attentive, sequential, informative, interrogative. These names imply that a greater amount of conscious and active attention is required. The listener is now looking for specific information or answers. He is listening to make sure he is following the speaker's plan or that he is accurate in his understanding of the material being presented. The listener "tunes in" as contrasted with "tuning out" in passive listening.

The listening requiring high concentration is known as analytical or critical listening. The listener relates what he hears against the total of his personal experience and makes a value judgment. What the speaker says is being evaluated in terms of logic, propaganda, bias, and authority.

The foregoing list of kinds of listening is but one of several attempts to classify the kinds of listening. This one was selected because it lends itself to an arrangement of approximate ascending order of concentration. The listing in

this paper has been so arranged. Thus it was necessary to omit classifications such as courteous listening and conversational listening both of which require varying degrees of concentration.

Factors Influencing Listening

The factors exerting an influence upon classroom listening can be divided into two groups. The first group is made up of factors bearing upon the teacher. Some of these factors are inherent in the teacher; others are external to the teacher but are under his control.

Listening skill is no different from reading or speaking skill in that pupils will learn it partially by imitation. The teacher, therefore, must set a good example as a listener. Pupils will note, too, that the teacher is an enthusiastic listener; and enthusiasm is contagious. If the class is dominated by the talk of the instructor the students will seldom, if ever, be able to observe the teacher as a listener. In later life the skill of listening will be exercised among peers. The pupils, therefore, should be given many opportunities to learn to listen to each other.

An atmosphere of acceptance should be developed. This will occur when the teacher is able to convey to each pupil that what he, the pupil, has to say is important. But let the teacher be on guard not only against the domination of the speaking situation by one or by just a few pupils but also against the introduction of irrelevant material.

A second pitfall into which teachers are prone to enter is that of repeating directions, answers, and assignments. Students very quickly come to rely on a second and third repetition and actually "tune out" the first utterances of the instructor. If the class is given to understand that directions and assignments will be given only once by the teacher, such a procedure will be accepted; and a forward step in listening skill will have been taken. However, the teacher must be sure that he has formulated his statements unequivocally and that they have been spoken clearly. The pupils, too, should understand that a reasonable amount of conferring with each other will be permitted.

The factors external to the teacher have to do with classroom management and lesson materials.

Obviously the listening process is improved when the listener can see the speaker. Teachers generally face their classes, but when pupils do the listening to each other this face-to-face arrangement must be planned for deliberately. The pupils should be arranged in a circle or a semi-circle.

Face-to-face seating is not enough. In addition, the pupils should be comfortably seated; and the subject matter should be geared to their interest and maturity. Care must be taken also not to exceed the attention span of the pupils or the length of time that young, active bodies can remain at rest.

The second group of factors influencing listening is centered in the listeners, in this case the pupils. One of

these is simply the nature of man. It cannot be changed, but it can be recognized and made useful rather than detrimental. Human beings are able to listen about four times as fast as the speaker can speak.[5] The untrained listener permits his mind to wander during this extra time, and the result is day-dreaming and loss of the speaker's trend of thought. The trained listener uses this extra time to analyze what is being said, to relate the ideas to his own experience, and to think ahead anticipating the road the speaker is following.

Another factor affecting listening and centered in the listener is the difference in auditory acuity, auditory discrimination, and auditory comprehension. Auditory acuity pertains to the ability to hear sounds while auditory discrimination deals with the ability to distinguish the sound of one letter or group of letters from another letter or group of letters which sound somewhat alike. Auditory comprehension involves the ability to understand and remember the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences which are heard.

For the teacher the problem of auditory acuity is one of recognition and referral to the proper medical authorities. It may include a change in seating arrangement, too. But the matters of discrimination and comprehension are the direct

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[5]Ralph G. Nichols, "What Can Be Done About Listening?" The Supervisor's Notebook, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1960), p. 2.

concern of the classroom teacher. Experiences for their improvement will be included in the next chapter.

