

Web-Chat Date: August 9, 2011

Topic: Active Listening in EFL Pedagogy

Abstract:

A successful entrepreneur and scholar, Peter F. Drucker, once wrote "The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said." In our EFL pedagogical approaches, to what extent should teachers apply active listening activities in his or her lesson planning? How important is active listening in English as foreign language environment? How would teachers define "active listening"? Many curricula and teachers stress the presentation skills, but should we also teach actively listening to presentations? What are some of the successful strategies and techniques EFL professionals could consider implementing to ensure the successful outcome of active listening communication?

Transcript:

Damon Anderson: Welcome everyone. We have an updated Adobe Connect platform. We hope you like the new look. Please feel free to submit any pre-questions prior to the start of today's chat.

Damon Anderson: Hello Jiang Lei and lhd. Thank you for joining us today. We will begin our chat in about twenty minutes. Please feel free to submit and pre-questions or comments.

CHEN Shen: Hi Damon! Greetings from CHEN Shen in China. This is my first time to join the web chat. I was wondering whether we will talk about the notion of "active listening" in today's chat, for I'm not quite sure what "active listening" means in the teaching context...

Damon Anderson: Hello Dr. Chen Shen and everyone. Thank you for joining our chat today. We will begin in just a couple of minutes.

Jiang Lei: Hello, Damon.

Lan Pham: Hello everyone

Nang Saung Kham: Good afternoon everyone

janet: Hello, everyone.

lhd: Hi everyone

CHEN Shen: Good afternoon everyone!

CAO Liang: Hello, everyone, nice to meet you here, and I hope we will have a nice discussion today

kim_vn: Hi everybody!

Phil Owen: Hi there.

Van Thi Hong Trinh: Hello

Damon Anderson: Let's begin our discussion today on Active Listening. Many of us have listening practice in our classes, using such techniques as note taking and dictation. Some have students listen to a dialog or text and then answer simple comprehension questions. Are any of these considered active listening?

xuyan: Can you explain the concept of "active listening"? How to apply related teaching methods?

Jiang Lei: When a student gives presentation, others would like to do their own business, especially when the presenter is not an eloquent speaker. What should the teacher do to ensure students active listening to their peers' presentation?

kim_vn: To hear what isn't being said, it is nice to think about this statement, do you all think so?

kim_vn: sometimes, we talk and our partners talk but we still do not understand what is being talked.

kim_vn: I am very glad to hear what will the teachers of English say about this statement? what do you think, everybody?

thuypham: goodafternoon

Lan Pham: The topic today is really interesting to me, as usually in the TEFL context, teachers often teach their students listening strategies so that they can understand and get what they heard. So to teach students hear what isn't being said is rather new to me. Could you please explain a little bit about this and give some more ideas for teaching this activities?

Damon Anderson: Đào Thị Lý: In my class, many Ss said that they couldn't hear what the speakers saying. How can I deal with this problem?

CHEN Shen: I don't think students doing active listening when they do note taking and dictation, or do comprehension questions.

CAO Liang: i think in the listening class, "active listening" consists of 2 parts, one is to hear what is being said, and the other is to hear what is not being said

Damon Anderson: In an active listening task (not exercise) students are to reflect on what they heard and to clarify their understanding before responding to what was said.

Phanisara: I agree Kim....to hear what isn't being said is the critical thinking skills. The type of questions found a lot on TOEFL and other new EFL proficiency assessment.

lhdu: I think active listening is a real conversation with authentic text

kim_vn: I think note-taking is not active listening

Phil Owen: Active listening requires the s's to think about or evaluate what is being said, not just understand it.

CHEN Shen: Damon, what do you mean by saying "Ss COULND'T hear what the speaker saying"?

Eaindray/Andra: Hello everyone!

janet: Some listening materials are tailor-made for students of certain proficiency level, I don't think the course designer expects the learner to hear what is not being said.

kim_vn: I dont agree with you in some extents, Janet

CAO Liang: yes, i quite agree with janet

Phanisara: Jiang Lei, for teachers to make provision for active listening activities for his or her students,.....teachers themselves will have to be pro-active in designing ahead of time the lesson plans and guided listening and questioning tasks for his or her students to undertake.

kim_vn: language is used to communicate, if listeners dont understand what speakers say, how can they communicate well?

CAO Liang: and i believe that is the basic skill for a beginner

thuypham: In my opinion, Drucker meant that active listening not only involves L what is said but the listener has to predict what is going to be said or understand what the speaker means or hidden meaning

Eaindray/Andra: I agree with Janet. In that case, Ss can't catch up even the main points.

janet: Yes, when we talk about hearing what isn't being said, the listening materials should be authentic

Damon Anderson: Chen Shen, I was just forwarding a question submitted by another participant. I believe the teacher felt that not all students could hear everything being said.

