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Listening Strategies for English Language Learner Comprehension, a Teacher Resource Guide

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LISTENING STRATEGIES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER
COMPREHENSION: A TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in English as a Second Language

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To my family for their support throughout this process.

To Margaret, thank you for your guidance and time.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This capstone examines the best strategies in teaching listening comprehension to third grade students because my third grade English learners (EL) did not significantly improve in the WIDA Access listening domain, and I want to do something about this lack of success. The EL learners in my school work so hard in reading and writing. They are given opportunities to speak with each other. In speaking the focus is always on that: speaking. There is little discussion on how to be a good listener and what to listen for in a conversation so that they understand. Much of the listening in school and on the WIDA listening exam is a one-way conversation. Students are only listening. Both teachers and students need guidance in how to help students listen more effectively by allowing more speaking throughout the day. Students would benefit if they had strategies to pay attention to in the important parts of a lecture or listening test. Giving my students strategies to increase listening comprehension would help them significantly in school. They would be able to retain more information from class and be able to use this information more effectively when doing classroom work. Giving teachers in my school an effective way to support EL learners during listening tasks would be a great service. There is little research done regarding elementary students and listening comprehension strategies. In this capstone, I worked to describe and develop lesson plans for strategies to help my students in their listening comprehension by providing

teachers with a resource for working with students. The question that I tried to answer in this study is: How do I create a teacher resource guide with listening strategies to improve student listening skills for EL students in grades 3-5?

In this chapter, I discussed my personal experience in learning listening comprehension. I wrote about the importance of listening comprehension for my EL students and how it impacts both learning language and content. I reflected on my experience working with EL learners and the need for professional improvement in my classroom, my building and other colleagues in the field. I briefly discussed the listening component of the WIDA Access test to determine the benefits and flaws in focus questions and think-aloud listening strategies for EL learners.

My Personal Experience with Listening Skills

Like many children, my listening experience began with my family. I learned to listen to my parents and brother at the dinner table. My mom read to me every night. This experience was helpful in both reading and listening skill building. My first memory of explicit listening comprehension was in my 7th grade history class. Our teacher was helping us learn note taking strategies during a lecture. My teacher explained that you can listen for certain cues while taking notes during a lecture. One cue is when teachers slow their speech suddenly and says their point louder. Usually it is accompanied by a word or sentence that the teacher writes down as well. Another cue is the sentence said by the speaker in the beginning and end of the conversation. When a new topic is presented, the first and last sentence that the teacher says is usually the main idea and should be written down. I used these listening strategies through high school and college. As an adult, I have mastered the listening strategy of perking up when the

speaker is telling me something that I need to remember. This skill is based on the strategies from my 7th grade history teacher. Thanks, Mr. Gannon!

Conversation-based listening involves different strategies. Listening while having a two way conversation allows for greater listening comprehension because the responses and questions that I contribute help me to synthesize the information presented to me. There are also social expectations that come with correct responses which motivates me to stay on task and listen. If I were to stop listening or respond with a way that doesn't show comprehension, it would affect the relationship that I have with the speaker. The speaker would be less likely to converse with me in the future.

In conversation, listening and speaking keep each other on task. How I am going to respond to the speaker's questions? What I can ask the speaker to be an engaging listener? It is important to ask the speaker questions about what they're saying to show that you value their stories and ideas. It also keeps the conversation interesting for me. In my students' perspective, the skill of formulating questions is very challenging. Often, in practice, my students will ask questions in the form of an answer. For example, if they intend to ask "How did you fly the kite?" they may phrase it as "You fly a kite?" In general, they are not confident in producing question words in a conversation.

Although it is important for me to revisit my own experience learning to listen, it should not be directly compared to my students listening experience because English is my first language. In my experience learning to speak Japanese while living in Japan, my listening skills were exhausted. I would apply my knowledge of the situation to understand the gist of what the speaker was saying. Forget asking questions; usually my

response was agreeing with the speaker, nodding or repeating the essence of what they were telling me. Luckily, my conversations were purely social. I couldn't imagine learning academic content in Japanese. The amount of energy it took for social conversation was difficult enough.

Importance of Listening Comprehension: The Case of My Students

In the 3rd grade mainstream classroom, I have observed students who are disengaged from instruction. Listening to classroom lectures does not come naturally to them. Students sit at their desks while their teacher lectures about this week's social studies theme of citizenship. Half of the 25 students are native Spanish speakers and score between a 2 and a 5 on their WIDA Access listening test. The students range in ability. Some are able to use simple compound sentences while others use complex sentences with accurate grammar and academic vocabulary. The teacher has a newspaper visual that is at a reading level that is too difficult for about half of the students. The article presents actions that the students can do to become better citizens. As students are sitting and listening to their teacher talking about citizenship, most of the content is not understood. When the teacher is done reading and lecturing, she asks the students to talk about some things that they can do to be better citizens. The students respond with long blinks while a couple of top achievers raise their hands. If their teacher had a listening strategy, perhaps students would be more engaged and comprehension would improve.

According to WIDA listening, Level 5 listeners should be able to draw conclusions or inferences and make connections between ideas based on oral discourse (Gottlieb, 2012). In order to do this, listeners need to develop listening comprehension skills so that they can synthesize information and understand concepts addressed in

class. Students need to be able to understand what is being spoken about in class so that they can engage in discussions, make connections between listening and reading and write about what they've heard.

My pull out classroom consists of 10 ESL students. We work for 30 minutes each day on reading and writing through science and social studies. We have a quiet room where we work on classroom content like biology of the human body in science or sensory poems with similes and metaphors for language arts. Content is scaffolded with front loaded vocabulary and topics. Through frontloading, students are able to experience the topic before we start reading about it. In studying the human body, students watch videos and play with visuals that contain different systems of the human body. When they start reading, they already have experience of the topic and vocabulary. They are more confident discussing concepts in class and writing about the topic. Last year, I started using a variety of higher level questions to get students engaged and speaking. The purpose of higher level questions is to give students the opportunity to think about the content at a deeper level (Bedwell, 1975; Cliatt & Shaw, 1985). Students synthesize the information and will remember it as a result of answering higher level questions. Higher order thinking questions go beyond a yes no answer. They elicit responses to questions like "What kinds of food are easier on your digestive system and why? Why is it important for you to get a good night's sleep? How does sleep affect your neurological system?" Students also practice reading comprehension, writing in journals and making connections between the content and themselves, other texts or the world.

One strategy that I have used is giving students authentic visuals, such as lima beans and soil, while they are listening or reading to connect their prior knowledge to new learning. They may have prior experience with gardening or eating beans. Prior knowledge comes from life experiences and prior school experiences. This commands their attention more than if they were only relying on auditory information. Recently, my students made a hypothesis and observation about lima bean seeds and their potential for new growth. Students watched as I drew the different sections of the bean and then went and drew the beans themselves. They also touched the beans to have a sensory experience while they observed. This activity became a strategy for teaching listening comprehension. I did not inform the students that these observations and drawings influenced their listening skills. However, as I think back, it would have helped them to know that listening comprehension was embedded in their learning. In being aware of listening comprehension, students would be able to monitor their own growth.

I realized that in teaching English as a second language, I have not given listening the attention that it deserves. The low priority I placed on listening was reflected in my student's WIDA Access listening scores. Students showed the least improvement in this area in comparison to speaking, reading and writing. Why is this? Perhaps, students had a difficult time focusing on the unfamiliar voices on the recording. Nothing could be repeated, but the pacing of the CD felt very slow and appropriate. This couldn't be why they did not improve. One strategy may be to familiarize students with listening to a variety of voices on a recording before they answer questions. Students need more listening support in the classroom. If I provided students with listening support, they may have shown more improvement or had a better chance in applying their listening skills.

Listening comprehension is a skill for comprehending academic information. If EL students can be taught to increase listening comprehension, they will be able to better communicate with each other and participate in classroom discussions. Learning should be an interactive process.

WIDA ACCESS Listening Components

According to the WIDA website, the listening test is based from Model Performance Indicators. Model Performance Indicators (MPIs) combine language and content objectives to provide a standard or goal for each WIDA proficiency level (WIDA Consortium, 2012). The indicators are based on five language subjects: social and instructional language, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The WIDA listening test tests the five language subjects in the five proficiency levels to determine the proficiency level of the student. Students may fall under Level One: Beginning; Level Two: Entering; Level Three: Developing; Level Four: Expanding and Level Five: Bridging. For example, one of the listening sample questions is directed for a level four student. There is a specific MPI for level four science that states “Compare/Contrast relationships that verify or contradict hypotheses as described orally in science experiments pertaining to physical states of matter, living and nonliving things, forces of nature or weather patterns” (WIDA Consortium, 2012). The question gives three multiple choice answers. The student is expected to answer a question about weight and density based on a science lesson in the recording. The student is able to listen only once to the recording before selecting an answer.

In considering how to support my students in this test, the importance of conversational listening skills and note taking skills in lecture listening must be

considered. How might students apply this to the one-way conversation that is presented? Both focus questions and think-aloud strategies would benefit students listening to a test recording; their use would simulate the natural two way conversation strategy of generating questions to stay on task and increase comprehension. The flaw in using think-aloud test strategies, is that there is no time to pause the recording to explore the thinking process. Questions would need to be formulated before and after the listening sample.