The remaining factors in this group have to do with the attitude of the listener toward both the speaker and the speaker's material. A speaker may be disliked because of his appearance, because of what he stands for, or because of certain mannerisms he uses in speaking. On the other hand, the speaker may be well liked for exactly the same reasons. Ideally listening is not concerned with liking or disliking the speaker. Listeners must be taught to avoid criticizing on the basis of these externals and to concentrate upon the content of what is being said.

In listening to another person or persons speaking the listener is subjected to a rapid interplay of his attitudes and emotions. A poor listener lets his inner self buffet him about to the extent that he gets nothing worthwhile out of his so-called listening experience. He is constantly "tuning in" and "tuning out" what is said, and in so doing misses the central thrust of the speech. Listening is concerned with the whole, not the parts of an oral presentation.

A poor listener calls a speech dull at the outset and "tunes out" rather than to continue to listen in order to find out if there is something he can use in the material. In an opposite reaction, a poor listener may become overly stimulated by a certain part of the speech or even by some emotion-laden word. From this point on he hears no more; now he is listening

in order to reply rather than listening in order to understand.

There are listeners who compliment themselves on their ability to listen only for facts. Little do they realize that facts in themselves have no meaning. Facts become meaningful only as they are related to other material and thus form ideas.

Other listeners insist upon outlining everything. The error here is that everything spoken does not necessarily follow from a carefully prepared outline. Only one-third or perhaps as much as one-half of all speeches have been prepared from outlines.[6]

Experienced teachers have encountered many instances of these last three characteristics of poor listening. Many are the students who have perfected the art of faking attention. They can sit quietly, look intently at the teacher, and yet manage to hear not a word. Listening requires mental effort as well as a physical pose.

Contrasted to the poor listener who fakes attention is the poor listener who makes no pretense of his inattentiveness. There is no disturbance minute enough but that it is able to divert his attention away from the speaker. He turns, twists, fidgets, stretches, yawns, drops, bends, picks up ad infinitum.

Lastly there is the dieting listener. He is satisfied with a listening diet of skim milk. Fortunately for him there

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[6] Ibid.

is an ample supply of skim milk available. Unfortunately for him listening for learning cannot be confined exclusively to listening to that which is easy.

In the classroom listening should be directed "for" something rather than "at" something. Better listening will result when the listener has a real purpose for listening.[7] Stating it another way, pupils will listen better when they expect to use what they hear.[8] Again, children will listen when a personal need is being satisfied.[9]

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[7]Commission on the English Curriculum for the National Council of Teachers of English, op. cit., p. 84.

[8]State Department of Public Instruction, "Listening," North Dakota Curriculum Guide, Thermo-Fax pages (Bismarck, North Dakota: State Department of Public Instruction), p. 54.

[9]Eleanor TeSelle, op. cit., p. 10.

CHAPTER III

EXPERIENCES FOR TEACHING LISTENING

The purpose of this chapter is to list experiences which can be used for teaching listening skills in grades four through eight. Some of these experiences are applicable to any and all of these grades. Others are much more limited in scope. To attempt to place each experience at a particular grade level would be to assume a degree of homogeneity in the schools and in the pupils which simply does not exist. These experiences have been taken from Nichols and from the materials sent to the writer by teachers and supervisors in response to his letters.[1] These materials have stood the test of classroom use.

Experiences to Create Awareness of the World of Sounds

1. Have the children close their eyes for one minute and listen. Call on selected pupils to tell the class what they heard.

2. Have the members of the class prepare a written or oral report listing the sounds they heard on the way to school. This can be varied by substituting sounds in the kitchen, on the playground, upon awaking, or after retiring for the night.

3. Play a recording for the class and have the pupils answer questions concerning the number and kinds of instruments,

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[1]The sources for these experiences are listed in the Bibliography, Section C. Most of these experiences are found in more than one of these sources.

the mood of the music, and the thoughts the music brought to their minds. If the recording is non-musical ask the children to tell how they knew when different characters were speaking and how they could tell the mood of the character.

