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# Extending our listening: developing listening skills both in and outside the classroom

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# A discussion...

- What have you listened to in the last 24 hours?
- Would you recommend any of these things to your learners? Why/why not?
- Of these listening activities, which would you describe as involving Intensive Listening and which Extensive Listening?



# What is Extensive Listening?

EL is 'all types of listening activities that allow learners to receive a lot of comprehensible and enjoyable listening input. These activities can be teacher-directed ... or self-directed listening for pleasure that can be done outside the classroom. The key consideration here is that learners get to do a lot of meaningful listening practice (Renandya & Farrell, 2011: 56).



# What is the difference between Intensive Listening and Extensive Listening?

- Listening to answer comprehension questions
- Listening for the exact words of a phrase or expression (specific information)
- Listening for details
- Listening to mimic a text / dictation
- Learners may not understand much of the contents
- Listening to massive amounts of text
- Texts which learners can understand easily (ideas, culture, knowledge)
- High comprehension: listening at or below one's listening ability
- Limited pre-set questions or tasks
- The learners choose the material



# Why Extensive Listening?

- Listening seen as primary role of language learning (Richards 1985; Richards and Rodgers 1986; Rost 1990)
- ‘...listening is the most widely used of the four skills and ... its use is frequently integrated’ (Watkins 2014: 68).
- ‘Listening is ...the starting point for learning any living language, and most people spend more time listening ... than they do speaking, reading or writing’ (Ur 2016: 66).



# What listening problems do students have?

- Many students find this the most difficult skill
  - Word recognition
  - Word and sentence stress
  - Conceptual representation
  - Culture and context
- Teachers find it challenging to teach too!



# What are the benefits of EL?

- Enhanced word recognition
- Increased fluency in processing spoken language
- Improved listening comprehension
- Possible acquisition of formulaic language  
(Renandya 2012)
- Typical classroom strategies might not work
- ‘Extensive ... listening is likely to lead to improvements in overall language development’  
(Watkins 2014: 68).



# With or without subtitles?

*You are going to watch two short video extracts with subtitles:*

- [Yorkshire Dialect](#)
- [Snatch "Caravan Talk"](#)

*As you watch consider this question:*

- Are you mainly focusing on reading or listening?

*Now discuss these questions:*

- How could you ensure that learners using tapescripts or subtitles actually develop their listening skills?
- What tasks could you suggest that don't involve using tapescripts or subtitles?





- Are you mainly focusing on reading or listening?
  - Usually written, but:
    - May not be the same?
    - Words missing
- How could you ensure that learners using tapescripts or subtitles actually develop their listening skills?
  - Watch without subtitles to understand the general meaning – watch it again with subtitles to check understanding
  - Watch without subtitles – read transcript (if available) – watch again without subtitles.
  - Get used to watching without subtitles
- What tasks could you suggest that don't involve using tapescripts or subtitles?
  - Use video and ask learners to focus on visual clues (video will have to be chosen carefully: e.g. records with an easy-to-follow story/narrative).
  - Highs and Lows - listen and decide if the mood/story/pace etc is high or low at any given time!
  - Get learners to write their own subtitles!



# How can you assess the difficulty of a text?

These websites can help you to determine the 'level' of a text:

- [English Profile: The CEFR for English](#)
- [Oxford Text Checker](#)



# How can you assess the difficulty of a text?

## Unknown dinosaur almost blown to oblivion

A newly discovered species of dinosaur has been identified from an extraordinarily complete Chinese fossil almost destroyed by dynamite. It was preserved raising its beaked head, with feathered wings outstretched in the mud it was mired in when it died 72 million years ago. The new creature has been named *Tongtianlong limosus*, "muddy dragon on the road to heaven".

The discovery is published in the journal Nature Scientific Reports. "It was found at a construction site by workmen when they were dynamiting, so they nearly blasted this thing off the hillside," said University of Edinburgh palaeontologist Dr Stephen Brusatte. "We almost never knew about this dinosaur."

A few small parts of the fossil were in fact blasted off, but considering the circumstances of its discovery, the fossil is remarkably complete. "It's about the size of a sheep, and it's part of a group of very advanced bird-like, feathered dinosaurs called oviraptorosaurs," said Dr Brusatte. "They were basically the last group of dinosaurs to blossom before the asteroid hit."

The researchers, from China and the UK, say the fossil is particularly special for the insight it provides into the evolutionary transition from dinosaurs to birds. "Modern birds came from dinosaurs," said Dr Brusatte, "and its dinosaurs like *Tongtianlong* that give us a glimpse of what the ancestors of modern birds would have looked like. "Fossils like these capture evolution in action."



# Flood listening.

Watch these videos and consider what different information you learn about the topic:

- [Brexit: Why Britain Left the European Union](#)
- [Brexit: Britain will be strongly in favour of staying in EU by 2021](#)
- [Brexit: The Comedy](#)
- *Would this activity work with your current learners or would you need to adapt it?*
- *When would you use this activity: in the classroom, or would it work better outside the classroom?*
- *What do you think are the advantages of using such a task?*



# Flood listening.

What do you think are the advantages of using such a task?

- Repetition
  - Language development
  - Ideas and opinions
- Different points of view
- Could fit in with topic of lesson
- But:
  - Topic could be controversial
  - Might be difficult with lower-level learners



# Using Websites

- [TED-Ed Videos](#)
- [BBC Ideas](#)

**Video title:**

**Summary of contents:**

**Important vocab:**

**My questions:**



# Some more EL activities

*Look at the EL activities you have been given and consider these questions:*

- *Decide on the relative merits and drawbacks of each activity.*
- *Would any of the activities work with your current learners or would you need to adapt them?*
- *When would you use each activity: in the classroom, or would it work better outside the classroom?*

*Now discuss your ideas with the other people in the room*



# Your ideas and activities

*In small groups discuss these questions:*

- What EL activities do/could you do with your learners both in and outside the classroom?
- What are your students' needs and aims? Could EL help them?
- Can you see any disadvantages of following a programme of EL?

*Be prepared to share your ideas!*





# Your ideas and activities

- Can you see any disadvantages of following a programme of EL?
  - May not be interactive
  - May not be authentic (choice of material could prevent this)
  - Time commitment - in and out of the classroom
  - Possible repetition of mistakes
  - Teacher's role is minimised!



# Summary and conclusion: 10 tips for effective EL

Choice of material

Address the learners' needs

Listen as much as possible

Purpose

Tasks

Both in and outside the classroom

Listen more than once

Resources

Read and listen at the same time

Use video



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# Questions?





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To  
Discover  
And  
Understand.