Origins of Interest

In my classroom, I focus primarily on improving writing and speaking. I do not feel well versed in listening strategies. Consequently, my students' WIDA scores in the Listening domain barely improved. I began to wonder what tools I can give my students so that when they are presented with a listening task, they wouldn't be confused in listening comprehension testing. I wrote this capstone as a means for my professional growth and to empower my students to become more proficient language learners. Few researchers have addressed the elementary age group in listening comprehension strategies.

Guiding Questions

What do I need to know to create a teacher resource guide with listening strategies to improve student listening skills for 3rd grade ELs?

- What is listening comprehension?
- What is WIDA? What does the listening test measure?
- What strategies support improving ELs' listening comprehension?
 - a. How does asking focus questions support listening comprehension?

- b. How do think-alouds support listening comprehension?
- c. Journal writing

Project Description

I studied best strategies in teaching listening comprehension to students in grades 3-5 because there is little research done for elementary students and listening comprehension strategies. How might listening strategies improve listening skills for EL students in grades 3-5? Writing a teacher resource guide was the best choice in exploring my topic.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the importance of listening comprehension in EL students and how it impacts learning in the classroom. In the next chapter I review literature that focuses on listening comprehension strategies and best practices for listening comprehension.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

The question that I answered is: How do I create a teacher resource guide with listening strategies to improve student listening skills for EL students in grades 3-5? The purpose of my literature review was to determine what listening strategies help the elementary EL learner. As Call (1985) recommended, students have more success understanding academic language when they are familiar with its grammar. I looked at strategies that allow for multiple opportunities to listen to the target language. In chapter four, I created a teacher resource guide with both focus questions and think-aloud strategies to improve student listening skills. Therefore, think-aloud and focus questions, were investigated. There are benefits and possible flaws to each strategy. The think-aloud strategy gives support throughout the listening task and may allow additional time to slow down the task to allow for processing. On the other hand, it may interrupt the cognitive process and distract the listener from content (Goh, 1998). Like think-aloud strategies, focus questions encourage connections and deeper synthesis of material in the listening task (Lustick, 2010). They are posed before the listening task and brought up again after. This may be helpful as it is less disruptive. When a story is read without interruptions, it may help in student concentration. Having questions read with a variety of voices can simulate the WIDA Access listening test format. This familiarity will benefit students in their listening comprehension on the test. In this scenario, co-teaching may play a role in that each teacher can be a voice in a dialogue that students would listen to. Student speakers can contribute as well.

Students need support in improving listening comprehension in both conversation and lecture format. Students need to use listening strategies during testing on the WIDA Access Listening test. The research I reviewed supports a variety of strategies to increase listening comprehension in the classroom.

In this chapter, I addressed the following questions through current research on best practices:

- What is listening comprehension?
- What is WIDA? What does the listening test measure?
- What strategies support improving ELs' listening comprehension?
 - a. How does asking focus questions support listening comprehension?
 - b. How do think-alouds support listening comprehension?
 - c. Journal writing

What is Listening Comprehension?

Listening comprehension is an active process in which the listener digests aural information into relatable chunks that contain meaning (Corrales & Call, 1989; O'Malley, Uhl Chamot, & Kupper, 1989). The more advanced listeners are in their second language, the more easily they can process the information. The work of EL learners is twofold in that they have to understand grammar and vocabulary in their first language before they can understand it in their second language (Corrales & Call 1989). When the EL learner is in the beginning or intermediate stages of language learning, the listening process slows. The working memory is using more of its energy on defining new vocabulary. Successful listening comprehension consists of understanding academic

conversations with peers and teachers as well as understanding read alouds and lecture-based learning from the teacher.

What is WIDA? What Does the Listening Test Measure?

WIDA is a measure of academic language proficiency for reading, writing, speaking and listening. According to WIDA Consortium (2012), WIDA has created academic language can do descriptors for the four English domains, listening, speaking, reading and writing in subjects of reading, math, science and social studies. In its research, WIDA aims to answer the following goals:

1. Clarify and expand students' understanding of academic language proficiency
2. Explore the relationship between academic language proficiency and academic achievement
3. Better understand students' development of academic language proficiency

Cook, Bowls and Lundberg (2011) found that EL students are trailing behind in math and reading standardized testing. As students' English proficiency increases, their academic success increases. They argue that schools need to have a clear definition of what English proficiency means. They also address the complexity of the English language learner experience. Students come into school with different backgrounds and different proficiency levels and grow at their own rates. The WIDA Access test aims to show accurate student data regarding these proficiency levels. The WIDA test hopes to encompass all disciplines in school so that an accurate academic language proficiency level is found.

The listening test measures listening proficiency level of the student. The performance definitions include entering, emerging, developing, expanding and bridging

levels. Each level has three categories: linguistic complexity, language forms and conventions and vocabulary usage.

It is important that I look at how the WIDA listening test measures proficiency because it helped me frame my teacher resource guide in chapter four. I addressed the following points in the teacher resource guide: an example of a specific subject: social studies, linguistic complexity, grammar and vocabulary building in student listening and speaking, and a focus on the level 4, expanding student goals.

What Strategies Support Improving ELs' Listening Comprehension?

When considering effective strategies for listening comprehension, one has to consider the listening level of the student and the specific listening task. Vandergrift (2004) categorized different stages of listening with best listening strategies for each stage. The beginning prediction stage, for example, has a different purpose than the ending reflection stage. Graham, Santos and Vanderplank (2008) theorized that students at different listening levels use different listening strategies to meet their needs. Yet, Blau (1991) confirmed that there were general strategies that helped all learners regardless of listening ability. Pausing speech and inserting hesitation markers such as like, well and um helped in comprehension because it naturally slowed speech. Interestingly, speaking at a slower rate was not helpful in the study. This supports the idea that the pausing in think-alouds may not interfere with concentration or comprehension. Pauses with no sound seemed to confuse the listener as it was an unnatural way to speak. Simplifying information through paraphrasing also confused the listener and was occasionally misinterpreted as new information. I was surprised to read

that paraphrasing had this effect. This shows that the think-aloud process helps make students aware of what the teacher is trying to do as they explain new concepts.

A combination of findings will be seen throughout literature review. Different best practices elicit different listening tasks as found in current research. Vandergrift (2004) shows a guide for the listening process, which is broken up into valuable chunks to facilitate learning (see appendix). The guide includes five stages of listening instruction with metacognitive strategies. The strategies are planning, directed attention, monitoring, selective attention, problem solving, and evaluation. The strategies are paired with lessons on listening instruction. The listening instruction lessons are planning and prediction stage, first verification stage, second verification stage, third verification stage, and reflection stage. The listening instruction is practical in that students are allowed to listen to the passage three times. The first lesson has pre-listening strategies of planning and directed attention. Students predict possible words they may hear. Lessons two through four have students listening to the sample each lesson with writing and discussion about the main idea. Students work together to decide what needs more clarification and what they understood in the listening passage with problem solving, selective attention and monitoring skills. In the final lesson, or reflection stage, students use evaluation and planning strategies to set goals for future listening tasks. This guide makes practical use of listening strategies and demonstrates how strategies can be combined to guide the listening task.

Similarly, Hinkle (2006) notes that listening for gist, using background knowledge and making predictions and inferences are essential second language listening strategies. He concluded that use of multiple strategies was most effective in improving

listening comprehension. Teaching and using only one strategy limits individual needs of the student. More advanced students and students listening in their first language are able to access different strategies, such as inferencing, refocusing after a distraction and using context clues. Multiple strategy use should be the ultimate goal in a listening period.

Likewise, researchers confirmed that lower level and higher level EL learners had different listening strategy needs. Graham, Santos and Vanderplank (2008) studied higher and lower level listeners. The lower level listeners were more fixated on individual words and their meanings. Higher level listeners worked to understand the gist of the whole passage. This shows that lower level listeners need to spend more time familiarizing themselves with background knowledge of the topic and new vocabulary words in the listening passage. The higher level student used more metacognitive strategies, double checking work and questioning initial interpretations of the story. The higher level student was able to vocalize vocabulary in the passage.

Call (1985) researched the correlation between short-term memory and listening success. Call argues that listeners need to learn the meaning of vocabulary words before they can comprehend the meaning of the text as a whole. This strategy would be more helpful with the lower level listener who needs more time learning individual words. Goh (2002) found that listeners need to combine various tactics to be a successful listener. The less proficient listener used more low level strategies such as visualization while that more proficient listener used the wider range of strategies such as comprehension monitoring and directed attention to be successful. Goh (2002) found that lower level listeners are aware of what they do when listening and how to identify

listening obstacles. All levels could use journals and classroom discussion to increase metacognitive awareness in identifying listening struggles.

Chaing and Dunkel (1992) researched high level and low level Chinese students. Students listened to four types of lectures: familiar-modified, unfamiliar-modified, unfamiliar-modified and unfamiliar-unmodified. Modified lectures had repetitive information with more explanations of the topic. The familiar lecture was on Confucianism while the unfamiliar lecture was on Amish culture. They found that the higher level students benefited from modified lectures but the lower level students did not. Both groups did better on the test for the familiar lecture. This information suggests that more background knowledge needs to be given to lower level students but both sets of students benefit from listening to topics that they are already familiar with.

Vandergrift (2003) noticed that lower level listeners had a more difficult time summarizing because they remembered less and were not able to internalize the topic with a deep level of understanding. For the higher level listener, new information is cross referenced with information that they remember. They are more able to use a variety of strategies when they listen.