4. When the rain falls, when an animal is frightened, when motors start, when snow is crushed underfoot, and when the clock keeps time, all these events are accompanied by sound. Ask the pupils to find or to think of words which tell of these sounds.

Experiences to Develop Auditory Discrimination

1. Have the students make the sounds which are suggested in the following verse. Try adding other verses to make more sounds.

Listening[2]

Let me hear the little wind blowing in the trees,
ch..., wh... wh...
Let me hear the humming sound of the busy bees,
zzzzz...zzzzz...zzzzz...

Let me hear the tea kettle when it's making steam,
sssss...sssss...sssss...
Let me hear the Jersey cow in the meadow green,
mmmmm...ppppp...

Let me hear the rooster as he flaps his wings,
r, r, r, r, r, r,
Let me hear the little girl as this song she sings,
la, la, la, la, la, la,

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[2]Louise Binder Scott and J.J. Thompson, Talking Time, (St. Louis: Webster Publishing Company, 1951), p. 110.

2. In order to give the students practice in distinguishing beginning and ending sounds of words place slips of paper with beginning sounds of words in one box and ending sounds of words in the other box. As you pronounce words the children will respond by selecting the slips with the beginning wounds or the ending sounds from the appropriate box. The boxes, of course, can be designed as additional motivation appropriate to the grade level.

In items 3, 4, and 5 which follow, the teacher should read the first word of the series, pause, and then read the remaining four words of the series. The first word that is read by the teacher is not found on the students' answer sheets. The four words of each series found on the answer sheets should be read but once by the teacher.

3. Have the pupils encircle the word that begins the same way as the given word.

baker:	hill	box	carry	quarter
short:	full	sing	ship	dog
which:	how	though	with	where

4. Have the pupils encircle the word that rhymes with the given word.

week:	paper	day	with	sneak
never:	milk	hat	ever	even
hit:	set	sit	hat	net

5. Have the pupils encircle the word that ends the same way as the given word.

frog:	pig	rub	rod	god
sun:	some	did	other	can
books:	takes	has	was	sink

Items 3, 4, and 5 can be expanded to include many additional sounds. One or two words from each item should be worked with the pupils as examples.

6. Pick a common last syllable of a word. Say this to the class and have the classsay aloud as many different words as possible ending in the same sound. For example, ...tion: attention, repetition, nation, invention, etc.

Experiences Stressing the General Importance of Listening

1. Instead of using the duplicator or the chalkboard try to present the regular tests in the several subjects orally. This will mean reading the instructions aloud and also all of the questions. A quick check of the students will enable you to determine how much time to allow between questions.

2. As an exercise not only in listening but also as a lesson in responsibility the students should be given the assignment of summarizing and passing on orally the instruction missed by those students who were absent.

3. Have the class develop a set of rules for courteous listening. This can be accomplished by means of class discussion around some central idea of good listening. For example, "Why should I listen to someone who is talking about something I'm not particularly interested in hearing?"

4. Try to break the habit of putting every message in writing. When students are used as messengers between classrooms or between the school and the home give the pupil the responsibility of carrying an oral communication.

5. Whisper a short message to a pupil at one side of the classroom. Ask him to relay the material, in a whisper, to the pupil nearest him. Continue this procedure until the message has been passed to several students or even to every student in the class. Ask the last pupil to repeat aloud what he heard, and then compare it with the original paragraph. This game should be tried frequently in an effort to gain accuracy.

6. In conjunction with the discussion of courteous listening have three or four students prepare short talks on a favorite subject. These students should be told that they will have to speak under trying circumstances but that they are to continue talking despite this. When the selected speakers have left the room, instruct the class to listen to the speakers attentively until you give them a pre-arranged signal. Upon receiving the signal the class is to cease paying attention and is to begin doing other things, such as looking at books or out the window. Call the speakers back into the room and have them give their speeches. After all the speakers have finished have them discuss how they felt when the class stopped paying attention to them. Use this as a basis for a class discussion about the listener's responsibility to the speaker.

