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A Progress/Status Report on the Teaching of Listening

Gail Fera Juris
Central Washington University

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A PROGRESS/STATUS REPORT ON THE
TEACHING OF LISTENING

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Gail Fera Juris
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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

William D. Floyd, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

John E. Davis

E. LeRoy Isherwood

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION AND THE PROBLEM.	1
Introduction.	1
The Problem	2
Statement of the Problem.	2
Procedure	3
Need for the Study.	3
Importance of the Study	3
Limitations of the Study.	4
II. REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND FINDINGS RELATED TO THE TEACHABILITY OF LISTENING.	5
III. REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND FINDINGS RELATED TO THE NON-TEACHABILITY OF LISTENING.	32
IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . .	40
Summary	40
Conclusions	43
Recommendations	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	45

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is basically a limited number of questions that educators must frequently and professionally consider when they attempt to make crucial decisions about the schools.

De Young stated these questions in this simplified way (19:376):

1. Who shall be taught?
2. What shall be taught?
3. By whom should the children and subjects be taught?
4. When shall they be taught?
5. How shall they be taught?

There is a need to focus periodically on the what phase in education. Many theories have been proposed to establish a philosophical basis to answer the question "What shall be taught?". Traditionally, the curriculum comprises the elements of the cultural and social experiences most valued by society that are worth passing on to the succeeding generations. Often the knowledges, attitudes, and skills have changed because the schools have been criticized for their failure to prepare individuals to meet the problems in life. At such times, the curriculum is then

out of adjustment with life outside the schools.

One of the theories of curriculum selection developed to meet this educational problem is described by Greene and Petty. These authorities in language arts of the elementary school contend that if the intent of education is to help the individual meet his needs in life and enable him to become a worthy member of society, then the school must give the student mastery of the attitudes, knowledge, and skills he can use in life situations. But the school cannot teach everything to everybody, so the problem becomes that of selection--selecting what to teach. The principle for this theory is called the social utility principle. It is based on the principle that "whatever is taught must fill an important need in life both inside and outside the school" (22:12-15). The adoption of this social need theory is not confined to language alone but influences all modern educational thinking.

Greene and Petty develop the principle further by identifying seven components of it, mentioning frequency, cruciality, universality, permanency, teachability, learnability, and suitability. Among these, teachability is defined as being that which is amenable to instruction.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. It was the purpose of the

present research to systematically study the teachability of listening. More specifically, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Is enough known about listening so it can be taught?
2. How effectively and efficiently can it be taught?

Procedure. This study was essentially limited to library research. The resources were the Central Washington State College library, and materials borrowed on inter-library loans.

Need for the Study. Although listening is the first of the language arts which a child uses as he learns to understand his environment, it still remains a vague part of most school curriculums. Listening is talked about frequently, but compared to a subject such as reading, relatively little investigating has been conducted since 1952 (40:3). This fact indicates the recency of listening as a field of interest in research. Of that research completed, it has seldom been analyzed to give proper support to the theory that listening can be taught.

Importance of the Study. The importance of listening was forcibly brought to the attention of educators through the work of Mirian E. Wilt, who, in her research of 1950, found substantial evidence that in the majority of elementary

classrooms, teachers did not consciously teach listening as a skill of communication; yet children were expected to listen for 57.5 per cent of the class time (44). Recently, researchers have estimated that close to ninety per cent of the class time in some high schools and colleges is spent in listening (40:3).

Listening has always occupied a good portion of our communication time. As early as 1926, research by Paul Rankin established that seventy per cent of the average adult's working day was spent in verbal communication, and forty-five per cent of that time was devoted to listening (36). Since the advent of television and the introduction and addition of more audio-visual aids in teaching and learning, the proportion of time spent in listening has been increasing (40:3).

Limitations of the Study. In terms of time, the present study was limited to research in the field of listening from 1950 to the present. In terms of scope, it was limited to opinions and research within the language arts field.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND FINDINGS RELATED TO THE TEACHABILITY OF LISTENING

The teaching of listening has been neglected. Within recent years, investigations have been made centering around the language arts areas other than listening. It is true that some of the research conducted has dealt with the teaching of listening, but it also is true that few studies have dealt with the teachability of listening specifically.

The improvement of listening ability was left to chance and the maturity of the individual. While listening continues to be the most neglected of the communication skills, there is a growing awareness of the need for teaching listening. The realization of the large amount of time spent in listening, both in school and out, has done much to awaken interest in research. Since 1950, a number of authorities have written concerning the teachability of listening in the classroom. Some reports have been the result of carefully designed and controlled studies attempting to establish that listening can be taught. Other writers have analyzed the various types of listening and have given suggestions for appropriate guidance for the development of each. Still others have done investigations of problems

centering around listening and its relationship to other areas of language development. There are also those who have reported on individual experiments without controls within the classroom, and those who have written with isolated facts in view or after reviewing research of others.

The intent of this chapter was to review and describe in considerable detail those research studies and authoritative opinions which indicate that listening is teachable and, further, should be taught.