Both levels of listeners benefit from multiple strategy use geared toward their level. Lower leveled listeners need more intense teaching strategies while the higher level listener benefits from paraphrasing and cross checking information. Both groups benefit from a structured lesson that allows for multiple opportunities to hear the listening passage (Vandergrift, 2003).

Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) asserted that students who are given metacognitive guidance outperform students with no metacognitive training. Participants

in the study were university level students in Canada studying French. Half of the students were given support for metacognitive process of prediction, planning, monitoring, evaluating and processing. They found that less proficient learners made greater gains than more proficient learners. Strategies were taught together, not one at a time. They found that lower level listeners benefit from use of multiple strategies. Having metacognitive strategies helped students with authentic texts even as lower level listeners. Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari suggest introducing text in the third and final listening to identify words and to add interest so that they will pay more attention. Students grew in their use of metacognitive strategies over time. This study implies that students would benefit from using these strategies throughout the year in various ways.

Best practices in listening comprehension depend on students' listening level and the listening task at hand. Metacognitive listening strategies, speaking aloud while listening and listening multiple times to a passage while introducing text in the final stages are all helpful techniques for all levels and ages, as well as journaling about the listening process and committing to believing that you can indeed have a successful listening experience. The speaker needs to have natural nuances in pausing and explain to the listener what they are trying to teach to increase metacognitive awareness in students.

How do Think-alouds Support Listening Comprehension?

The think-aloud strategy is a way to engage students in the learning process. It has been widely investigated that think-alouds are a successful way to increase student listening comprehension. O'Malley, Uhl Chamot, and Kupper (1989) assert that students

need to think through content in a conversational manner to engage the metacognitive thinking process. They found that high school intermediate Latino students benefited from think-alouds because they were able to make connections with the lecture. Effective listeners make connections and are able to redirect themselves when they are off task through these connections. When these effective listeners come across new or unknown information they are able to talk their way through it and infer meaning through context and connections. As students participate in think-alouds they are paraphrasing the content. Students who are able to paraphrase, in essence, comprehend the text (Gilliam, Fargo & Robertson, 2009). Think-alouds have been proven to increase comprehension in kindergarteners studying science according to (Ortlieb & Norris, 2012). In addition to comprehension, think-alouds can give insight into the student thought process for both teachers and students (Mackey & Gass, 2011).

Despite evidence of think-aloud success, some research concludes that it is not the best strategy for EL learners. Goh (1998) has explained that when students are EL learners, think-alouds distract the students with working memory. The EL students become distracted by repeatedly pausing the listening. When there is too much to process, comprehension actually decreases. Short-term memory needs to be working properly if one is to pause the listening task and expect students to continue to follow the thought process after the pause. Corrales & Call (1989) argue that comprehensible input is needed for short-term memory to work when learning a second language. Listeners need to be hearing familiar syntactic structures. As previously mentioned, increasing student's metacognitive awareness through think-alouds does, indeed, increase listening comprehension for EL students (Ortlieb & Norris, 2012). As long as the pause comes

naturally, students will be able to follow along with the think-aloud and benefit from its matter of fact explanation of listening concepts.

Vandergrift (2003) used student think-alouds as a way of monitoring the types of strategies that students were using during listening. He found that think-alouds help students talk through their listening comprehension in a way that makes both teachers and students aware of their comprehension.

How Does Asking Focus questions Support Listening Comprehension?

Focus questions are questions given to students or created by students before the listening task. Focus questions are a strategy to help students find information while listening. They are questions that are consciously crafted to enhance the learning process for the student. Lustick (2010) explains that focus questions need to be crafted with considerations; cognitive development of the student, lesson objective and connections made come together to make a more meaningful focus question. They are asked before the activity. Students are encouraged to keep the question in mind as they carry out the listening task. After the listening task is complete, the class can discuss responses to the focus question in detail. Killoran (1987) found that starting focus questions with "is," "could," "should," "does," and "can," will allow for explanations and elaboration of the listening passage. Students will be more inclined to paraphrase and comprehend text if answering questions that begin with these starters.

Teachers who use higher cognitive questions in class are able to elicit a richer discussion from their students. This highlights the importance of the quality of focus questions. The questions need to be constructed so that students are making connections to the goal of the lesson (Bedwell, 1975; Cliatt & Shaw, 1985).

With the challenges that EL students face in listening comprehension, support is essential. Activating prior knowledge and front loading vocabulary through the use of focus questions are valuable ways to support the EL learner during a listening activity. Thompson, Leintz, Nevers, and Witkowski (2004) assert that preparing students to listen by understanding the listening context and asking questions to activate prior knowledge before the listening task can increase comprehension. Activating prior knowledge can happen in either focus questions or think-alouds. Plaister (1975) found that it is helpful to give learners support before they hear a lecture as a strategy to frontload information. Ideally students would be able to support themselves in listening. But before they are independent learners, students can be supplied with vocabulary and content support through different texts, videos and pictures. Teachers can scaffold the listening process with prompting questions. Youb (2010) found that listening comprehension improved when teachers used facilitating questions to deepen understanding and collaborating questions to help students facilitate independent learning. As students read more about a topic they will need less supports to understand the content.

Another way to help students synthesize content is by having them create their own focus questions and have students practice using these focus questions in class discussion. Ferris and Tag (1996) concluded that EL students are in need of support in framing grammatically correct questions in the classroom. They suggested giving students more practice with asking and answering questions in class. Kayi-Adar (2013) found that student discussions benefit from scaffolding. Student personality dynamics,

however, can interfere with scaffolded use as the teacher hands over conversations to the students.

Journal Writing

(Graham, 2007) used journaling as a way for students to gain metacognitive awareness and confidence in listening comprehension. Students wrote about listening strategies and how they helped with listening comprehension. She found that when students reflected on how they were listening, they became more responsible for listening comprehension. This gave students confidence and their listening comprehension improved. Zimmerman (1995) explained that a learners' ability to listen effectively was influenced by beliefs about themselves that affected their behavioral processes. Self-doubt, strategy choice confusion and not believing in themselves affected ability to listen. The concept of metacognition can be so abstract for the learners, but explaining to the learners that they have control over their success if they believe in themselves is something that could be very motivating for an elementary school students. Journal writing is a way for students to build confidence in utilizing listening strategies (Graham, 2007).

Summary

In my research, I found that multiple strategy use and multiple opportunities for the learner to experience the listening task helps in successful listening comprehension. I defined listening as an active process where the listener hears information and processes it into meaning that they can paraphrase and relate to (O'Malley, Uhl Chamot, & Kupper, 1989). This process is more difficult for EL learners because they have to process the meaning of the syntax and vocabulary before the comprehension process begins.

Teachers can help facilitate listening is through think-aloud, focus question and journaling strategies. Additionally, breaking up the listening task into lessons that involve both student- and teacher-led discussions will benefit the listener.

In the next chapter, I describe the background, rationale and goal of the teacher resource guide.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Project Goal

The question that I answered is: How do I create a teacher resource guide with listening strategies to improve student listening skills for EL students in grades 3-5? The project goal is to provide educators with a guide to teach listening comprehension. I chose to write a teacher resource guide that could be applied to any content and serve as a functional and adaptable teaching tool. The guide contains best practices in listening comprehension for intermediate ELs in grades 3-5. It includes Vandergrift's guide to five lessons on listening comprehension. Focus questions, think-alouds, journal writing, interactive learning strategies, and student-led discussions are activities in the lesson. The listening strategies are broken up into five 30 minute lessons that can be applied to a variety of subjects. This flexibility allows for teachers to use the guide in whatever circumstance fits their needs. I also have a pre and post-listening test included so that teachers can record student growth.

Rationale

As I go into my ninth year of teaching, I realize that support for listening comprehension is necessary in the ESL classroom. In teaching learning strategies, speaking skills are more emphasized than listening. In short, listening comes last. My 3rd grade students did not significantly improve in the WIDA Access listening domain because there is little curriculum for elementary students addressing listening

comprehension strategies. Creating a teacher resource guide for teachers who want to improve their students' listening strategies can make a difference in student academic performance and listening performance.

As covered in Chapter 2, Hinkle and Vandergrift (2003) concur that students benefit from using multiple strategies in the same activity. They are able to choose which strategies benefit their students for that particular learning situation. Students also benefit from listening for gist and having background information on the topic. The five lessons in the teacher resource guide included strategies suggested by Hinkle and Vandergrift. The resource guide also included Kagan (2002) and Rojas' (2011) interactive and cooperative learning strategies. They were enhanced with additional strategy use and put into a more structured lesson plan that is centered around increasing listening proficiency. Lastly, students journal (Goh, 2002) to increase metacognitive listening and to build confidence in listening skills through self-awareness. Through journaling, students paraphrase the listening text and categorize what they do and don't understand. During the second and third listens, students will have improved listening comprehension through the implementation of researched best practices.

Procedure

In putting together my teacher resource guide, I focused on a broader age range compatible with the WIDA Access listening test. The guide was written for educators who support ELs in grades 3-5, which is the English proficiency level of intermediate listeners who have the WIDA Can Do Descriptor of level three and are trying to achieve level four. According WIDA Consortium (2012), the level three listener can use general and some specific language of the content areas, create expanded sentences but may have

phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors. The developing student needs sensory, graphic or interactive support. The level four learners are able to use varying sentences or paragraphs that relate to one another. They have minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not affect the conversation. They still need sensory, graphic or interactive support. The needs of students in level three are reflected in the resource guide. Students are supported interactively. Throughout the activities in the guide, students are encouraged to use varying sentences with increased amounts of academic vocabulary.