Notice that items 2, 3, 5, and 6 make use of students. listening to students more than students listening to the teacher.

Experiences Involving Responsive Listening

1. Read the description of a physical scene to the class. Have the class draw pictures of what they heard.

This can be done with the children's original paragraphs. In fact, the children can be paired so that each reads his paragraph to his partner, and each makes a drawing of what he has heard.

2. Have the members of the class act out a few paragraphs of a book or story you have just read to them.

3. Read aloud a poem, such as "Nancy Hanks", or a story which is likely to stir emotions and encourage the class to talk about their feelings. Try to get at the specific emotions involved and at the pupils' reasons for feeling as they do.

4. Have the class become familiar with the idea of chain stories. Ask a pupil to begin telling a story orally while the rest of the class listens attentively. Call upon individuals to exercise creativity by continuing the story orally.

5. Read the first half of an unfamiliar story. Now combine listening with writing by having the pupils write a creative ending.

6. Upon the chalkboard sketch two faces, one happy and the other sad. As you pronounce a number of words, ask the pupils to associate the word with the face representing the feeling of happiness or the feeling of sadness. Leave enough space between the two faces for the neutral words you should include.

Experiences for Appreciative Listening

1. Use poetry and choral speaking making use of rythmic

poems such as "The Highwayman" by Noyes and "The Mountain Whippoorwill" by Benet.

2. Listen to good music and have the pupils try to discover such details as the following:

What kind of music is it? Is it vocal; is it instrumental, or is it both?

Is music the same throughout, or does it get higher or lower? Does its speed stay the same? Is it always loud, or is it sometimes soft?

Are the same instruments playing, or do different instruments take turns playing?

Is there one person singing, two persons, more persons, or does the number of singers vary?

Incidentally, here is an excellent opportunity to do some vocabulary building (duet, trio, soprano, bass, temp, pitch).

3. Have the children learn to appreciate correct grammatical form. Do they need practice in "isn't" and "ain't" or in "not any" and "not no"? Have the students play a game by asking and answering questions such as these. For example:

John, is your bike at school today?

No, Miss_____, my bike isn't here today.

Jane, do you have your class dues ready?

No, Mr. _____, I haven't any money with me today.

Each question must be answered with a complete sentence.

4. Sometimes a lesson from the content areas such as geography or history should be taught as a listening lesson. Have the students listen as you read. Impress upon them that they are to be making a mental picture of the material you are reading. Later on the pupils should read the material for themselves. Then discuss whether there were things they found in reading that they had missed in listening.

5. Develop an appreciation for differences in style.

> Read two items of similar length, but of different style or intent. Ask the pupils to listen for differences and then discuss. For example:
>
> a. a short editorial and a short magazine sales pitch
> b. a description and a character sketch
> c. an arithmetic problem and the directions for a science experience
> d. a recipe and the directions for making some object
> e. a newspaper item and a fictional incident[3]

6. Read a short conversation varying the tone of your voice so that the class will be able to note differences in meaning. Ask the class to determine which one best expresses the intended meaning.

7. Now take a short sentence and vary the emphasis from word to word. Ask the pupils to decide how the meaning changes.

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[3]State Department of Public Instruction, "Listening in the Language Arts," South Dakota Curriculum Guide in the Language Arts, Pre-publication Copy (Pierre, South Dakota: State Department of Public Instruction, 1963), p. 28.

For example, "What are you doing here? What are you doing here? What are you doing here? What are you doing here? What are you doing here?

Experiences for Attentive Listening

1. Assignments should be made and directions should be given purposefully with a statement to that effect. The pupils should be told to listen so that they know what to do next, or they should be told to listen in order to know what to look for in the next assignment.