In 1950, Miriam Wilt conducted one of the most revealing studies to stir the listening field. The purpose of her research was (1) to determine what percentage of the school day elementary children were expected to listen, (2) to discover whether teachers were aware of the amount of time they expect children to listen, (3) to find the relative importance teachers place upon listening as compared with other language skills, (4) to find teachers' opinions of the importance of listening skills in situations in which listening is the activity of the majority of the group, and (5) to seek evidence of the teaching of listening in classrooms (44:11).

The data for her study was gathered from the answers to 1,452 questionnaires by teachers in forty-two states to assure a wide sampling of teacher opinion, and by actual visiting and timing listening activities of the children

in nineteen classrooms.

The result of the study indicated that children were expected to listen a large portion of the school day. Contrary to the opinions gathered from the questionnaires that children spent most of their time reading, children in the schools visited were spending more time listening than in any other single activity. Teachers had estimated 74.3 minutes per day, while observation showed children listened 158 minutes per day, or 57.5 per cent of the classroom time. There was also substantial evidence from the classrooms visited that the majority of elementary teachers did not consciously teach listening as a fundamental tool of communication. There was no evidence of its being taught. While children were expected to listen more than half the school day, purposes for listening, standards of achievement, and evaluation of the activity were conspicuous by their absence (44:115-125).

Soon after Wilt's report, the National Council of Teachers of English called attention to listening in their publications, The English Language Arts and Language Arts for Today's Curriculum, prepared by the Commission on the English Curriculum. Based on a five-year study, their report stated clearly that good listening habits must be taught, not left to chance; that, just as there is a need for continuous instruction in reading throughout the school years,

so there is a need for carefully-graded training in listening (2:57). In the words of McLetton, "much lip service was given to the teaching of listening", but even so, not much was done about it as revealed in a survey by Heilman of the textbooks on teaching published between 1946-1954. In an effort to determine the kind of preparation that a teacher might have for teaching listening, Heilman found that (25:285)

Of the fifteen texts examined, eleven had no mention of listening in either index or table of contents and no discussion of the subject in the text itself.

Next, Heilman examined curriculum guides and found that, although listening was recognized as one of the language arts skills, suggestions for teaching it were vague.

Several experiments almost limited entirely to the college level were taking place in the early 1950's, which led to measurable improvement toward teaching listening. Heilman, in an investigation to measure and improve the listening ability of college freshman, found that they were unable to respond critically and realistically to controversial statements (24:302-308). Irvin discovered that only 27 per cent of a group of college students could identify main points of an informational lecture (27:25-29), and Cartier found that 75 per cent of a group of college students comprehended 33 per cent or less of what they heard (17:114). Brown reported that only 49 per cent of a

group of college freshmen were able to get the correct idea of a selection heard, making slightly less efficient listeners than a group of high school juniors (10:69-71). Bird reported three separate studies which indicated that listening is more important than reading for success in 38 to 42 per cent of college courses taken by freshmen (5:328). Bird also did experiments which confirmed Rankin's study on the amount of time people spend listening (13:122). Nichols reported in one of his studies that the factors which influence listening most significantly include (1) recognition of correct English usage, (2) size of the listener's vocabulary, (3) ability to make inferences, (4) ability to sense the organization of spoken material, and (5) interest in an emotional attitude toward the topic. According to the students' reports, poor listeners listen for specific facts; good listeners for main ideas (32:154-163). Blewett, in a conducted research among 150 college freshmen girls concluded that (7:229-232):

Considerable variation exists among individuals in the ability to learn through the listening process.

From his study, Blewett constructed and used a listening test that has not been published. Brown conducted many studies with college students which resulted in the first published test of listening comprehension with national

norms for grades eleven through fourteen (11:633-636). These tests, in later revision, became the Brown-Carlson Test of Listening Comprehension. Nichols and Keller developed and used a "Listening Efficiency Test" at the University of Minnesota for college freshmen (5:331). These studies gave evidence of the need for training at the college level and the result has been the development of a number of successful listening programs. Taylor, in a report of listening published by the N.E.A., discussed these results (40:19):

One study described a four-session course in which listening approaches were stressed. Two others involved six and seven 10 minute periods in which instruction was given in how to listen. Another study involved a systematic program of twelve weeks of special listening instruction. In every one of the college listening programs, the gains were significant beyond the 1 per cent level of confidence.

There is a surprising scarcity of listening research at the primary level. One report, involving children in grades two, four, and six, was completed in the Chicago Public Schools in 1950. The researchers, Joseph Dunn and Louise Tyler, of the Chicago Teachers College, helped set up an Evaluation Committee in the Department of Instruction and Guidance. A subcommittee was assigned the task of developing a program of evaluation of listening in the schools of the area. The committee arrived at attempting to measure

these four categories in listening: (1) Skills, (2) attitudes, (3) interests, and (4) habits. Unable to locate a listening comprehension test to measure these objectives in their program, they devised standards of their own. Schools were selected and the pre-tests given. Because no "listenability" formula was available, the subcommittee applied the Dale-Chall readability formula to the stories they used. According to the formula, the second-grade story was at the fourth-grade level; the story used with grade four was at the fifth-and sixth-grade level; the story given to sixth-grade pupils was at the ninth-and tenth-grade level of readability. Although the committee did not feel the application of a readability formula to be valid, they pointed out that reading and listening abilities do not appear to develop at identical rates. The committee also concluded that it was practicable and desirable to continue to develop instruments for the evaluation of listening ability. Members also formulated some hypotheses about listening which they believed should be tested. Among these were the following (31:185):

Many students may learn effectively if material is presented orally to them. This will have to be tested if teaching by television goes into effect. Successful listening may be more difficult for many than successful reading.