Description of Teacher Resource Guide

The teacher resource guide can be used to support intermediate ELs in grades 3-5. A variety of listening strategies were used. Strategies are think-alouds, focus questions, journal writing, interactive learning strategies and a pre and post-test. There are five lessons that align with Vandergrift's (2004) model of listening: Pre-listening Planning and Prediction; First Listen, First Verification Stage; Second Listen, Second Verification Stage; Third Listen, Final Verification Stage; Reflection Stage. The lessons lead students to apply the strategies over a series of five 30 minute lessons.

Lesson 1. The first lesson includes pre-listening and prediction. In this lesson, the teacher frontloads vocabulary and gives students background information about the topic. They practice the new information through the find someone who activity. Students learn and discuss the focus question. Then they predict the answer to the focus question.

Lesson 2. The second lesson is the first time students hear the listening sample. They practice the think-aloud strategy with the teacher guiding the think-

aloud. Students do Kagan's (2002) talking chips activity to discuss the focus question. The students then talk about what they understood and they what they missed.

Lesson 3

A new focus question is presented. Students listen to the listening sample a second time. Students practice think-aloud strategy with partners through turn and talk (Rojas, 2011). They journal about what they understood and what they missed.

Lesson 4

The third and final focus question is presented. Students listen to the listening sample for the third time. Students practice think-aloud independently. Afterwards, they check their findings with other students in the inside outside circle activity (Rojas, 2011).

Lesson 5

In the last lesson of the listening cycle, students reflect on how their listening comprehension has increased and discuss what strategies were the most helpful to them. They reflect in a turn and talk activity and in their journals. Feelings about successes and needs for improvement will be included.

Strategies

Think-aloud Strategy. A think-aloud activity will allow the teacher and the student to speak about what connections and understanding they are making during the listening task (Mackey & Gass, 2011). Throughout the passage, there will be pauses to encourage think-aloud. The teacher will lead a think-aloud and have students think pair share to generate their own think-aloud ideas. The lesson was recorded so the teacher could go back and hear what their thought process was during the think-aloud. A few groups shared out so that more of the think-aloud process could be recorded and

observed. As the students think aloud, they were observed how on task their comments are. Are they making connections that help them synthesize the information? Observing both the think-aloud and focus question activities from a recording will allow the teacher to look in more depth into student listening comprehension and will allow both methods to be compared side by side (Mackey & Gass, 2011).

Focus questions Focus questions encourage inquiry in learning and are particularly helpful in learning science content (Lustik, 2010). I will present students with a focus question before the listening activity. Students will answer the focus question after the passage has been read. The focus question will be answered through a think pair share activity and the students will bring their ideas back in the whole group. The teacher records their answers by recording the lesson. Recording will allow for more time to compare lessons across time and between the two strategies (Mackey & Gass, 2011). Perhaps the weakness of the focus question is that it doesn't allow for student generated questions as the think-aloud strategy does. Students are not stopping the listening task. Pausing the listening task may slow the lesson down enough for students to process the information. Teachers should try to combat this by encouraging students to focus on the question by making connections. Also, I will make natural pauses in the reading and read at a slow pace to allow time for students to process.

Journal Writing As mentioned in Chapter 2, Graham (2007) emphasizes the importance of journal writing in increasing student's metacognitive awareness and confidence in listening comprehension. Students journal about meaning of words and topics covered in the listening text to aid in their class discussions. This also serves as a graphic support.

Interactive Learning Strategies. Kagan (2002) offers ideas for cooperative learning strategies. In the teacher resource guide, I included talking chips. Each student is given two pieces of paper or chips. After they participate, students will put the chip in the cup in the center of the table. This ensures that all students are given a chance to speak. In the spirit of increasing listening comprehension, I included two different papers or chips. Students can self-monitor their listening. When a student speaks the other students can actively listen by comparing what the speaker is saying to their notes. When they do this they can place their listening chip in the bucket. Virginia Rojas (2010) suggests using inside outside circle to create an environment ripe for conversation. Half of the students form a circle and face out. The other half of the students form a circle around the circle and face inward. Students are then paired facing each other one on the inside and one on the outside circle. Students take turns asking a question and answering the question from their journal. Then the outside circle rotates one person to the right and the discussion happens again. This can continue for as long as the exercise is facilitating a productive discussion. Turn and talk is an easy and effective way for students to speak and listen with partner support. Students simply turn to the person next to them and each student gets a turn asking the question and answering the question. Both the listener and the speaker are encouraged to participate. This activity is directly associated with speaking and listening practice and will give students confidence with the listening topic. These strategies are important to include because they are an entertaining and effective way to encourage student participation and responsibility for growth in speaking and listening.

Pre and Post-Listening Test Students will take one test before the lesson cycle one after to account for growth. Pre and post-testing will provide the teacher with quantitative information to decide how much the listening strategies affected comprehension. Again, research will show that there is a relationship between comprehension and use of listening strategies (Mackey & Gass, 2011). Each focus question is the questions on both the pre and post-listening test. There is social studies based content that students are studying in class. The teacher reads students a passage; students then answer focus questions about the passage. One issue with validity of a pre and post-test is ensuring that both are the same in difficulty (Mackey & Gass, 2011). For this reason, the tests will be identical.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the methods used to create a five lesson teacher resource guide that will support students in listening comprehension for educators who need to develop student listening strategies. The guide has strategies embedded throughout the five lessons. Students are given three opportunities to listen to the listening sample with several discussions and journal writing to answer questions and clarify meaning. Through these discussions, students familiarize themselves with vocabulary from the topic and are able to hold academic conversations, increasing their listening comprehension each time so that they are able to function at a WIDA level four, expanding level. Over time, students become more confident with these strategies and their overall listening ability will improve.

CHAPTER FOUR: LISTENING STRATEGIES: TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

The question that I answered is: How do I create a teacher resource guide with listening strategies to improve student listening skills for EL students in grades 3-5? In this chapter I present my teacher resource guide. I provide educators with a lesson template for five 30 minute lessons on listening strategies. These strategies do not need to be taught beforehand, but students will become more familiar with them after each listening lesson cycle. Templates and descriptions are included for journaling, turn and talk, talking chips, inside outside circle, find someone who, as well as the pre- and post-listening tests. I also have examples of sentence frames for journaling, focus questions and think-aloud. In addition to the templates there will be an example social studies lesson plan. These show how to apply the guide.

Listening Strategies: A Teacher Resource Guide for Intermediate English
Learners in Grades 3-5.

Teacher Resource Guide

Developed by Ana Ruiz McLafferty, 2015

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Dear Educator,

Thank you for taking the time to read and use my curriculum guide on listening strategies. As teachers, we are increasingly expected to meet the needs of our EL students. I hope to provide you with an easy to use guide that will address the unique needs of your classroom. This concise and functional model can be used with any subject. Listening and speaking through class discussion are a way to keep students engaged and learning. Listening skills are important in that your students need to be able to follow what you are saying as you teach them and read to them. Listening is half of the conversation, after all. Through the guide, you will facilitate learning and conversation in all of your students. This resource guide will allow more students in your class to participate. It will help improve student listening skills and class participation. There are several research based ideas presented. You can use one, two or all of the strategies as you see fit!

Sincerely,

Ana Ruiz McLafferty

Group Size and Lesson Timing

The ideal EL group is 10 students or less. However, these listening skills can be used in a typical classroom with both English learners and students whose native language is English. The interactive learning strategies are meant to have all students participate and practice speaking and listening skills regardless of class size. Focus questions, think-alouds and journaling can be done in all class sizes. I have timed the lesson for 30 minutes each as this is the amount of time that I have with my students. The length of the lesson could be expanded for larger class sizes or if you have more time with your students. In my district a typical pull-out classroom is 30-40 minutes.

Lesson Plan Template

The following lesson plan template is intended to be used for the five lesson cycle. There is a place to insert vocabulary and language objectives and standards as well as content objectives and standards. In the template, I have embedded interactive learning strategies, think-aloud, focus questions and journaling time. Preceding the template is a complete lesson sample based from a social studies unit. Teachers need to plan for their own subject and use the guide as needed. In a class of third to fifth graders, it would be appropriate to continue with this format for different lesson cycles throughout the year. As the class develops a routine for the listening cycle, they will speak and listen with ease and have more aptitude for learning language and content with these improved listening skills. The formative assessment is comparing the pre and post-listening test scores, journaling about focus questions and think-alouds. Teachers can make note or video record how students are doing as they work through the think-aloud

process. Students who are working well independently can be challenged by creating questions for each other during interactive conversations. Students who need extra support will benefit from visuals and sentence starters as well as partner work.

Social Studies Lesson Plan Example

The following is an example of how to apply the lesson plan template to a social studies unit in third grade. Since the activities are already blocked out, only language and content standards with focus questions need to be entered. An example of the think-aloud and supplemental materials or templates used for this lesson cycle has also been written out. In addition to the lesson plan, there is an example of what a student's journal may look like in the lesson. The goal of providing this example is to see how the lesson plan works in a realistic teaching scenario so that it can be used more comfortably.