Nang Saung Kham: I agreed with thuypham

CHEN Shen: Hey guys! Anybody could give an example of active listening task?

thuypham: So I'm afraid I have different idea with Kim_vn, when you take note, you are listening actively, because you don't write down what you do,'t really understand

Damon Anderson: I believe that students need to be taught to hear the meanings of the suprasegmentals as well as the words (pitch, intonation, stress, juncture and pause).

CAO Liang: i think to hear what is not being said is used in a more daily situation, or in a trick situation, like to understand literature or business talk

thuypham: note taking is a difficult skill for me

janet: yes, I also think that note taking is active listening. But it's the basic level of active listening

Damon Anderson: I agree that note taking and some forms of dictation are types of active listening because the students are actually engaged with what they are hearing and are transferring the information into another form or are using it to do something with, and that will show to some degree, depending on the activity, their level of understanding.

Lan Pham: I think note-taking is a kind of active listening because while listening, students have to select the main points to take note, not to write everything they can hear; also they should develop a strategies in taking note e.g abbreviating, using symbols, etc. to catch up the main points

xuyan: Does active listening means listening involves understanding and reproducing the input?

CAO Liang: note taking can help a person to remember what is being said, but to really understand the conversation needs more,

Phil Owen 2: But Active listening is not just ANY listening, is it?

kim_vn: totally agree with Anderson, these things help listeners understand what isn't said

thuypham: Chen Shen, when you listen to a talk or presentation, you ask some questions relating to the topic, that's active listening

Jiang Lei: in my opinion, active listening is to think, predict, judge while listening. agree or disagree, right or wrong.

Damon Anderson: Often times we talk with our students and they don't really hear everything we say because they are too busy forming a response in their heads before we finish speaking to them. In active listening, you form your response after hearing all that is said and you have been able to reflect on it.

Jiang Lei: it's to listen critically.

Phil Owen 2: So in active listening, s's might take notes, but then predict or analyze or cruitique what was in the notes.

Phanisara: Samples for Active Listening Tasks ---Acting out/Body Language---Asking Questions for Clarification----Paraphrasing.....

CHEN Shen: Thanks thuypham! Get it!

CAO Liang: i agree with Jiang Lei, and also you may offer some question or suggestions

thuypham: agree with Lei and Anderson

Damon Anderson: Yes, Phil, I agree with your idea on note taking.

kim_vn: I think active listening means understanding what the speakers convey

Phil Owen 2: I'm having connection problems, so I'll just have to stop typing and read.

Damon Anderson: If you look at some of the comics that talk about a husband and wife talking where She says something, but He hears something totally different, this is an example of non-active listening.

Phil Owen 2: In Cambodia! Battambang.

Lan Pham: I think what kim_vn said is just listening comprehension.

CHEN Shen: So in the class, it is a good idea teachers gives Ss time to reflect on what is said and then ask questions or give comments.

Eaindray/Andra: I understand that active listening is responding to the speaker attentively.

CHEN Shen: I mean Ss ask questions or give comments.

Lan Pham: I agree with Jiang Lei's definition about active listening

Phanisara: I agree with CAO Liang---and to hear what isn't being said is what determine the critical competitiveness among language users in daily lives.

Eaindray/Andra: Wow, Relo Damon!

Eaindray/Andra: A good eg!

CHEN Shen: Agree with Eaindray/Andra.

Damon Anderson: I think that we can give our students some discourse markers to use for active listening such as: If I understand what you are saying.....; when you say ____ you mean _____, correct?; I am not sure I understand you when you say.....

Eaindray/Andra: Thz Chen Shen!

CAO Liang: but the example of men and women also involves the psychological part, and the different structure of the brains of men and women

Damon Anderson: Only partially, Cao. If they actively listen to each other, they would have a better chance of understanding instead of inserting their own emotional thoughts into what is being said. That is why counselors and negotiators try to encourage more active listening.

Phanisara: Active listening also implies the understanding of socio linguistic and pragmatic nature of the discourse. Some cultural background that teachers can point out to their students when developing their understanding of the materials presented.

Eaindray/Andra: Without active listening, any listener can't be a good listener, right?

CAO Liang: yes, that's a good idea, thx Damon

kim_vn: Lan Pham, speakers convey, I mean the listener should understand what the speaker says by understanding his/ her pitch, intonation, not only the words

CHEN Shen: Damon's discourse marker is a good idea.

CAO Liang: that may take some while, but it will help students to better understand a conversation gradually

janet: So when we give the students the discourse markers, it will help them get a larger picture of what is being said.

liu hong: you mean the intention of the speakers

Phil Owen 2: So Active Listening does relate to the term as used in counseling.