A number of researchers have reported on the teach-

bility of listening in the intermediate grades. Edward Pratt in 1953 completed an investigation on the effect of a specific program of training in listening on a representative group at the sixth-grade level. Studies by Brown (11) and Nichols (32) had indicated important listening skills, and this evidence led Pratt to accept these basic skills for teaching and testing as follows: (1) Word perception, (2) comprehension of ideas, and (3) using ideas to build understandings. Using forty sixth-grade children and their classes from schools in the State of Iowa, Pratt assigned twenty classes at random to the experimental group, with the remaining classes constituting the control group. After the initial pretesting period, specific lessons on listening during a five week span were provided for the experimental group.

The results of his research have been referred to and used as a guide in later studies. His general conclusions were (35:315-320):

1. Teaching listening ability through instruction concerned with the skills involved in the listening process can be effective. Even the short period of time given to instruction in this experiment produced statistically significant results. Many of the skills involved in the listening process, however, are complex and need to be developed gradually. Children could not be expected to master these skills in a five-week period. The most that could be hoped for in the experimental period of this study was an indication of the effectiveness that such instruction might have if developed thoroughly. Since the difference between the adjusted means of the two groups on the final test of listening ability is

significant beyond the 1 per cent level of confidence, there seems to be little doubt that listening can be taught effectively in Grade VI.

2. The effectiveness of instruction in listening was found to be independent of varying levels of intelligence. Although only three levels of intelligence were considered in this study, the lack of significant interaction substantiates this conclusion. The analysis was made by using the mean intelligence quotient of the class, on the Pinter Intelligence Test, as a measure in the distribution. The findings of the analysis of the effect of intelligence on listening instruction indicate that listening instruction is a valuable experience for classes of sixth-grade children no matter what the mean intelligence.
3. There is some indication that instruction is more effective with certain listening skills but the small sampling of items in this study on each skill limits the reliability of any statement that might be made in support of a specific skill.
4. The correlation between listening ability and reading ability was found to be positive. The coefficient of .64 was obtained. Other investigators have reported higher and lower correlations, but the coefficient here is among the higher reported.
5. The correlation between listening ability and intelligence was found to be positive. The coefficient of correlation for the two abilities was .66 in this study. This correlation is in line with the correlations of intelligence and other academic abilities. Intelligence seems to play about the same part in listening that it does in reading, arithmetic, social studies, and science.

Pratt stated that the systematic improvement of listening was almost totally ignored. In the period of time between 1900 and 1952, the number of studies conducted

relative to the teaching of reading was estimated at over 3,000; the total bibliographies on listening were no more than 175, including articles, monographs, and theses; with only about fifty of them loosely classified as research (35:315). In 1954, Brown pointed out that listening was the most neglected of all the communication skills (9:85-93). An examination of 124 curriculum bulletins in the language arts by Duker in 1954 revealed that listening was given an important place in only fifty-one of the bulletins and was not even mentioned in thirty-six bulletins (5:330), even though the Commission on the English Curriculum concluded that "pupils from pre-school through college learn more frequently by listening than by any other means" (5:328).

In 1953, Caffrey was not satisfied with the reports from leading authorities that a distinguishable listening factor existed. Instead, he did a factor analysis of scores from a group of listening and related tests. Using correlations from scores on his experimental test of general listening ability, the California Auding Test, the reading portion from the Iowa Test of Educational Development, and the Otis Quick Scoring test of mental ability, he did find a separate listening factor. He concluded that whether the test was presented orally or taped, listening ability could be objectively, reliably, and validly measured (30:743). Sam Duker, an investigator in the listening field, published

a bibliography of materials on or related to the teaching of listening as a supplement in the January, 1955 issue of Education. The complete issue was devoted to listening (20:334-344).

A similar study was reported in April, 1955 when, for the first time, the Review of Educational Research included a chapter on listening in its issue devoted to the language arts. The chapter was a discussion by Caffrey in which he reviewed 155 articles and research studies, classifying them under the headings of auding, courses and evaluation, auding and other reading, hearing, speech, testing, and psychological references (13:121-138).

In December of 1955, Sister Mary Kevin Hollow reported a study designed to determine whether a planned program of listening would improve appreciably the listening abilities of intermediate-grade children. Sixteen mid-western parochial schools were chosen for the experiment. A total of 602 intermediate grade students took part in the study. Three hundred two of these students formed the experimental group, and the remaining 300 were placed in the control group. Specific lessons were given on a six-week basis. During the first three weeks, one twenty-minute lesson was presented daily. Two lessons were presented each day during the final three weeks, and the children in the experimental group were expected to practice two or more

basic listening skills. The control group continued in the usual language arts program.

The findings gathered through the procedure of Sister Hollow's study provided the following conclusions (26:161):

1. The listening skills of the intermediate-grade pupils involved in the experiment were appreciably improved by a planned program of instruction.
2. The children with low, with average, and with high intelligence quotients benefited substantially from systematic instruction in listening comprehension.
3. Factors such as reading comprehension, spelling, total language, and intelligence were found to be related to listening comprehension.
4. Other selected factors, such as sex of the child and size of family, did not seem to be related to listening ability.