2. Riddles are not only fun but they are also an excellent means for teaching attentive listening.

3. Begin by having one student say a word, have a second student repeat the word and add one of his own, the third student repeats both words and adds another. This continues until someone misses a word. As soon as a word is missed, the whole process starts over again. There are many variations of this round-robin listening drill.

4. This exercise makes use of the times you read to the pupils and also will help expose the "attention-faker". As you read to the class pause now and then to have the pupils guess what some word in strong context will be, or to predict an outcome, or to discuss a controversial point, or to draw a conclusion.

5. Read a selected article without comment and ask the students several general questions about it. After that do

some of the following activities as experiences in listening for details. Have the pupils make a list of the words describing color, or naming people, or describing sounds. See if the students are able to list the order of events in the article.

6. The pupils should have the opportunity to practice note taking while listening. Be sure to emphasize brevity and the taking of key words only. Don't let the students get into the habit of trying to write down everything that's said.

7. Have a member of the class give the directions for playing some game. See whether the class is actually able to play the game after hearing the directions just one time.

8. Arithmetic[4]

The materials of arithmetic provide excellent means to teach the following skills of listening:

a. ability to identify and to formulate problems
b. ability to locate and select pertinent information
c. ability to understand sequence
d. ability to arrange data systematically
e. ability to arrive at correct conclusions

9. Play mental arithmetic at the beginning of the arithmetic lesson. For example: Two and three, less one, times three, plus three, divide by five, add seven. What is your answer?

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[4]Ibid., p. 29.

Experiences for Critical Listening

1. Radio or T.V. listening in class provides practice for critical listening.

2. Have the students make a "hit parade" of poems, stories or T.V. programs heard each month. They should have the opportunity to discuss the appealing qualities of each.

3. The teacher discusses the difference between true stories and stories in which imagined events take place. The teacher should then give an example of a very short story of each type. One or two sentences will do. Then the pupils are asked to tell which story is make-believe and which is true. When the pupils are familiar with the difference between the two types a student may volunteer to tell a story. The story may be of some imaginary event or of something which could really happen. The storyteller then asks another student, "Make-believe or true?"

In starting this game, the teacher may make use of such easy examples as, "The cow jumped over the moon," and "The cow gave some good milk for the children's supper." With more practice, the children may judge such a story as this: "One day Bill and Jerry went for a walk in the woods. Near some damp ground they found many mushrooms growing. They were just going to pick some for supper when they heard a little voice say 'Don't pick that one! I need it for my umbrella when it rains.' Then a little elf skipped away from the mushroom and disappeared into the woods.[5]

4. A listening game modeled after the T.V. program "To Tell the Truth" lends itself well to the use of current social studies or science unit concepts. Three pupils are selected as

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[5]Lillian Leyson et al, "Listening," (Sioux Falls, South Dakota: Sioux Falls Public Schools, 1960), p. 4. (Mimeographed).

contestants, and in a brief conference they determine which one of them will make a true statement. It is then up to the class to listen attentively in order to determine which one of the three is telling the truth.

5. The teacher delivers a speech that is decidedly one-sided in favor of something the students consider desirable, too. The students are then asked to criticize the speech objectively.

6. Have the class listen to a talk on some controversial topic. This talk should be presented by an authority on the subject. Take notes and then discuss the true and false, the good and bad. Analyze the language used and the purpose of the speaker.

7. Have a student read a review of some entertainment in a magazine or a newspaper. The class should discuss the qualities the program would or would not have.

8. Invite outsiders into the classroom to talk on safety, social studies topics, or some other pertinent subject. The class should be prepared for effective listening. After the talk have the class evaluate the speaker and outline his talk on the chalkboard.

9. Able students should take on the responsibility of listening to a discussion and then of summarizing it at the end of the discussion period. Others of the group could be assigned to evaluate the discussion on the points of a good discussion. The points of a good discussion such as clarity of voice,

talking to the point, participation, weight of evidence, and courtesy should be established beforehand through teacher-pupil planning.

