

Moreland University

M28U2A2

Integrated Active Listening and Speaking Assignment

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Subject and Grade Level: English Language, Grade 1 (the last month of Grade 1)

Name of Course: ‘English Communication’

Context

The class is for a bilingual K12 school in China. The students have classes that use English as the means of instruction and classes that use Mandarin Chinese as the means of instruction. They have both science classes and math classes taught in English in addition to those taught in Chinese, to support the bilingual development in both subjects, as well as their main English program. This is an assignment class that is part of the main English program. In grade 1 and 2, the English program incorporates all skills, but focuses on communication.

The class have been studying together for nearly one year. The English teacher is also a homeroom teacher. There is time during homeroom time to work on parts of assignments.

Recent work has been on practicing active listening both as part of social skills and relationship building within communication, as well as to identify both main ideas and specific details.

The assignment will practice this, along with allowing students to practice free and creative language use, while keeping presentation structured, something else that has been practiced over the recent months.

Learner Population

There are 15 students in the class - 8 boys and 7 girls. They are all ethnically Chinese and have Mandarin Chinese as well as some dialects as mother tongues.

They all have some background in English, having been exposed to it in different contexts and capacities through their kindergarten years and now into the beginning of primary school.

For speaking and listening in English, two are high in the “speech emergence” stage, thirteen at different stages in the intermediate fluency stage, as described by Krashen and Terrell (1983). This equates to the first two being in around the Intermediate Lower to Intermediate Mid and the other 13 of ranging levels in the Intermediate Mid or early in the Intermediate High based on the ACTFL framework for speaking and listening (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages., 2024).

All students have always shown expected and mature behaviour during school life. They engage well with school activities and are familiar with school and class routines.

Name of Assignment: ‘Creative Work, Speaking and Active Listening in Response to “The Thirsty Crow”

Timeframe of Assignment: 50 minutes in assignment class, followed by 10 minutes small group reflections during homeroom time.

Overview of Assignment - Timeline for Assignment Process

As a broad overview, the assignment class is based around the short story - ‘The Thirsty Crow’. Students will consolidate active listening, practice active listening by listening to this story from the teacher, then make a piece of creative work responding to it, which they will introduce to each other in pairs for speaking and active listening.

The class will begin with an introductory discussion on what active listening is, using the idea of “Be a Whole Body Listener” from the Jack Hartmann song [here](#). (10 minutes)

They will then listen to the story from the teacher, with some difficult vocabulary introduced first, after which, they will answer three multiple choice comprehension questions for specific details. **(10 minutes)**

This will be followed by a discussion in pairs and then feedback with the whole class about what the morale of the story is. **(5 minutes)**

Students will then create a piece of creative work of their choice - either drawing a picture, or building models with lego blocks in response to the story. It can show part of the story, show a similar story, or show what they think might have happened before or after the story. **(15 minutes)**

Now it is time for the main part of the assignment. Each student will need to introduce their work to a classmate using speaking. The classmate will practice active listening. They will listen, and then say three key details they heard to practice paraphrasing, followed by asking their classmate a question about their work. The students will work in groups of three. They will take it in turns to each be the speaker, listener and video recorder. The video recorder takes a video on the class iPads that will be used later. **(10 minutes)**

In a short interview during a homeroom time following the class, each group of three will watch their videos back with the teacher. The teacher will complete assessment rubrics together with them based on their performance in both the speaking and active listening. **(10 minutes)**

Note:

As listening and speaking features to the assessment, students are first reviewed what active listening is, through the song. They practice active listening twice, first when listening to the story from the teacher, and second when listening to their classmates' introduction of their work. They practice speaking with the spoken introduction to their work. The first active listening practice is assessed by the questions they answer. The second active listening and speaking are assessed by a rubric.

Learning Objectives

What is Active Listening?

- During the first stage of the class, all students are introduced to eight key features of active listening using a song and practice miming them out.

Listening Objectives (English)

- During the class, students successfully answer two multiple choice questions on a short story to demonstrate listening for specific details.
- At the end of the class, students repeat three sentence details they heard from a partner's introduction of work using accurate, complete sentences.
- At the end of the class, students successfully ask their partner one question about a work introduction.
- At the end of the class, students are able to listen to a partner's work presentation showing the following body language.
 - Making eye contact.
 - Facing the person speaking.
 - Keeping legs on the ground and still.
 - Keeping arms by the side and to themselves.
 - Staying quiet and not interrupting.

Speaking Objectives (English)

- At the end of the class, students say a minimum of 10 complete sentences to introduce a piece of creative work they have made.
- All students show structure, starting by summarizing what their work shows and then giving specific details, during a presentation introduction to a piece of creative work they have made.