Another impressive study was completed by Spearritt when he added further assurance of a distinguishable listening factor. In 1961 he used ten classes of sixth-grade pupils in Australia and correlations from their scores on thirty-four measures of listening, reading, thinking, memory, and attention. Some of his conclusions were:

(1) A separate listening comprehension factor was found in the listening tests; (2) no close relationship between attention and listening was found; (3) children who did well on reading and reasoning tests and who could remember long sequences of symbols tended to do well on tests of listening comprehension.

From his study, Spearritt devised a measuring instrument called the STEP Listening test. This is the only nationally-standardized test designed specifically to test listening comprehension of upper elementary school children. The test measures a wide variety of skills from literal comprehension to interpretation, application, and evaluation. There were four forms designed for fourth-grade through college (30:744).

One of the more noted studies in the intermediate area is an extensive research by Robert Canfield, completed in 1961. The purpose of his study was to provide information on the effectiveness of types of instruction in listening at the fifth-grade level. A comparison was made of three groups; one experimental group received direct instruction and practice exercises in listening for main ideas, important details, opinions, relevant and irrelevant details, and transitional phrases; a second experimental group received indirect instruction by listening to selections and discussing their content; the third group, which was the control group, received only the usual language arts program.

The groups of fifth-graders were from two elementary schools in the suburbs of Syracuse, New York. There was no significant difference in the mean intelligence quotients of the three groups. The Sequential Tests of Education Progress,

Listening Test 4A and 4B, were used to measure listening skill.

His findings, based on the mean score gains of the two experimental groups, were conclusive that pupils profit when they receive direct instruction and indirect instruction in listening. The control group, lacking a planned program of instruction, had limited gains (15:146-151).

Canfield further states (15:150):

A series of well-presented oral selections on subject-matter content, followed by questions on comprehension, can be effective in improving a pupil's listening. Since pupils spend a considerable amount of time listening during the school day, teachers have many natural opportunities to use the latter approach.

According to this study, listening comprehension is related more closely to report card grades than to intelligence or reading ability.

Dr. Maurice Lewis, while attending the Colorado State College of Education in 1954, completed a study of the effect of listening upon reading in grades four, five, and six. As a result of his study, he constructed tests to measure listening ability of intermediate-grade children (29:455).

In another study involving fifth-graders, specific training was given in listening for main ideas, details, and inferences. Trivette used six fifth-grade classes,

including 147 students from an elementary school in Kingsport, Tennessee. The group was considered representative of a cross-section in range of ability since no effort was made to group the students homogeneously. A wide range was also represented as to socio-economic background, with the majority from a low socio-economic class.

The materials Trivette reported using in this study included:

1. Two questionnaires, entitled, "Listening Information Form: Information From Parents", and "Listening Information Form: School Information", by Willard Abraham.
2. Listening Comprehension Test for Grades Four, Five, and Six, by Maurice S. Lewis.
3. Daily listening exercises.

From her study Trivette concluded (41:277):

1. Training in specific listening skills was effective for most students included in this study. No possible reasons were suggested for the fact that 29 students received lower scores on Form B than those received on Form A.
2. Parent and teacher judgment in identifying "poor listeners", singly or in conjunction, did not seem to be reliable in identifying "poor listeners".
3. The .61 coefficient of correlation between students' reading grade levels as indicated by the Stanford Achievement Test and students' scores on the Listening Comprehension Test, Form A, was significant, indicating a parallel relationship between reading skills and listening skills.

4. When specific listening comprehension skills, such as "main idea", "details", and "inference" are improved, other comprehension skills, such as getting "word meanings" and "directions" tend to improve.

In 1961, Mildred E. Biggins reported on a study made in the Brazil Public School System during the 1960-61 school year in grades two and three. A total of 254 students were used in the study. The purpose of the study was (4:54):

. . . to compare listening comprehension with reading comprehension, mental age, sex, cultural background, and the teacher's evaluation of the child's ability to listen. Also the study sought to compare reading comprehension and mental age, sex, and cultural background.

On the basis of the study and its findings, the following conclusions were drawn (4:55):

1. Listening ability has a strong relationship with reading ability.
2. Listening ability has a strong relationship with intelligence.
3. There is a closer relationship between listening and chronological age at the third-grade level than at the second-grade level.
4. Teachers' ratings of listening ability tend to agree with ratings secured from test scores.
5. Neither sex appears superior in listening or reading at the primary level.
6. The occupation of the father is not a reliable indicator of the listening ability of the child.
7. Development of additional tests and testing

materials for use at the primary level is necessary in order to give needed emphasis to listening.

Duker reported that Hayes, after analyzing ten reading tests for beginning readers, constructed one of the few reported listening tests for use at the primary level. Duker praised the research of Hayes as a model of carefully-studied, scholarly preparation of test items and rigid test evaluation (21:146).

Lubershane reported another study involving fifth-graders. The listening instruction consisted of exercises in following directions. In a three-month period, the experimental group showed pronounced gain in listening as well as significant gains on a standardized reading test--0.8 of a year--while the control group showed no unusual gain (40:18).