10. Criticizing oneself:[6]

> "Hearing oneself as others hear one" is something more easily accomplished if a tape recorder is available. Children may record talks presented in class and may later be allowed to listen to themselves. If the child has difficulty in speaking fluently, the tape should be played for him alone, so that he may listen without tension and the teacher may help him to analyze objectively his strengths and weaknesses in speaking. Several recordings are usually necessary before a child begins to listen and analyze his own problems.

The foregoing experiences for teaching the several kinds of listening are by no means exhaustive. They are indicative of the work that is being done by teachers and school systems that are concerned with the teaching of listening as a specific and important skill.

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[6] Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

Listening is an important but neglected language-arts skill. Is any action being taken to rectify this situation in this day of concern about the work of the nation's schools? This was the question to which this paper was addressed.

An examination of recent textbooks in the language-arts area and within the grade level limitations set by this study indicated that the commercial publishers had not made a serious effort to include materials for the teaching of listening as a specific skill. Nichols[1], however, in his writings indicated that work was being done in this area by individual schools.

Following Nichols' lead we contacted the elementary curriculum supervisors in thirteen western states for information about listening skills being taught in their states. Only two of these supervisors ignored the request for information. The others either provided information or supplied the names of teachers who would be able to supply materials. Twelve teachers were contacted, and seven of these twelve were most generous with their information and materials.

The information supplied us with a good definition of what is meant by listening in its broadest sense. Listening

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[1]Ralph G. Nichols and Leonard A. Stevens, Are You Listening? (New York:McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc.,1957), p. 212.

in this sense means hearing with perception leading to comprehension.

The information also disclosed that listening was classified in many different ways. Of the many classifications we chose five: passive, appreciative, responsive, attentive, and critical. Other means of classification could have been chosen, but these five readily lent themselves to arrangement in order of increasing amounts of required attention.

Lastly the information contained a large number of experiences for the teaching of specific listening skills. A surprising amount of similarity was shown in these listening experiences.

Conclusions

The sample chosen for this study was considered sufficiently representative of the work being done in the area of listening skills throughout the nation. As we pursued our quest to the local level the responses became fewer in number, and some hoped for responses from large metropolitan systems failed to materialize. Nevertheless, the fact that so many of the listening experiences from such widely scattered areas were so similar in nature leads us to believe that a more extensive sampling process would not have yielded significantly different results.

Among the materials received were supplementary materials on listening skills published by three of the leading publishers

in the field of language-arts textbooks. Evidently at least these three publishers are beginning to note the importance of listening skills taught purposely rather than incidentally. Incorporation into the language-arts textbooks appears to be in the near future.

Compared to the number of schools in the area covered by this study, the twelve schools or teachers named as doing noteworthy work in the teaching of listening skills is only a drop in the bucket. However, these were only those whose work had come to the attention of the state supervisors. A school by school survey would be necessary to ferret out all those teachers who are doing quiet but effective work in this area. A beginning has been made, and the type of materials which have been developed indicates that it is a sound beginning.

Implications

Dr. Nichols was contacted in an effort to obtain more recent information about investigations in the area of listening skills, for his book, Are You Listening, was already six years old.[2] He in turn referred us to Dr. Duker at Brooklyn College, and Dr. Duker supplied us with an up-to-date, 725-item bibliography on investigations in this area.[3] Of particular interest to the student desirous of delving more deeply

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[2]See Appendix C

[3]See Appendix D

into this matter is Dr. Duker's classification of these references into ten categories.[4] Among them are psychological factors involved in listening, the interrelationship of the various language-arts with listening, listening at the college level, and the testing of listening skills.

How is listening skill evaluated? It is obvious that listening for information can be tested by teacher-made tests. But how is appreciative listening tested? Buros[5] lists no standardized tests for listening at the primary level and only one test at the intermediate level. This test[6] has several shortcomings.