Related Standards and Skills

ACTFL Can-Do Statements

See the indicator descriptions [here](#).

Interpretive Communication Benchmark, 'Intermediate'

***I can** understand the main idea and some pieces of information on familiar topics from sentences and series of connected sentences within texts that are spoken, written, or signed.'*

Interpersonal Communication Benchmark, 'Intermediate'

***I can** participate in spontaneous spoken, written, or signed conversations on familiar topics, creating sentences and series of sentences to ask and answer a variety of questions.'*

Presentational Communication Benchmark, 'Intermediate'

“I can communicate information, make presentations, and express my thoughts about familiar topics, using sentences and series of connected sentences through spoken, written, or signed language.”

ACTFL World Readiness Standards

Communication

Interpretive Communication

- Students need to listen to the story told by the teacher, as well as their classmate's presentation.

Interpersonal Communication

- Students work and discuss together with classmates as they discuss the story they have listened to and later on interact with classmates as they listen to each other's presentations and discuss them.

Presentational Communication

- Students present the work they have created to each other.

Culture

Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives

- The story being studied for the assignment, 'The Thirsty Crow', has its origins in a different country and culture. Students are hence exposed to this. There will be the opportunity later on to explore the story and its culture in more depth or compare it to stories from the student's own culture in China.

Connections

Making Connections

- With the moral of the story being studied - "keep trying and never give up" - connections can be made with homeroom time, where there is a focus on social studies and social development.

Comparison

Cultural Comparisons

- Again, there will be the opportunity later for comparison with stories from other cultures with those from Chinese culture.

ISTE Standards

Empowered Learner

Learning Goals

- Students have the opportunity to take autonomy over progress towards their learning goals as they make their own piece of creative work.

Feedback to Improve Practice

- Though not using technology yet, students get feedback from the teacher during the assignment reflection and feedback in the interviews.

Technology Fundamentals

- Students begin to practice this as they use technology to record videos of one another's assignment activity.

Knowledge Constructor

Explore Real World Issues

- Through the story, students consider the importance of continually trying and not giving up, and have the opportunity to think about how they can apply this in their life and the real world.

Innovative Designer

Design Process

- As they complete their piece of creative work, either a drawing, or a lego construction, students consider how they can put it together.

Design Constraints

- With this only being a fast creative activity within the context of a different class, students will only be able to use limited resources for it, not a full range of resources as they might during a normal arts or design class. They need to be flexible to use only these limited resources.

Creative Communicator

Original and Remixed Works

- Students are making their own original work, but in response to something they have listened to.

Communicate Complex Ideas

- Students are practicing clear communication of their work as a goal of the assignment.

21st Century Skills

Creativity

- Students will create their own piece of art work based on the story.

Communication and Social Skills

- Students are practicing speaking and the skill of active listening as per the goal of the assignment.

Technology Literacy

- Students will record a video of two of their classmates engaging in the activity in which one shares their work and the other practices active listening.

Flexibility

- Students will practice flexibility to work with different partners.

Supporting Student Differentiated Needs

Students Who Need More English Support (the two still in the speech emergence stage)	<p>1. Pre-teach vocabulary: Before the story, introduce keywords , like “crow,” “thirsty,” with visuals or gestures to build understanding.</p> <p>2.Simplified questions: For the multiple-choice questions, use shorter sentences and familiar words. Example: “What did the crow drink?” instead of complex phrasing.</p> <p>3.Sentence starters: Provide sentence frames for their creative work presentation, like “My picture shows...” or “I made this because...”.</p>
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	<p>4. Peer support: Pair them with a supportive intermediate fluency student who can model clear speaking and help explain tasks.</p> <p>5. Extra practice: During homeroom, give them one-on-one time with the teacher to practice saying their sentences before presenting.</p>
General Support for All Students as ELL's	<p>1. Visual aids: Use pictures or a storyboard of "The Thirsty Crow" to support comprehension during storytelling.</p> <p>2. Modeling: Demonstrate active listening, for example: eye contact, facing the speaker. As for speaking practice, for example: clear sentences and examples if they need before activities.</p> <p>3. Clear instructions: Break tasks into small steps. For example: "First, listen to the story. Then, draw or build. Finally, tell your partner."</p> <p>4. Group work: Mixed-ability groups encourage peer learning. Stronger students can model language while all practice listening.</p> <p>5. Repetition: Repeat key phrases or instructions and check for understanding by asking students to repeat back.</p>
More Able Students	<p>1. Extended speaking: Ask them to add more details in their presentation, like explaining why they chose their creative work ideas.</p> <p>2. Complex questions: Encourage them to ask deeper questions to their partner, like "Why did you pick this part of the story?"</p> <p>3. Leadership roles: Let them lead pair discussions or model active listening for the classroom.</p>