In a program conducted with eighth-grade students, a series of taped lessons designed to improve both listening and reading skills was used. Dr. Kraner reported that students in the experimental group showed a significant gain in listening, reading, and English skills as measured by standardized tests. Especially outstanding gains were made in following directions in both listening and reading (28:111).

Dr. Sara Lundsteen, concerned with the assumption Packard had made in his book, Hidden Persuaders, that

television was the "cookie cutter" that shapes children's minds all the same mold, decided to find out (1) if children could be taught to listen critically, and (2) if the results of the teaching could be measured objectively. She based support for her first assumption on the possibility of testing listening from the previous research of Spearritt's listening test, under the statistical data of Pratt and Biggins (4). In 1958 and again in 1961, attempts were made by West and by Devine to measure specifically-critical listening. Lewis (29) had also constructed, in 1960, listening ability tests for intermediate grades.

Lundsteen's assumptions for her experiment included (30:743):

1. There is an identifiable factor of listening comprehension. Moreover, it can be tested objectively. It is distinguishable from other language factors, such as reading and verbal mental ability.
2. The process of critical listening has been observed in children, even preschool children, although it may be restricted by lack of knowledge and experience.
3. Hoping for natural growth in listening abilities is not enough, for our day and age. Just as systematic instruction is necessary in reading, so systematic instruction is necessary also in listening.

The sample for the experiment included 300 fifth-and sixth-grade pupils in a large Texas city. Six classes were used as a control group and another six classes composed the

experimental group. Specific lessons to teach critical listening were constructed. These lessons were presented twice a week during a forty-minute period to the experimental group. The control group followed the usual English curriculum. After the completion of nine weeks of lessons, tests were administered and the following findings were reported by Lundsteen (30:743-747):

1. The lessons were effective in teaching listening abilities. Analysis of the tests showed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups at the .01 level.
2. Test data showed that critical listening scores for the sixth grade surpassed significantly the fifth grade.
3. The girls appeared to be slightly better than the boys in critical listening.
4. In evaluation of the test of critical listening, the test-retest method produced a reliability coefficient of .72.

Lundsteen also reported these implications:

It is time to begin a more scientific, systematic, developmental approach to the teaching of critical listening.

Long range planning is needed, spiraling through the elementary school with varied teaching strategies and devices.

If this is a generation confounded by the problems of "when to listen, what to listen to, and how to listen"--what exactly can we as language teachers do? . . . a rethinking of the English curriculum offers us a summons, a challenge, and an opportunity to give children critical listening power.

Beryl B. Carlson completed a similar study in 1965 at Selah, Washington. The purpose of this research was to study the teaching procedures used in developing the critical listening skills at the fourth-grade level. Carlson reported "that direct instruction in critical listening is significant in developing more effective listeners over incidental instruction provided in the regular language arts program" (16:30).

Some of the research that followed the first studies on the teachability of listening were concerned with the methods of teaching. Russell and Russell (1959) gathered together and published a handbook containing various techniques for teaching listening skills in the elementary school, classifying them by grade level. Within it were arranged the one hundred ninety activities into interests and needs of the typical pupil at the given grade level; sub-sections dealing with topics as words, analytical listening, and critical and creative listening; and listening with some specific purpose in mind (37:1).

Lewis, another advocater of teaching listening, has set some goals for listening, some aspects of a desirable listening environment, and some principles of learning to observe in teaching listening. He describes the aspects of the behavior of a good listener (29:264-266):

1. He is aware of the importance of listening in the learning process.

2. He understands the roles of the speaker and the listeners in the communication process.
3. He listens through to the ends of a discourse before he attempts to draw conclusions.
4. He can follow directions given orally.
5. He adjusts his listening to the purpose at hand.
6. He enjoys listening.
7. He is a critical listener.

Lewis also suggests that a classroom environment is conducive to good listening if:

1. The classroom environment stimulates speaking and listening.
2. The classroom arrangement is flexible.
3. There are opportunities for reaction.
4. There is a permissive atmosphere.

Ruth Strickland, an authority in the elementary school language arts field, states that children come to school varying greatly in their ability to listen. As growth in capacity to listen is just as important to a child's future success and welfare as other language arts, planned experiences designed to promote growth in this skill should be provided for respective stages of listening development. These stages have been outlined by Strickland (38:116-119):

1. Little conscious listening except as the child is directly and personally concerned with what is being presented.

2. Easily distracted by people and things in the environment.
3. Half listening while holding fast to own ideas and waiting to insert them at the first opportunity.
4. Listening passively with apparent absorption but little or no reaction.
5. Listening, forming association, and responding with items from own experiences rather than reacting to what is presented.
6. Listening and expressing some reaction through questions and comments.
7. Listening with evidence of genuine mental and emotional participation.
8. Listening with real meeting of minds.

While much research study was concerned with the teachability of listening and methods of teaching listening, Nichols and Cashman stressed the importance of teachers' attitudes and examples (34:268-271):

Efforts by teachers and pupils to take advantage the 'approval factor' in listening should yield substantial results. Two goals in particular are: elimination of the fear of listening to difficult material, and achievement of greater economy in learning.