Damon Anderson: I believe that in the TEFL/TESL field, active listening has grown out of the CL/CLL Approach (Counseling Learning/Community Language Learning).

Phanisara: I agree with CAO Liang. The whole brain theory is also another angle to survey best EFL pedagogy at the current time. Genders and other psychological and personality differences make a big difference in how one thinks and interpret their listening tasks.

Eaindray/Andra: Psychologically right/wrong, the listener needs to respond in a proper way. If not, the listener might be deaf or sth else.

kim_vn: agree with Damon's discourse marker

Damon Anderson: I believe that it was Curren (or Curran) that gave us the CL/CLL model.

CHEN Shen: My question is in what type of class can the discourse markers be used efficiently?

Damon Anderson: The discourse markers should be/can be used in all types of classes. I ask students to use them to let a speaker know when and if communication has stopped or there is a problem in understanding. Rather than just say "What?" or say I don't understand, let the speaker know where communication broke down.

Phil Owen 2: I've tried to use play reading in classes to work with intonation and speaker's intention. I'm not very polished at this, though.

kim_vn: Anderson, continue talking about Curran

Eaindray/Andra: Does CLL mean Communicative Language Learning, doesn't it?

CAO Liang: i think the example of discourse maker can be applied in different types of class. It can even help us as teachers. Sometimes Ss dont know how to express themselves clear. And we may say "I don't quite understand, do you mean....", in this way, it can help Ss to express themselves better

Damon Anderson: When I have a class where students are talking, I ask them to not just repeat what the person before them said, but to say what they understood and then respond to it. It is amazing how this really clarifies things for the students and how it really keeps a discussion going.

CAO Liang: I think Phil, you made a good point of using different intonation to express the real intention or different emphasis

CHEN Shen: Agree with Cao Liang.

Phanisara: I believe we can introduce the concept of discourse markers for the students practicing English in all of the four skills. Listening for the markers and interpreting the meaning; Speaking with role play and dialogue practice; Reading to distinguish the markers indicate certain syntax and meaning; as well as writing practices to indicate transitional words and phrases.

liu hong: or " I think you're try to express that.... Am I right"

janet: Besides discourse markers, any other techniques to teach active listening?

Phil Owen 2: I've tried to use play reading in classes to work with intonation and speaker's intention. I'm not very polished at this, though.

Damon Anderson: Phil, in terms of using a play or dialog, give the same dialog to different groups and give them different instructions in how to read it. For example, tell one group that speaker A and Speaker B really like each other. In another group, tell them that speaker A likes Speaker B, but speaker B can't stand speaker A. See how they use the different suprasegmentals and see if the others can understand the differences in the roles when they hear the different productions.

janet: Thanks, Phanisara, that was very enlightening

Eaindray/Andra: Yes, janet! How about facing the speaker to have eye-contacts and restate what he/she said and ask clarification Qs.

Phanisara: Good question Janet. Creative for the teachers to think of different ways to encourage students to improve their active listening activities. Cloze songs exercises. Writing one's own sentences to finish a reading paragraph or stories.

janet: That was great idea, Damon. I really like it.

Phil Owen: Yes, it is.

liu hong: In my writing teaching , the students are in groups of four , each group choose the best one, and he/ she will present his / her writing , the others listen and they choose the best from all , and compare mine with theirs, many times, they choose the same one

Ihdu: I agree with Phanisara, listening through songs is the best way to teach listening

Eaindray/Andra: It's really funny and enjoyable, Damon!

Damon Anderson: The results of active listening can be a much more engaged class rather than students just giving short answers and waiting for the next question.

CAO Liang: yes, I think song cloze is a great idea.

CAO Liang: most students prefer to listen to English songs

liu hong: but it is not easy for task-teaching classes in China

Damon Anderson: Actually, Liu Hong, having worked in China for 3 years, I would disagree with you. Of course, you need to change the students' culture of learning in your class, but it can be done with excellent results. Even with classes of 50.

Phanisara: Really like the idea, Liu Hong! So students can listen and give their reasons why they like a certain story over another.

Phanisara: Acting out words and paraphrasing games are also fun.

liu hong: I think so

janet: Yes, I agree with Cao. I use song cloze a lot in my class and it works quite well.

Nang Saung Kham: if there is limited resources to teach the by songs?

Eaindray/Andra: Just try it, later U can see its benefits, Liu!

Nang Saung Kham: since it has never been practise in Myanmar before ...

Damon Anderson: Patty Zhang, you raised your hand. Go ahead and type in what you would like to say.

Phanisara: Altogether, active listening tasks allow students room to think, to listen carefully, to work more on their own language learning, to really see if they really understand the process and the language. Become more autonomous learners and critical thinkers and self evaluators for their own learning processes.