Date/s: 9/28/15-10/2/15

Teacher: Ana

Topic: Social Studies/ Maps

Text: A-Z Readers Roadside Oddities Level L. Also available in level I and level O

Content Standard:

Found on Minnesota Department of Education

- 1.3.1.1.1 Use geographic representations, use maps and concepts of location (cardinal and intermediate directions). Describe places in one's community, the state of Minnesota, the United States or the world. 3. 1. Relative location words—close to, above, bordering. For example "Our school is across from the post office." Description using cardinal directions—"Mexico is south of the United States." Description using intermediate directions—"Hawaii is southwest of the continental United States."

Language Standard:

Found on WIDA website Can do Descriptors for Grades 3-5.

Can do Descriptor level 4

• specific and some technical language of the content areas • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences, or paragraphs • oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic, or interactive support.

Listening Can Do Descriptor Level 4

• Interpret oral information and apply to new situations • Identify illustrated main ideas and supporting details from oral discourse • Infer from and act on oral information • Role play the work of authors, mathematicians, scientists, historians from oral readings, videos, or multi-media

Student Goal:

Content Goal: **I can** identify and use relative location words and cardinal directions to describe the attractions.

Language Goal: **I can** listen and talk about the main idea and details from the story.

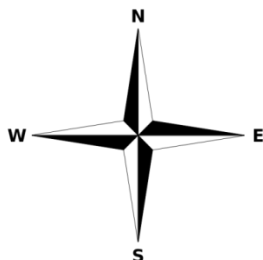
I can use 3 complex sentences and 3 vocabulary words to talk and listen about roadside attractions and their geographic location.

Pre-Test (Focus questions/Essential Questions)

1. What is the main idea?
2. What roadside attraction would you want to see and why?
3. Describe how you would get from the Toilet Seat Art Museum to Lucy the Elephant?
4. How would you get from Minnesota to Texas?

Vocabulary Definitions and Images:

North, South, West, East, Compass Rose



Replica: a copy of the real thing

Story of a Building: To measure how tall a building is. Talk about the height of the

school.

Monument: A statue or building that remembers a person or an event. The statue of liberty or the pyramids in Mexico.

Attraction: Something interesting that you go to see

Social Studies Example

Lesson One

Pre-Listening and Prediction

Quick Look: Present Vocabulary, Find Someone Who, Present Focus question, Exit Question

Materials: pictures of concepts, map (in book) find someone who grid, pencils for students, focus question on the board.

5 minutes Introduction: Vocabulary Presented through Visuals/Pictures and Interactive Activity (Frontloading) Ask if anyone has seen the pictures in the story. Ask if anyone has traveled to different states in America. Point to the states on the map together.

10 minutes Find someone who (Virginia Rojas, 2011):

Students have vocabulary on a piece of paper in grid form. Students find someone who knows something about the word. If students can describe the word, they can sign their name by the word.

Question: What can you tell me about a compass rose?

Answer: A compass rose is a symbol that shows north, south, west and east.

Students see how many signatures they can get in 5-10 minutes

3 minutes Focus question #1

Students Turn and talk to discuss and make a prediction about the focus question.

(What is the main idea?)

Student 1: What is the main idea?

Student 2: I think the main idea is how to go to different places in the United States.

Then reverse.
Exit Question: Tell me about a new vocabulary word. Have students share one new vocabulary word that they learned today.

Find Someone Who Social Studies Example

<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
<u>East</u>	<u>Compass Rose</u>	<u>Monument</u>
<u>Story of a building</u>	<u>Replica</u>	<u>attractions</u>

Social Studies Example

Lesson Two

First Listen

Quick Look: Present Focus Question #1, Listening Task, Teacher Led Think-aloud , Talking chips, Exit Question

Present Focus Question #1 written on the board and read aloud. What is the main idea?

Materials: listening sample, map, sentence frames and focus question written on board, talking chips cards.

5-10 minutes Present Listening Task

5-10 minutes Think-aloud Strategy: Introduce think-aloud strategy (teacher lead). For example <i>Roadside attractions are weird and wonderful. They invite people to stop and check them out.</i> “I wonder where the different roadside attractions will be. I remember hearing about a big ball of twine/string. I wonder if that one will be in the story. I wonder if they show where these attractions are. (Flipping to the back of the book) “Yes! They do have a map of the different roadside attractions. I haven’t heard of any of these. Let’s keep reading to see what the main idea is. So far I know it’s about roadside attractions.” (After reading about the corn palace) “I wonder where the corn palace is. Let’s look at the map!” (Turn to the map) “South Dakota is west of Minnesota. Our states border each other. Maybe I can drive here someday. It says that the animals eat the corn pictures. This reminds me of the corn pictures that I have seen at the state fair! So far these roadside attractions are interesting. Maybe the main idea is that there are many interesting roadside attractions in the United States.”
--

10 minutes Talking chips (Kagan, 2002) Use talking chips to discuss focus question and questions brought up during the think-aloud. Each student is given a listening and a thinking chip. As they listen and share their thoughts they can place a chip in the middle of the circle. The teacher can facilitate the conversation by restating questions brought up during the think-aloud. For example: What is the main idea? What attractions did you hear about in the story? Explain where they are on the map.

Exit Question: Ask students the focus question a final time before the lesson ends.

Students share answers with class. *What is the main idea?*

Social Studies Example

Lesson Three

Second Listen

Quick Look: Present Focus question #2, Teacher Guided Think-aloud through Turn and Talk, Journaling, Exit Question

Present Focus Question #2 written on the board and read aloud:

What roadside attraction would you want to see and why?

Materials: listening sample, map, journal, pencils, sentence starters and focus question on board, sentence frames.

10-15 Minutes Second Listen: Think-aloud Strategy through Turn and talk

Think-aloud strategy will be teacher guided through turn and talk work with partners.

As the teacher is reading the story, stop momentarily to discuss content. Have think-aloud sentence starters written on board. Students are listening in partners. As the listening sample is paused, students can ask each other the focus question and one additional connection or question that they have about the listening sample. Then choose a couple of partners to share their thoughts with the whole class. The goal of the think-aloud is to find meaning in the listening sample and to find the answer to the focus question presented at the beginning of the lesson.

For example “I wonder why... there are so many attractions in the United States.

Maybe it’s because people like to make them and want people to visit their city.”

10-15 Minutes Journal about conversation.

Have students cut and paste the pre-made paper into a notebook or journal. The paper

will include the topic, date and sentence starters:

Sentence Frames:

I know that ...

I need to learn more about

Have vocabulary presented on the wall for reference.

In the journal students will write what they discussed during think pair share. They will write their answer to the focus question here.

Exit Question: Ask students the focus question a final time before the lesson ends.

Students share answers with class.

What roadside attraction would you want to see and why?

Lesson 3 Journal for Social Studies Example

Date: 9/30/15

Focus question: What attraction would you want to see and why?

Answer: I would like to see the toilet seat art exhibit because it reminds me of the painted car parade in Minneapolis. It sounds funny and cool.

<p><u>I know that...</u></p> <p>There are lots of different attractions to see in the United States</p>	<p><u>I need to learn more about ...</u></p> <p>Where these attractions are on the map.</p> <p>How to tell someone directions to the different attractions.</p>
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Social Studies Example**Lesson Four**Third Listen

Quick Look: Present Focus question #3, Independent Think-aloud, Inside Outside Circle,

Exit Question

Present Focus question #3 and #4 written on the board and read aloud (I decided to put two focus questions here. They are similar and elicit more practice and language from the students.)

3. Describe how you would get from the Toilet Seat Art Museum to Lucy the Elephant?

4. How would you get from Minnesota to Texas?

Materials: listening sample, map, Inside outside circle cards, sentence starters and focus question on board, sentence frames.

10-15 Minutes Third Listen: Think-aloud Strategy: Talking aloud with themselves.

Think-aloud strategy will be teacher guided by talking aloud independently. As I read the story I will stop momentarily to allow students to think-aloud independently. I will have sentence starters written on the board.

- What do I know about this?
- What do I think I will learn this time?
- Do I understand what I just heard?
- Do I have a clear picture in my head about this information?
- What more can I do to understand this?
- I wonder why...
- This reminds me of...

- Do you think that

Students are listening independently. As the listening sample is paused, students can answer the focus question and one additional connection or question that they have about the listening sample. Choose a couple of students to model their think-aloud with the whole class. The goal of the think-aloud is to find meaning in the listening sample and to find the answer to the focus question presented at the beginning of the lesson. Students are practicing the think-aloud with more independence.

10-15 Minutes Inside outside circle (Virginia Rojas, 2011)

Half of the students form a circle facing out and the other half of the student form a circle around the first circle facing inward. Students form pairs, one from the inside and the other from the outside circles. Each student has a focus question that they ask each other. After asking the question the students in the inside circle rotate on student to the right. They begin the conversation again with a different partner.

Variation: Students can ask questions that they created during the independent think-aloud activity. Ask students to remember one question that they asked during the think-aloud and ask it to their partner in the inside outside circle.

Exit Question: Ask students one of the focus questions a final time before the lesson ends. Students share answers with class.