The listening experiences while varying from an emotional poem to a recipe all require less than five minutes of listening. Children at this level should be tested for longer periods of listening than this.

No use is made of recordings of any kind. Rather, the materials are read by the local examiner. The variability thus introduced is obvious.

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[4]Sam Duker, "A Bibliography on Listening," (Brooklyn: Office of Testing and Research, Brooklyn College, 1961)pp.51-52.

[5]Oscar Buros (ed.) Fifth Mental Measurements Yearbook, (Highland Park, New Jersey: Gryphon Press, 1959), pp.652-655.

[6]Cooperative Test Division, Sequential Tests of Educational Progress: Listening (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1957).

This test could easily be given as a silent reading test. Yet, there is no information available to indicate that this has been done in order to determine the extent to which these materials are testing factors common to both reading and listening.[7]

The need today is not so much for more materials as it is to put the existing materials to wider use. Equally important, and perhaps even more urgent, is the need for additional and more refined instruments for measuring all kinds of listening skills.

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[7]Buros, op. cit., p. 653.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The following is a copy of the letter sent to the elementary curriculum supervisors in the several states:

Bozeman, Montana
April 29, 1963

State Department of Public Instruction
_____, _____

Attention: Elementary Curriculum Supervisor

Dear Sir:

I am interested in developing materials to be used in the teaching of listening skills at the upper elementary level (grades 5 through 8). Such materials will be of benefit to me as a prospective school superintendent and to the present and future students enrolling in the course in the teaching of language arts here at Montana State College. This project is being done as part of the requirements for an M. Ed. degree.

Are you aware of any school(s) and/or teacher(s) in (state) who have done work in this area? If so, I would appreciate receiving their names and addresses in order that I can contact them directly.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Yours truly,

APPENDIX B

The following is a copy of the letter sent to the persons suggested by the several elementary curriculum supervisors:

Bozeman, Montana
May 28, 1963

_____
_____
_____
_____

Dear_____:

You were mentioned by_____, Supervisor of Elementary Education, as a person who had done work in the area of teaching listening skills at the upper elementary level. I am interested in developing materials to be used in the teaching of listening skills in grades five through eight. Although this work is being done in connection with fulfilling the requirements for an M. Ed. degree, such materials will be of benefit both to me as a prospective school superintendent and to the present and future students enrolling in the course in the teaching of language arts here at Montana State College. Any information you can supply as to your methods and/or actual materials used will be appreciated.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. I will also be happy to reimburse you for any additional costs involved.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and cooperation.

Yours truly,

APPENDIX C

The following is a copy of the letter sent to Dr. Nichols.

Bozeman, Montana
April 30, 1963

Dr. Ralph G. Nichols
Dept. of Speech and Theater Arts
309 Folwell Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Dr. Nichols:

I am interested in developing materials to be used in the actual teaching of listening skills at the upper elementary school level (grades 5 through 8). Since your book, Are You Listening, and its bibliography is already six years old, a more up-to-date bibliography would be of great help to me. If such a listing is available I would appreciate receiving a copy.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Yours truly,

APPENDIX D

The following is a copy of the letter sent to Dr. Duker:

Bozeman, Montana
May 28, 1963

Dr. Sam Duker
College of Education
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Dr. Duker:

You were suggested by Dr. Nichols of the University of Minnesota as the person through whom the best bibliographies on listening skills are now available. I am interested in developing materials to be used in the teaching of listening skills in grades five through eight. Although this work is being done in connection with fulfilling the requirements for an M. Ed. degree, such materials will be of benefit both to me as a prospective school superintendent and to the present and future students enrolling in the course in the teaching of language arts here at Montana State College. Your willingness to supply an up-to-date bibliography on listening skills will be appreciated.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. I will also be happy to reimburse you for any additional costs involved.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and cooperation.

Yours truly,