Since adult listening habits are products of our experiences as young people, we recognize the need to increase instructional units in school programs. By indicating approval of listening through our comments and observable habits, we improve the learning process.

Ralph Nichols, who has completed studies at the elementary, secondary, and university level in the teaching

of listening, states that inefficient listening is a problem. He further has identified what he believes are the ten worst listening habits in America (2:58-60):

1. Calling the subject dull.
2. Criticizing the speaker.
3. Getting overstimulated.
4. Listening only for facts.
5. Trying to outline everything the speaker says.
6. Faking attention to the speaker.
7. Tolerating distractions which impair listening efficiency.
8. Choosing only what is easy by avoiding difficult expository material.
9. Letting emotion-laden words get in the way.
10. Wasting the differential between speech and thought speed.

Despite these bad listening habits, Nichols proposes the teaching of these counterpart skills to take the place of the poor skills (33:21-26):

1. Find the areas of interest in content.
2. Judge the content and intent, not the delivery.
3. Don't get overstimulated.
4. Listen for ideas; focus on the central idea.
5. Be flexible.
6. Work at listening.
7. Resist distraction.

8. Exercise your mind with difficult expository material.
9. Acknowledge "red flag" words that implore your ability to listen.
10. Capitalize on the difference between thought and speech. (The average speaking speed is 125 words per minute, whereas the thinking speed is estimated at 400 words per minute.)

Nichols contends that until children learn to read well, they must receive the bulk of their instruction, guidance, and entertainment by ear. Because of this belief, he advises that early attention be given in teaching primary children how to listen (2:62).

Another publication which revealed that findings from research have been incorporated into teaching is the "Code for Teachers of Listening", published by Dr. Blake, Associate Professor of Education at Temple University in 1962 (6:48-49):

1. Be a good listener myself.
2. Use a classroom voice and facial expression that promote accurate listening.
3. Initiate activities with interest levels of my class in mind.
4. Get everyone's attention before speaking.
5. Teach children that directions, instructions, and other types of information-giving, is only stated once.
6. Encourage children to listen to each other's contributions.

7. Ask many questions that require more than yes or no.
8. Take time to listen to pupils before school, after school, and during the school day.
9. Teach listening all day in connection with all subjects.
10. Create an emotional and physical climate conducive to good listening.
11. Establish with the children the purpose for which they should listen to each activity.
12. Be well prepared every day for the materials to be taught or activities to be directed.
13. Vary classroom program to provide variety of listening experiences.
14. Teach children the importance of being a good listener.
15. Realize that children as a rule spend more time listening than in any other communication skill.
16. Be aware of seating arrangement in each listening activity.
17. Help children set up standards for effective listening.
18. Teach children to develop appreciation and awareness of sounds.
19. Build a program in which listening skills are consistently taught and practiced.
Introduce unknown words through context, noting details, following directions, finding main and subordinate ideas, detecting clues to show speaker's trend of thought, point of view, inferences.
20. Teach desirable listening habits: self-discipline, mental curiosity, critical analysis, truth, logic sequence; listening for different purposes, appreciative, analytical, informative, recreational, responsive, marginal; courtesy to

the speaker; non-emotionalism; note taking; using the differential between thought speed and speaking speed.

Lee and Hook have also described the behavior of poor listeners; and Oliver, Dickey, Zelko, Johnson, and Russell have identified the qualities of good listeners (5:329). These good and poor characteristics of listeners have been determined by the investigators largely on the basis of observation, interview, and deduction.

Paul Witty, another authority in the elementary language arts field, has completed numerous studies related to listening. His investigations include studies of the effects of television and audio-visual aids on listening. Witty and Sizemore published an extensive review of experimental studies on listening as a way of learning and the effectiveness of lecture presentations as compared with reading, the comparison of oral presentations with visual presentation, the relative merits of oral versus written examinations, and the relative effectiveness of listening as a way of learning related to factors as the nature of the task to be mastered, types of materials to be dealt with, age of the subjects, and influences exerted by past experiences. Witty and Sizemore cite references for classroom teachers to use for improving listening habits, skills, attitudes, and the investigators hope "that the present

tendency to offer instruction in listening will find increased acceptance in schools throughout our country" (43:297-301).

In this chapter the reports of the carefully-designed and controlled studies that support the assumption that listening can be taught, have been reviewed. Some further goals and authoritative opinions for teaching listening effectively and suggestions for providing an environment conducive to effective listening were also incidentally reported.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND FINDINGS RELATED TO THE NON-TEACHABILITY OF LISTENING

There are those educators who do not believe that listening lends itself to systematic instruction. The purpose of this chapter was to review and describe those research studies and authoritative opinions which indicate that listening is not teachable. One such authority is Herbert Hackett, who feels there are a few studies based on exacting experimental evidence, but he states there is not enough of this evidence to support the contention that listening can be taught. Hackett's major premise is that not enough is known about listening outside the field of acoustics. The valid studies, he believes, number less than twenty compared, for example, with 3,000 studies about reading. Another premise is that there is no basic research because few have used scientific methods or have the inclination to form testable hypotheses, to prepare instruments for listening, or to evaluate what has been tested (23:348-349).