3. Describe how you would get from the Toilet Seat Art Museum to Lucy the Elephant?

4. How would you get from Minnesota to Texas?

Inside outside circle Social Studies Example

<p><u>Focus question One</u></p> <p>What is the main idea?</p>	<p><u>Focus question Two</u></p> <p>What roadside attraction would you want to see and why?</p>	<p><u>Focus question Three</u></p> <p>Describe how you would get from the Toilet Seat Art Museum to Lucy the Elephant?</p>
<p><u>Focus question One</u></p> <p>What is the main idea?</p>	<p><u>Focus question Two</u></p> <p>What roadside attraction would you want to see and why?</p>	<p><u>Focus question Three</u></p> <p>Describe how you would get from the Toilet Seat Art Museum to Lucy the Elephant?</p>
<p><u>Focus question One</u></p> <p>What is the main idea?</p>	<p><u>Focus question Two</u></p> <p>What roadside attraction would you want to see and why?</p>	<p><u>Focus question Three</u></p> <p>Describe how you would get from the Toilet Seat Art Museum to Lucy the Elephant?</p>
<p><u>Focus question One</u></p> <p>What is the main idea?</p>	<p><u>Focus question Two</u></p> <p>What roadside attraction would you want to see and why?</p>	<p><u>Focus question Three</u></p> <p>Describe how you would get from the Toilet Seat Art Museum to Lucy the Elephant?</p>

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Social Studies Example**Lesson Five**Student Reflection

Quick Look: Turn and talk Reflection, Journaling Reflection

Materials: Journal, pencils, list of strategies, list of focus questions and sentence frames on board

5-10 Minutes Discussion (Turn and talk)

Talk about listening strategy successes and what needs more work. Include a list of strategies, list of vocabulary and list of focus questions for students to refer to.

Students turn to a partner to share their thoughts. Then partners share their thoughts with the class.

Strategies: focus questions, think-aloud, turn and talk, inside outside circle, find someone who, journals, talking chips.

Vocabulary: North, South, West, East, compass rose, replica, monument, attraction, story (of a building)

Focus questions:

1. What is the main idea?
2. What roadside attraction would you want to see and why?
3. Describe how you would get from the Toilet Seat Art Museum to Lucy the Elephant?
4. How would you get from Minnesota to Texas?

Sentence frames for Turn and talk:

I found that.... was helpful because....

.... Went well because

I need to work more on....

I still don't understand ...

I really understand ... now. Explain the content to their partner.

15 minutes Journaling

Students can record their findings in their journal. Students can write three to four sentences on what strategies and concepts they had success with and what needs improvement. Also, include a sentence about how well they feel they are doing with listening. In addition, students can revisit the journal entry from lesson three. Have students read their previous journal entry. They can make changes in the chart to reflect new learning. If they have learned any new concepts they can write them in or move concepts to appropriate columns.

Sentence starters:

I am a terrific listener because...

I have improved in my listening because...

I want to practice _____ more.

Exit Question: Students share one way their listening has improved with class.

Post Listening Test (Four Focus questions/Essential Questions)

1. What is the main idea?
2. What roadside attraction would you want to see and why?
3. Describe how you would get from the Toilet Seat Art Museum to Lucy the Elephant?
4. How would you get from Minnesota to Texas?

Lesson Five Journal for Social Studies Example

Lesson Five

Date: 10/2/2015

<u>Listening Reflection</u>
I am a terrific listener because...
I have improved in my listening because....
I want to practice _____ more.

Lesson One

Pre-Listening and Prediction

Quick Look: Present Vocabulary, Find Someone Who, Present Focus Question, Exit

Focus question #1:

Materials: pictures of concepts, find someone who grid, pencils for students, focus question on the board.

5 minutes Introduction: Vocabulary Presented through Visuals/Pictures and Interactive Activity (Frontloading)

10 minutes Find someone who (Rojas, 2011):

Students have vocabulary on a piece of paper in grid form. Students find someone who knows something about the word. If students can describe the word, they can sign their name by the word.

Question: What can you tell me about...?

Answer: A.... is

Students see how many signatures they can get in 5-10 minutes

3 minutes Focus question #1

Students Turn and talk to discuss and make a prediction about the focus question.

Student 1: Ask the focus question

Student 2: I think

Then reverse.

Exit Question: Tell me about a new vocabulary word. Have students share one new vocabulary word that they learned today.

Lesson Two

First Listen

Quick Look: Present Focus question #1, Listening Task, Teacher Led Think-aloud , Talking Chips, Exit Question

Present Focus question #1 written on the board and read aloud:

Materials: listening sample, sentence frames and focus question written on board, talking chips cards.
--

<i>5-10 minutes</i> Present Listening Task
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<i>5-10 minutes</i> Think-aloud Strategy: Introduce think-aloud strategy teacher lead. As the teacher is playing the listening sample, stop momentarily to discuss content. Think-aloud sentence frames such as “I wonder why...” used here. The goal of the think-aloud is to find meaning in the listening sample and to find the answer to the focus question presented at the beginning of the lesson.
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10 minutes Talking chips (Kagan, 2002) Use talking chips to discuss focus question and questions brought up during the think-aloud. Each student is given a listening and a thinking chip. As they listen and share, their thoughts they can place a chip in the middle of the circle. The teacher can facilitate the conversation by restating questions brought up during the think-aloud.
--

Exit Question: Ask students the focus question a final time before the lesson ends. Students share answers with class.
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Lesson Three

Second Listen

Quick Look: Present Focus question #2, Teacher Guided Think-aloud through Turn and talk, Journaling, Exit Question

Present Focus Question #2 written on the board and read aloud:

Materials: listening sample, journal, pencils, sentence starters and focus question on board, sentence frames.

10-15 Minutes Second Listen: Think-aloud Strategy through Turn and talk

Think-aloud strategy will be teacher guided through turn and talk work with partners. As the teacher is playing the listening sample, stop momentarily to discuss content. Have think-aloud sentence starters written on board. Students are listening in partners. As the listening sample is paused, students can ask each other the focus question and one additional connection or question that they have about the listening sample. Then choose a couple of partners to share their thoughts with the whole class. The goal of the think-aloud is to find meaning in the listening sample and to find the answer to the focus question presented at the beginning of the lesson.

10-15 Minutes Journal about conversation.

Have students cut and paste the pre-made paper into a notebook or journal. The paper will include the topic, date and sentence starters:

Sentence Frames:

I know that ...

I need to learn more about

Have vocabulary presented on the wall for reference.

In the journal students will write what they discussed during think pair share. They will write their answer to the focus question here.

Exit Question: Ask students the focus question a final time before the lesson ends. Students share answers with class.

Lesson Four

Third Listen

Quick Look: Present Focus question #3, Independent Think-aloud, Inside Outside Circle,

Exit Question

Present Focus question #3 written on the board and read aloud:

Materials: listening sample, sentence frames and question examples for think-aloud on board

10-15 Minutes Third Listen: Think-aloud Strategy: Talking aloud with themselves. Think-aloud strategy will be teacher guided by talking aloud independently. As the teacher is playing the listening sample, stop momentarily to discuss content. Have think-aloud sentence starters written on board. Students are listening independently. As the listening sample is paused, students can answer the focus question and one additional connection or question that they have about the listening sample. Choose a couple of students to model their think-aloud with the whole class. The goal of the think-aloud is to find meaning in the listening sample and to find the answer to the focus question presented at the beginning of the lesson. Students are practicing the think-aloud with more independence.

10-15 Minutes Inside outside circle (Virginia Rojas, 2011)

Half of the students form a circle facing out and the other half of the student form a circle around the first circle facing inward. Students form pairs, one from the inside and the other from the outside circles. Each student has a focus question that they ask each other. After asking the question the students in the inside circle rotate on student

to the right. They begin the conversation again with a different partner.

Variation: Students can ask questions that they created during the independent think-aloud activity.

Exit Question: Ask students the focus question a final time before the lesson ends. Students share answers with class.

Lesson Five

Student Reflection

Quick Look: Turn and talk Reflection, Journaling Reflection

Materials: Journal, pencils, list of strategies, list of focus questions and sentence frames on board

5-10 Minutes Discussion: Turn and talk (Rojas, 2011)

Talk about listening strategy successes and what needs more work. Include a list of strategies, list of vocabulary and list of focus questions for students to refer to. Students turn to a partner to share their thoughts. Then partners share their thoughts with the class.

Sentence frames:

I found that.... was helpful because....

.... Went well because

I need to work more on....

I still don't understand ...

I really understand ... now. Explain the content to their partner.

15 minutes Journaling

Students can record their findings in their journal. Students can write three to four sentences on what strategies and concepts they had success with and what needs improvement. Also, include a sentence about how well they feel they are doing with listening.

Sentence starters:

I think that I am a terrific listener because...

I think that I have improved in my listening because...

Exit Question: Students share one way their listening has improved with class.

Post Listening Test (Three Focus questions/Essential Questions)

1.

2.

3.

Listening Strategy Descriptions, Templates and Sentence Frames

Students will use the following listening strategies throughout the five lessons. Below is as description with reproducible templates for your use. Sentence frames are included to be posted for a classroom visual.

Activities and Resources

- Focus questions
- Think-aloud
- Journal
- Pre and Post Listening Test
- Turn and talk
- Talking chips
- Find Someone Who
- Inside Outside Circle

Focus questions

Focus questions can be found in essential questions listed in the subject's curriculum or they can be created based off of the lesson goal. The focus question is presented at the beginning of the lesson before the listening task. It is written on the board for students to see and read with the students.

Question Sentence Frames and Examples:

- What is the main idea?
- Give me an example of
- Describe In your own words.
- If you were what would you do?
- Predict what would happen if
- What would you do if you were in their shoes?
- What is a personal connection that you can make to the listening sample?
- Do you think that is ethical?

