

Report: Teaching and Assessing Listening FIG

Fall 2023

FIG members (Interdisciplinary):

- Jen Sacklin (ESL),
- Beth Sheppard (Chinuk Wawa)
- Rachel Knighten (Spanish)
- Stacey Christian (Spanish)
- Amy Griffin (ESL)
- Cybele Higgins (ESL)
- Tracy Henninger (ESL)
- Jennifer Gates (ESL)
- Kurtis Foster (ESL)
- Nancy Wood (ESL)
- Karin Almquist (French)

Readings:

1. **Book:** *Listening in the Classroom – Teaching Students How to Listen* (edited by Marnie Reed and Tamara Jones, 2022).
 - Most FIG members found this book extremely useful and would recommend it to any language instructor.
2. **Book:** *Teaching Listening, Revised Edition* (Ekaterina Nemtchinova, 2020).
 - Most FIG members found this book too elementary; it would be great for pre-service teachers or those with little to no classroom experience or training.
3. **Article:** Facilitating Extensive Listening with Non-Graded Materials in EFL Programs (Nathan Ducker and Matt Saunders, *International Journal of Innovation in English Language Teaching*, 2014)
4. **Article:** Beyond Mere Listening Comprehension: Using TED Talks and Metacognitive Activities to Encourage Awareness of Errors (Carolyn K. Elk, *International Journal of Innovation in English Language Teaching*, 2014)

Benefits of the FIG, according to 6 participants:

“One benefit of the FIG was to stimulate ideas for the creation of engaging grammar-focused asynchronous practice activities. Often target grammar is practiced by writing in a workbook or speaking in class. Listening activities are less frequently included in the WG [Writing and Grammar] classes, and it was nice to add more using ideas from the FIG. It was also useful to explore how a teacher can help students see the connection between using listening to learn grammar in context, while also using grammar knowledge to improve listening comprehension. This FIG helped me teach that kind of strategic awareness to my intermediate level students.”

“It was beneficial to focus together, with other language instructors, on improving how we teach listening skills. The readings raised my awareness of the myriad challenges that students may encounter when trying to make meaning while listening to a spoken text. They also offered practical and detailed examples of effective activities to address these. I implemented one of the suggested listening activities in a class that was observed by a colleague who understands French. She gave positive feedback afterward, and confirmed my perception that students' had benefited from the new listening exercise. I have since incorporated similar activities into my 101 curriculum and will continue to do so throughout the 100-level sequence during Winter and Spring terms. “

“I learned tons about teaching listening in the FIG. I'm more aware of the processes that go on in the listener's mind and the possible interruptions to comprehension as well as some ways to also help the language learners become more aware of them. This FIG has been immediately helpful in my classroom and I know I will continue to develop my instruction as I practice what I've learned and get student feedback. I got the most out of *Listening in the classroom: teaching students how to listen* by Reed and Jones and listening to other teacher's stories and ideas during our meetings.”

“By interacting with teachers who teach in different contexts, including different levels of ESL, courses that focus on different skills, and different language contexts such as a language taught as a foreign language or to a heritage community, we learned multiple approaches to and activities for enhancing students' language skills. That experience provided invaluable new techniques for language instruction. The literature discussed during the FIG also introduced pedagogical techniques I was not familiar with but found helpful in the class I was teaching during the time the FIG ran. The opportunity to create an activity on a specific language skill, have it observed, and discuss it in an all-group meeting was also very helpful for shaping my teaching practice. My students responded very positively to the activity and upon assessment improved their ability to make use of the specific language skill that was the focus of the activity, which is the ultimate test of efficacy for a pedagogical approach and a great testimony to the value the style of discussion, inquiry, and practice the FIG brought about.”

“Two major benefits of this FIG experience for me as a group member:

- 1) I had the opportunity to get updated on advances in a major aspect (listening) of language pedagogy without having to go to a conference or workshop. I appreciate that FPD acknowledges the value of and supports this type of professional development by covering.
- 2) This FIG provided an opportunity to connect with colleagues in a different part of the institution. The ESL and Languages curricula reside in different divisions and even on different campuses, as a result, there is no formal collaboration between the faculty even though we are engaged in fundamentally the same work.”

“I wrote a textbook for my Reading & Oral Skills class. The textbook's Reading activities are stellar (if I do say so myself!) but the book is lacking good Listening activities. One benefit from the FIG is that I now have a slew of robust, research-backed listening activity ideas to draw from. Another benefit is that I now have a cohort of colleagues that I can invite to lend their expertise to the textbook and improve its Listening focus.”