Heilman reports that listening cannot be taught until the paradoxical attitude of educators toward listening skills or the placement of listening in the education process is

changed. He bases his conclusion on the importance educators give listening as a receptive media of learning; but unlike reading, which has a role in the curriculum, listening as a skill, as a study, or the listening process is not in the curriculum. Heilman further states that educators must admit little is known about the listening process and he adds, "It is undeniable that listening has few champions in the arena of research." (25:283-284).

Heilman completed a study of the curriculum guides for both elementary and secondary schools of eight different states on the local, county, and state levels. In these guides he reports such cliches as (25:285-286):

1. Children learn to listen by listening.
2. Children may learn automatically to listen and to speak, but they can be taught to listen and speak more effectively.
3. It is further understood, since progress in listening, as in other skills, must vary with each pupil, that the competent teacher will recognize and provide for individual differences.

Heilman adds there is never material included in these guides on how to teach listening or how to provide for the individual differences in teaching listening. He further contends that as long as the vagueness in curriculum guides continues, until more is known about the listening habits of pupils, and until it is discovered how the process of listening can be improved on various education levels, we will not be able

to teach listening (25:286-287).

A similar study was reported by Kenneth Brown, who examined the speech and listening content in language arts texts of grades three, four, five, and six. Fifty-four books of ten major publishing companies from the years 1959 to 1964 were examined. Although authorities claim that listening is the language medium children use most, it was rarely stressed. Brown concludes that listening was not emphasized as a distinct area for direct instruction. He further added that some books give no more attention to listening than the suggestion to "listen courteously". Brown found no presentation of listening in any of the fourth-grade texts (12:336-339).

John Caffrey contends that most of our so-called instruction in listening is the "chasty-pasty lend-me-your-ear, folks" variety; much of this instruction consists of "Listen, now listen to me." or "Let's all sit up straight and listen." Caffrey said, "No wonder so much of our communication research is either regurgitive or soothingly and unarguably platitudinous." (23:284)

A study by Maurice Lewis found that at about the end of the sixth grade, when pupils achieved a fair degree of proficiency in reading, they ceased to improve in listening (29:495).

In another study conducted by the teachers in the

Nashville City Schools, they reported inadequate test materials and no conclusive evidence from their experiments in the teaching of listening (42:345-348).

Other studies showed that the average person will retain only fifty per cent of what he hears, no matter how hard he concentrates, and that two months later he can be expected to recall only half that amount. One experiment in which selections were read to fourth-grade children and comprehension checks followed, only twenty-one per cent to thirty-three per cent of the content was retained (40:4).

There are those who feel the measurements of "listenability" are not reliable. The Flesch and other reading formulas have been applied to material presented orally. Chall and Dial reported that most attempts to measure listenability have involved older children and adults (18:141-153). Lundsteen reported that the STEP Listening test, hailed in 1958, has been under criticism as to its validity (30:744). Lorge, Lindquist, and Jackson criticized the Educational Test Service listening test in Buros Fifth Mental Measurements Yearbook, stating some items appeared to be guessed readily by pupils who had not heard the selection on which the item was based, that the test was too long, and that the test was possibly too easy. Lorge and Lindquist were also critical of the procedures used in devising the Brown-Carlson test (20:146). Stromer added a criticism of available

listening tests by raising the question of the validity of listening tests in real life situations (39:323).

The basic requirements for any scientific study are (1) a method for observing, (2) a system for generalization, and (3) a method of testing the generalizations. Hackett stated most of the studies "fall flat on all three". The typical observing device is the "listening test", a test which places important restrictions on the listener. There is no evidence that learning to listen in a "listening test" is in any way related to listening in everyday life (23:350).

Caffrey pointed out that any method which relies totally on how well a person can respond through other skills than that tested, is difficult to evaluate. This method of testing can make no distinction among the several skills since the response through listening is interpreted through reading or writing (14:303).

Another reason why some educators feel listening cannot be taught effectively was reported by Dr. Furness. There are listening disabilities which are present at any level, from elementary school through college. Furness considered these disabilities under three headings; "physiological, psychological, pedagogical".

Under physiological disabilities she listed faulty auditory discrimination, poor motor co-ordination, speech problems (i.e., faulty enunciation, articulation, and

pronunciation) and speech defects, fatigue, physical discomforts (i.e., room too warm or too cool), or the speaker using unpleasant voice or distracting movements.

Psychological disabilities include lack of listening readiness, emotional maladjustments, personality traits, and retarded mental development.

Pedagogical disabilities are lack of interest, lack of purpose, half-listening, failure to listen discriminatively, and failure to listen critically.

The task of discovering how effectively students listen will not be complete until students can be analyzed in the preceding remedial areas (31:181-182).

In the psychological area, authorities have expressed theories and opinions. Stromer stated a theory based on observation and information drawn from related areas of listening. His contention is that personality has the greatest influence on listening ability. He further broke down these personal reactions that dominate our listening as: Reaction to meeting the speaker; reacting to rate of delivery; reacting to listener's own vocabulary; reacting to listener's background and understanding. Stromer claims that training in listening cannot come without first training ourselves to control our reactions in social situations when listening is needed (39:324-326).

Anderson stated the expression of ego has not been

considered in attempting to teach listening to little children (1:83).