Think-aloud

In think-aloud, the listener is literally pausing the listening sample to talk to themselves. This needs to be modeled by the teacher for students to understand the type of thought process and language that needs to be used in a think-aloud. For example, the teacher can pause the listening sample and say “Did I understand what I just heard?” or “Hmm.. This reminds me of when... I wonder why” As they press play again, the listener is now listening for the answer to the question or more information to develop the think-aloud further. After more information is received, the listener can pause the sample once again to continue talking through the thought process that one does when they listen academically. As students are able to practice using the think-aloud independently they will begin to create thoughtful questions about the listening sample. Think-alouds should happen two or three times throughout the listening task and at the end.

Sentence Frames:

- What do I know about this?
- What do I think I will learn this time?
- Do I understand what I just heard?
- Do I have a clear picture in my head about this information?
- What more can I do to understand this?
- I wonder why...
- This reminds me of...
- Do you think that
- What were the most important points in this reading?
- What new information did I learn?
- How does it fit in with what I already know?

Journals

The student journals will serve two purposes. First, students will use journals to organize their understanding of key concepts, vocabulary, focus questions and think-alouds. Second, students will use the journals for conscious reflection on how the listening strategies are working for them. They will write about successful times that they were listening in class and what helped them understand the listening task. They can move concepts and strategies over to the left side once they are able to confidently explain and use them. In this way, the journals can serve as a method of self-assessment. There are two journal templates created for the two lessons that include journaling. I have journaling written in for lessons two to five. Journaling is compatible with all lessons and can be included or moved to lessons one, two and four as well. The template is reproducible. Students can glue the template directly into their journals to save time and to direct students writing energy towards complex thinking and reflection.

Journal Templates:

<u>Lesson Three</u>	
Date:	
<i>Focus question:</i>	
Answer:	
I know that...	I need to learn more about ...

Lesson Five

Date:

Listening Success!

I think that I am a terrific listener
because...

I think that I have improved in my
listening because...

Listening in Progress!

I still need to work on....

Feelings About Listening

Pre and Post Listening Test

The pre and post-listening test can be exactly the same to measure how students have improved after the listening task. Since it is a listening test and not simply a content-based written test, students need to listen to the information. It could be a recording, a video on the subject or a teacher reading from a book. After the listening sample teacher can ask students focus or essential questions. These questions can be the same as the focus questions that students will be given throughout the lessons. The questions can be obtained from curriculum materials or it can be created by the teacher. Ideas for how to format focus questions can be seen in the focus question section.

Pre and Post Listening Test Template:

Name:

Date:

Class:

Listening Test

1.

2.

3.

Interactive Learning Strategies

Interactive learning strategies can support students in listening as well as speaking in academic conversation. Interactive learning strategies such as talking chips and think pair share are ways to encourage both the listener and the speaker to participate and facilitate their own learning acquisition (Kagan, 2002). Rojas (2011) offers examples of student conversation that involves the question and answer format for classroom discussions and activities. The strategy inside outside circle (Rojas, 2011) gives students multiple opportunities to ask and answer questions with a variety of students in an orderly way.

Turn and Talk (Kagan, 2002)

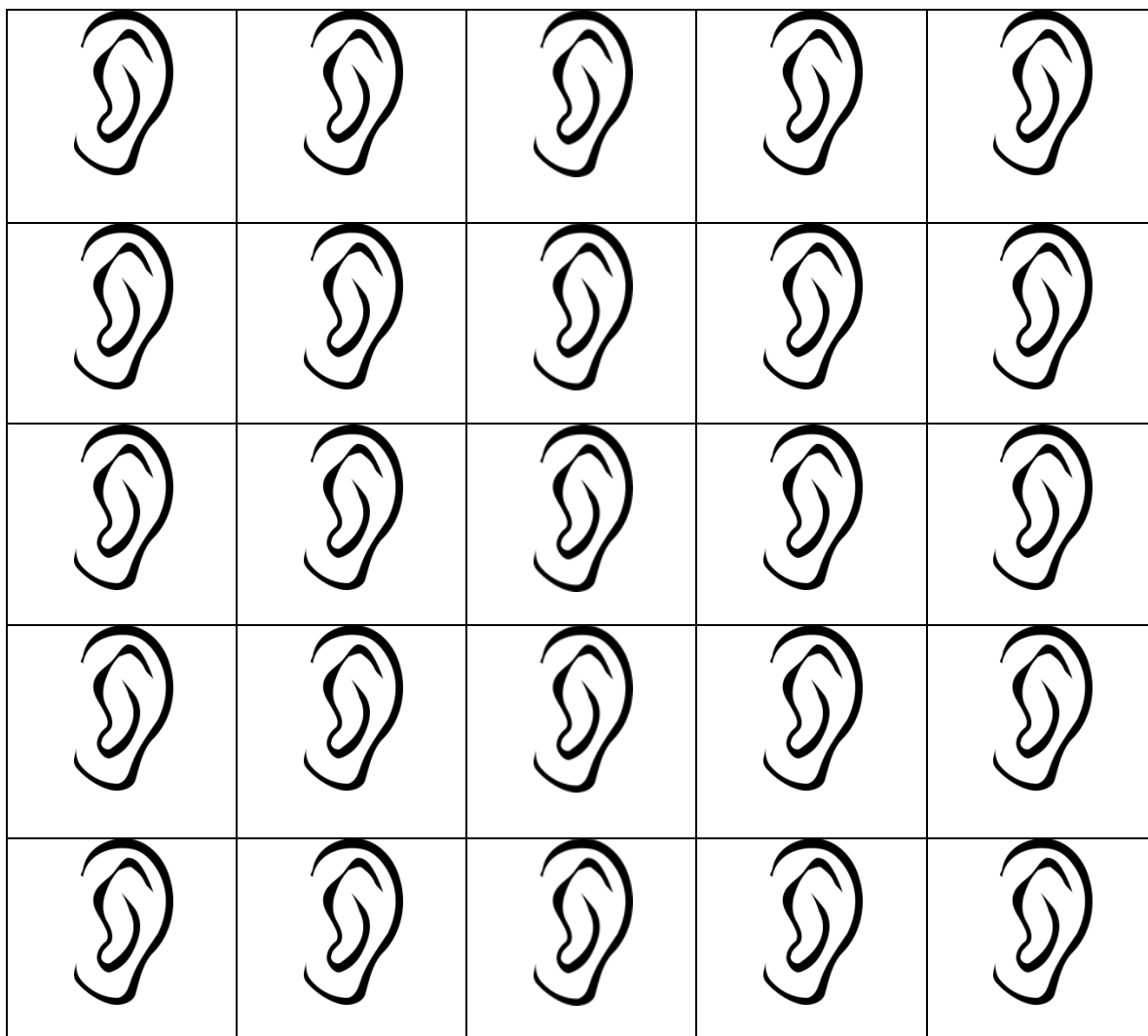
Turn and talk is simple in that the teacher or a student asks a question. Then, students turn their bodies to face the person next to them. They talk about the question and what they think the answer might be. This gives students the support of a partner to answer a question in a low pressure environment. They are practicing their listening skills one on one and they are speaking academic language together. After the turn and talk is finished, students can share what they think the answer might be with the whole class.

Talking Chips (Kagan, 2002)

Talking chips encourages every student to participate. Each student gets a cloud and an ear card. I recommend laminating the cards so that you can use them throughout the year. I chose clouds to represent a thought or idea from the student. The ear represents active listening. Ask the students the focus question or questions that were created during the think-aloud. When a student answers a question they can place their cloud card in a box in the middle of the table. As students are listening, they can put an ear card in the box. The listening cards can be student regulated and will increase their metacognitive awareness in listening.

Talking Chips Template:





Find Someone Who (Rojas, 2011)

In the find someone who activity, each student receives a piece of paper with 9 vocabulary words or concepts from the lesson. The teacher writes the words in the spaces. I put two grids on a page so that you can conserve paper. Each student receives a paper and a pencil. They can stand up and find someone in the room who knows something about the topic. They can say “Do you know something about _____?” The person responds by saying “Yes, _____” or “No, I don’t”. If they haven’t heard of the word in question the first student can ask them about a different word or the answering student can tell them about one that they do know. After they explain the word in a complete sentence, the answering student can sign or write initials their name on the other student’s paper in the correct box. This can go on until one student gets all nine signatures or for a limited amount of time, 10 minutes. This game is a hit!

Additional idea:

Students can glue this paper in their notebook and draw pictures or write descriptions of each word after the activity is finished.

Find Someone Who Template:

Inside Outside Circle (Rojas, 2011)

Inside outside circle is another way to get students speaking and listening to each other's ideas using academic language. Break the class up in half. The first half makes a circle facing outward and the second half makes a circle around the first circle. Students make pairs with whomever they are facing. Students are given cards with focus questions on them. One student asks the other student a question. The other student tries to answer the question using a complete sentence with learned vocabulary. Then they switch roles. After each partner has had a turn, students in the inside circle rotate once to the right and the discussion begins again with a different partner. Students can ask the same question again or choose a different question to ask the partner. This gives students different perspectives on the same topic. After the exercise is complete, the class can talk about different interpretations of the listening task that they noticed. This will influence student listening in subsequent lessons because they will have the different perspectives in mind.