Damon Anderson: You know that old game of pass the word or post man where the teacher whispers something to one student who then has to whisper it to the next student and so on until it gets all the way around the class? It is a fun game because the listener is not able to clarify what they heard, so they just tell the next person what they thought they heard. This is an example of non-active listening. Do this once, then do it again and have the listener repeat to the whisperer what they heard before they pass it on to the next person. Big difference.

Eaindray/Andra: No no! we use it in Myanmar.

liu hong: I agree with you Damon Anderson, but we have so many taboos for the teachers in our school. we must use the same material, the same speed ...

janet 2: Phanisara, can you explain what is paraphrasing games, I'm really interested.

Phanisara: Resources can never really be limited. We use what we have to creatively design our lesson activity to actively engage students in the learning class. Ask the students themselves to come up with what they think should be the resources for their own active learning activities.

Eaindray/Andra: Teaching Eng through songs/ poems/ proverbs/ articles are used in many years ago! Last say more than ten years ago.

Ihdu: how can I save the content of this discussion today?

Damon Anderson: We keep a record of it and Khun Nina will post it on our Facebook and Web page. She will send you the link if you give her your email.

Damon Anderson: Everyone, we only have about 5 minutes left. What topic would you like to discuss next month? This has been a great chat today. Thank you all.

Chollada ICT Thailand: I'm so sorry kha , I can't reach the internet ,Good afternoon Khun Damon and everyone

Phanisara: Paraphrasing games....can be with two teams or more in the classroom.....can be with vocabulary practice....guessing/saying another word/paraphrasing the words and sentences. Groups can be assigned to take turns on guessing the words, meaning, sentences. Collecting points to determine the winner in the end.

Damon Anderson: Thanks, Khun Chollada!

Damon Anderson: Debates also require good active listening.

Chollada ICT Thailand: kha I will read at the record.

thuypham: Sorry, I lost the talk due to the flat battery. But I don't know much about Councillng Instruction. I stop typing now to read the scripts of others

liu hong: I think today I 've learned how to communicate more with the students and make efforts to help students communicate better while listening, thank you for the teaching by chatting

CAO Liang: but we don't have enough time for that in class. I don't know, maybe most of your students are English majors, mine are non-English majors

Lan Pham: Damon, can I have Nina email address so that I can ask her for the link of the web-chat today? Thanks!

Patty Zhang: I am sorry, I missed the chat since I did not know how to present my idea through this.

Phanisara: Thank you for everyone wonderful input.

Chollada ICT Thailand: It's such a wonderful studying

Patty Zhang: yes, I also want the record of this chat.

Phil Owen: Yes, it was a good chat.

Patty Zhang: when is the next chat?

Damon Anderson: The next chat will be September 13th at the same time.

CHEN Shen: thanks a lot everyone!

CHEN Shen: I do learn from the discussion

CAO Liang: yes, i do learn something wonderful methods, thank you all

thuypham: Oh I want to have the recording of the chat too. Can you help?

janet 2: Thanks, everyone. It was a wonderful chat. Hope to meet you later.

Phanisara: Love that comment Liu Hong. That is really the purpose of our professional chat---so we can think of better and more effective ways to help our students.

Patty Zhang: Thank you. I will be there next time.

Damon Anderson: Khun Nina, can you give everyone the web page link and the facebook link so they can see the transcript when you post it?

Chollada ICT Thailand: Thanks a lot , I will join next time

liu hong: I seem to feel better to chat in this form , thank you all

lhdu: I send my email to which adress?

Patty Zhang: Where can we get the link for this chat?

Eaindray/Andra: I didn't aware how the time had passed. C U on Sep! Enjoyable chat today!

thuypham: Damon, how can I save the chat? I just can copy and paste as usual

CHEN Shen: bye

CAO Liang: c u next time guys

Patty Zhang: bye. see you next time.

Phanisara: One can find the archives of the web-chat dialogues at the US Embassy Bangkok website at:
<http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/education/english-language-program/efl-webchats.html>

We also try to share the link in our RELO Thailand Facebook page as well at
<http://www.facebook.com/RELOThailand> We appreciate your continued support.

liu hong: I think my students have sung higher praise for me now, though I 've a long way to go, bye

CAO Liang: bye for now

thuypham: Damon, good idea to post the transcript. Thanks

Nang Saung Kham: I was just reading the chat this time

Nang Saung Kham: Thanks everyone and bye

Nang Saung Kham: see you next time

Damon Anderson: Thank you everyone for participating in the chat today. We look forward to seeing you in our next chat on September 13th. We will leave this chat up for a while longer, but will close it for adding comments and questions. Bye everyone.