Caffrey added that teachers cannot suitably teach listening until the influence of the "interest factor" on listening is understood. Another area Caffrey described, of which little is known, is that of the relation of listening and the patterns of speaking and thinking imposed on people in any speech community by the culture and language structure (14:350). Few, if any, studies have been reported on the effects of culture and the ability to listen to different things. Culture has added to widen the individual differences and no allowances have been made for these differences in the area of listening (1:81).

Hackett stated educators have been led naturally from the methodology of listening research to the teaching of listening. Much of the teaching has come before the research and is based on borrowings from speech and reading. He claims that mixed with these borrowings have been a smattering of semantics, educational psychology or group dynamics, with each teacher using or adapting the technique he has found of value in other types of communication situations. Too often, he suggested, the teaching has been of the prescriptive kind; "7 rules of better listening, 13 ways of preparing to listen, 6 ways not to listen, and 7-15 devices of propaganda to learn". He gave the example that just

because students have been instructed in some system of labeling propaganda devices does not mean that this ability to find propaganda makes them better listeners. Hackett further stated that these prescriptions have not been adequately tested.

The present need is for more basic research. If the teaching of listening is to become a valuable part of our school program, it must start from a base--the social-psychology of perception and cognition attitude formation and change; and the relation of culture and language development of listening habits of children and adults (23:351).

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

Listening as an area for research has reached some maturity during the last two decades. Previously, the teaching of listening was seemingly left to chance. Most of the research studies annotated during this period under review were concerned with the teachability of listening, experimental methods of teaching listening skills, and the non-teachability of listening. These experimental studies, important or representative in the listening field, were reported in chronological sequence.

Studies by Paul Rankin, Miriam Wilt, and Donald Bird provided evidence of the amount of time students and adults spend in listening. These authorities stressed the fact that of all the communication skills, listening received the smallest amount of instructional time. Rankin, Wilt, Bird, Althea Berry, James Brown, Sam Duker, and Ralph Nichols helped bring the realization of the importance of listening as a communication skill in daily life, and as a tool for learning.

The research of James Brown, Thomas Blewett, Charles Irvin, Francis Cartier, Arthur Heilman, and Nichols provided

a foundation for successful instructional programs in teaching listening at the university level.

Edward Pratt, Sister Mary Kevin Hollow, Robert Canfield, Maurice Lewis, Sue Trivette, and Sara Lundsteen reported successful studies in teaching listening at the intermediate-grade level.

More specifically, Pratt, Lundsteen, and Beryl Carlson evaluated the effectiveness of instruction in critical listening.

Studies investigating problems centering around listening and its relationship to other phases of language development were reported. Paul Witty, Robert Sizemore, Mildred Biggins, Blewett, and Nichols have investigated the relationship between listening, reading and intelligence. Lewis studied the effects of listening upon reading and Robert Kraner compared listening and reading as methods of instruction.

Ruth Strickland, Nichols, and Lewis analyzed the various types of listening and provided suggestions for appropriate guidance for the development of each. David Russell, Elizabeth Russell, and Stanford Taylor published techniques for teaching listening skills in the elementary schools.

Howard Blake, Nichols and Paul Cashman stressed the importance of teacher attitudes and examples in teaching

listening, and provided teacher guidelines.

The effort to develop objective methods of evaluating listening performance resulted in the Brown-Carlson Test of Listening Comprehension, from grades eleven through fourteen; the Educational Test Service listening tests for use below grade eleven; and the STEP Listening tests for upper elementary grades. There have been unpublished tests of listening comprehension as those of Biggins and Hayes on the primary level, the tests of Lewis on the intermediate level, and Blewett's test at the college level.

Educators as Hackett, Stromer, and Caffrey stated the results obtained from studies were contradictory or limited because of inadequate samples, unsuitable techniques, invalid tests, and unsophisticated analyses. Hackett claimed not enough research was done to validate the teachability of listening. Heilman and Kenneth Brown revealed what some educators professed, and the guidelines they provided were contradictory. Dr. Furness claimed that listening was not teachable because of the hidden remedial problems.

Despite some confusion and contradiction, it was found that the majority of research by educators in the listening field provided evidence that listening can be taught and improved through definite instruction. This research has established a good foundation of principles and guidelines on which further studies, teaching, and testing can be based.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Even though there is disagreement, one feels secure with considerable support from various research and data of authorities that listening is amenable to instruction and, in fact, too important to be left to incidental or haphazard development. One is encouraged to conclude that (1) listening should be taught, and (2) listening can effectively and efficiently be taught through direct and indirect instruction.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

After a close study of the literature it would seem there is still much to be done in providing meaningful experiences in the teaching of listening. Although concern for the development of skill in listening is growing, and the number of research investigations increasing, the critical step of incorporating a program of developmental and sequential listening instruction into the school program needs to be taken. This might effectively be initiated by teachers' colleges and universities through course offerings in the methods and materials of teaching listening. It is suggested in the teaching of listening, all teachers capitalize upon experiences and curriculum that are already part of the school day. It is further recommended that teachers assume the responsibility of providing wide

experiences to help children adapt the kind of listening they do to the type that best serves the purpose. It is also recommended that more research needs to be conducted at the elementary level, even more pertinently in the primary grades, and tests developed and standardized to provide further background and encouragement for research at this level.

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