Teacher Website Resources

- Think-aloud Process on Reading Rockets:

http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/think_alouds

- Kagan Interactive Learning Strategy Article:

http://www.kaganonline.com/free_articles/dr_spencer_kagan/279/Kagan-Structures-for-English-Language-Learners

- Virginia Rojas Vocabulary Strategies:

http://esu4vocabularystrategies.wikispaces.com/file/view/newsfile1845_1.pdf/200773642/newsfile1845_1.pdf

- Talking Chips Guide:

<http://mplsesl.wikispaces.com/Modified+Resources+and+Lesson+Plans>

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

The question that I answered is: How do I create a teacher resource guide with listening strategies to improve student listening skills for EL students in grades 3-5? A variety of listening strategies gives students support in listening to lectures and conversation based instruction in class. Listening strategies, such as think-alouds, train students to have an engaged listening experience. These systematic experiences flow into all four language domains: listening speaking, reading and writing, and elevate students in their English language development. This capstone is written for EL students in grades 3-5 with intermediate listening skills. Focusing on listening with these strategies ensures that all four language domains are involved in a lesson. By applying listening strategies, students will be able to synthesize classroom content and to transfer this understanding into their future learning experiences. I chose to write a teacher resource guide that could be applied to any content and serve as a functional and adaptable teaching tool.

In my years of teaching ESL, I have received sufficient support in teaching students how to read and write. I have had the WIDA training in how to assess speaking and training from my district in how to improve speaking and writing. Listening is acknowledged as a language domain but it not addressed specifically during teacher training. Hence, from year to year, my students improve in their speaking, writing and reading but grow at a slower rate in the listening portion of the WIDA Access test. This

realization lead me to my question: How might listening strategies improve listening skills for EL students in grades 3-5? In my research, I found that listening strategies improve listening skills; especially when a variety of strategies are used concurrently.

Literature Review Revisited

This teacher resource guide was based on a review of research geared toward student growth in listening comprehension. Multiple strategy use and several repeated opportunities for the learner to experience the listening task were identified as supporting listening comprehension. Listening as an active process where the listener hears information and processes it into meaning that they can paraphrase and relate to. This process is more difficult for EL learners because they have to process the meaning of the syntax and vocabulary before the comprehension process begins. O'Malley, Uhl Chamot and Kupper (1989) and Call (1989) explain that students need to understand content before they can digest information while listening. This is why repeated information and giving students background information and images are so important for the EL learner. Vandergrift (2004), Goh (2002), and Hinckle (2006) recommend that best practices for listening support occurs when combining and using multiple strategies. In addition, Vandergrift (2004) categorizes different stages of listening into five lessons with different listening strategies for each phase. The teacher resource guide contains five lessons based on Vandergrift's suggestions with additional strategy ideas for student use. (Graham 2007; Zimmerman, 1995) suggests that students need to build confidence in listening in order to do so effectively. Journaling about skills and reflecting on growth is one way to encourage listening empowerment. Think-alouds are a proven way to increase listening comprehension: O'Malley, Uhl Chamot and Kupper (1989); Call

(1989) agree that think-alouds encourage the metacognitive listening process; Vandergrift (2004) contributes the notion that think-alouds are a way for teachers to monitor student listening comprehension. Focus questions are another effective way to make learning more targeted and meaningful. They aid in student concentration and give them motivation to listen. Lustik (2010) writes that considerate, well made focus questions allow for a rich learning conversation. Listening is important for comprehension in the classroom and is a language domain on the WIDA Access test. WIDA created Can-Do Descriptors to clarify academic language proficiencies. These are a helpful tool in thinking about what language students should be expected to listen and produce. These researched based strategies are divided into the teacher resource guide. All of these strategies are organized for functional use. Students will benefit from these strategies the most when used in succession with each other.

Implications

My hope is that teachers will be able to support their students with research-based strategies that support the ELs in their language acquisition. Teachers will find that this is a tool that doesn't require a lot of additional work. I have made reproducible templates for interactive activities and journals. Sentence starters have been created for think-alouds and journal entries. There is a lesson plan template as well as a lesson plan example for reference.

In using this curriculum, teachers will help students will become more conscious of lecture-based listening, and listening in conversation. The journals will give them the repeated experience reflecting on listening strategies and how to improve their listening. Think-alouds support students in learning new content through

listening. Ideally, they will be able to ask themselves think-aloud questions and reflect as they are listening during tests and in day to day auditory experiences. The strategy of focus questions will also become engrained in their repertoire of listening and make students insightful listeners and conversationalists.

Change in the importance of listening needs to be addressed at the district level as well. ESL instructional specialists need to relay strategy support to teachers because listening is a tested language domain. Content related listening happens every day in classrooms. EL students need to be encouraged to have supported discussions about content. Half of a successful conversation involves listening. Therefore, listening comprehension needs to be supported district wide.

Limitations

This guide is meant to be tried and corrected as necessary. Although the guide is written to support a variety of subjects and settings, it comes with limitations. These drawbacks will vary based on school environment, time, classroom supplies and WIDA English level. After considering these limitations, the guide is designed to be adaptable and functional for classroom use.

School Environment and Time

The school environment and philosophy affects flexibility in teaching. Principals and school districts often have their own initiatives that teachers are required to implement in their classroom. These initiatives usually require more of one's time to prepare materials. Limited prep time to prepare for the school day is a concern for schools nationwide. Time to teach listening, speaking reading and writing in the classroom are restricted as well. The focus on state testing and standards divides the day

and makes yet another resource guide seem exhausting. The school environment needs to have flexibility and educator support to allow teachers time to try out new strategies.

Supplies

Teachers need access to a copier that works in the building that they teach. They need to have paper or notebooks for journals and access to books, online resources, videos or recordings that support their lessons. Having an ESL community if possible in their school district that communicates and shares teaching ideas would help in building successful resources for listening materials. Students need pencils and the teacher needs a place to teach with walls or boards for displaying vocabulary and images. The materials list sounds obvious, yet, I have experienced school environments where the copiers do not work and I don't have a classroom to teach in. Knowing where to find resources in the school is essential in any teaching situation.

WIDA English Level and Grade Level

The teacher resource guide was created for students with intermediate listening comprehension. The goal is to elevate listening comprehension to an advanced level for students in grades 3-5. This age range and WIDA level was chosen based from my experience with these students. It could easily be adapted for older students or students who have higher WIDA levels. However, students with emergent listening skills would need additional support. They would need more drawing and sentence support in journaling. They would also need listening samples that are shorter in length. Students in lower grade levels would need age appropriate listening samples and journal activities as well.

Future Research Plans

As I continue to teach, I hope to evolve and refine my teaching skills to meet the needs of my students. I plan to utilize my teaching guide in listening strategies. As I focus on these strategies throughout the year, I will record the assessments to see how listening skills have improved. Ideally, classrooms would be able to continue the listening strategies in subsequent grades. This way, we could record listening comprehension growth over a few years. Additionally, I could compare growth of students with listening strategy support to students without listening strategy support. Analyzing growth would show how the listening strategies are working and what needs to be added or refined. Other researchers could revisit the elementary learner and how listening strategies can support listening comprehension. They could also research strategies that would better prepare students for the WIDA Access listening test.

Summary

This chapter revisits the questions that I found and research that I explored to support my students in their acquisition of listening. In my teacher training, I have been given and found strategies to support students in speaking, reading and writing. The assumption is that listening will follow. I have found that in bringing listening to the forefront, comprehension in all language domains will be supported and listening comprehension increases. This capstone was a valuable experience in that it forced me to reevaluate my teaching. My students will now be supported with research-based listening strategies for auditory support. In the teaching guide, I organized these concepts into a functional format. In turn, the teacher resource guide is available for any teacher who is seeking guidance in advancing student listening comprehension. I have given

suggestions for how to use implement the guide and have discussed its limitations. In sum, my students will be confident and reflective learners with higher functioning listening comprehension and support.

APPENDIX

Stage of Listening Instruction	Related Metacognitive Strategies
<p data-bbox="378 600 678 632">Planning/predicting stage</p> <p data-bbox="524 695 927 926">1. Once students know topic and text type, they predict types of information and possible words they may hear.</p>	<p data-bbox="1101 600 1406 695">1. Planning and directed attention.</p>
<p data-bbox="378 963 656 995">First Verification Stage</p> <p data-bbox="524 1058 889 1289">2. Students verify initial hypotheses, correct as required and not additional information understood</p> <p data-bbox="524 1331 911 1688">3. Students compare what they have written with peers, modify as required, establish what needs resolution, and decide on details that still need special attention.</p>	<p data-bbox="1101 963 1284 995">2. Monitoring</p> <p data-bbox="1101 1037 1419 1131">3. Monitoring, planning and selective attention.</p>
<p data-bbox="378 1730 688 1761">Second Verification Stage</p> <p data-bbox="524 1824 862 1856">4. Students verify points of</p>	<p data-bbox="1101 1730 1341 1824">4. Monitoring and problem solving</p>

<p>disagreement, make corrections and write down additional details understood.</p> <p>5. Class discussion in which all contribute to reconstruction of the text's main points and most pertinent details, interspersed with reflection on how students arrived at the meaning of certain words or parts of the text.</p>	<p>5. Monitoring and evaluation</p>
<p>Final Verification Stage</p> <p>6. Students listen for information they could not decipher earlier in the class discussion.</p>	<p>6. Selective attention and monitoring</p>
<p>Reflection Stage</p> <p>7. Based on discussion of strategies used to compensate for what was not understood, students write goals for next</p>	<p>7. Evaluation</p>

listening activity.	
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Listening Instruction Stages and Related Metacognitive Strategies (Vandergrift, 2004)

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