	<p>4.Creative freedom: Allow them to write a short sentence or two about their work to share with the class, practicing written expression.</p> <p>5.Reflection: During homeroom interviews, ask them to explain how they used active listening or what they learned from their partner.</p>
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Specific Assessment Components

[Speaking Rubric for students use on each other, please click on it:](#)

Speaking rubrics for teachers if it is needed as showing bellow:

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Developing (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Number of Sentences	Speaks 10+ complete sentences to describe work clearly.	Speaks 8–9 complete sentences with clear ideas.	Speaks 5–7 sentences, some incomplete or unclear.	Speaks fewer than 5 sentences or ideas are unclear.
Structure	Starts with a clear summary of work, then gives specific details in order.	Starts with a summary, gives some details, mostly in order.	Summary or details are unclear or not organized.	No clear summary or details; presentation is disorganized.

Clarity and Pronunciation	Speaks clearly with correct pronunciation; easy to understand.	Speaks mostly clearly; minor pronunciation errors don't affect meaning.	Some unclear speech or pronunciation errors make it hard to understand.	Speech is unclear; pronunciation errors confuse meaning.
Confidence	Speaks confidently, with good volume and engagement.	Speaks with some confidence; volume is adequate.	Speaks quietly or hesitantly; lacks engagement.	Very quiet or nervous; hard to hear or follow.

[Active Listening Rubric for students use on each other, please click on it:](#)

Speaking rubrics for teachers if it is needed as showing bellow:

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Developing (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Body Language	Shows all active listening traits: eye contact, facing speaker, still legs/arms, quiet.	Shows 3–4 active listening traits consistently.	Shows 1–2 active listening traits; some distractions.	Shows no active listening traits; distracted or disruptive.
Paraphrasing	Repeats 3 key details in complete, accurate sentences.	Repeats 2–3 details in mostly complete sentences; minor errors.	Repeats 1–2 details; sentences incomplete or inaccurate.	Cannot repeat details or use incorrect information.

Question Asking	Asks a clear, relevant question about a partner's work.	Asks a relevant question; may lack clarity.	Asks a vague or off-topic question.	Does not ask a question or question is unrelated.
Engagement	Listens attentively; nods or responds to show understanding.	Listens with minor distractions; shows some engagement.	Often distracted; minimal engagement with the speaker.	Not engaged; interrupts or ignores speaker.

Specific Assignment Steps and Sequence

Introduction (10 minutes)

- The teacher plays Jack Hartmann’s “Be a Whole Body Listener” song.
- Students practice active listening traits (for example: eye contact, still body).
- Brief class discussion: “What does active listening look like?”

Story and Comprehension (10 minutes)

- The teacher introduces key vocabulary (for example: “crow,” “pebbles,” “pitcher”) with visuals.
- The teacher reads “The Thirsty Crow” aloud; students listen actively.
- Students answer three multiple-choice questions on specific details (for example: “What did the crow use to raise the water?”).

Moral Discussion (5 minutes)

- In pairs, students discuss the story’s moral (“keep trying, never give up”).
- Whole-class feedback: Teacher calls on a few pairs to share ideas.

Creative Work (15 minutes)

- Students choose to draw a picture or build a Lego model responding to the story (for example: part of the story, a similar story, or what happens next).
- The teacher circulates to support and check understanding.

Speaking and Listening Activity (10 minutes)

- In groups of three, students take turns as speaker, listener, and video recorder.
- The speaker presents their work (10+ sentences, starting with a summary, then details).
- The listener shows active listening traits, paraphrases three key details, and asks one question.
- The recorder films the interaction using class iPads.

Homeroom Reflection (10 minutes, later)

- Each group of three watches their video with the teacher.
- Teacher and students complete speaking and active listening rubrics together.
- Discuss strengths and areas to improve.

Materials, Resources and Technology

Song Video: Jack Hartmann’s “Be a Whole Body Listener” (accessed via YouTube or school platform).

Story Materials: Printed or digital copy of “The Thirsty Crow” for the teacher; visuals (for example: pictures of a crow, pitcher, pebbles) for vocabulary.

Comprehension Questions: Three multiple-choice questions on paper or displayed on a screen.

Creative Work Supplies:

- Drawing materials (paper, crayons, markers).
- Lego blocks for model-building.

Technology:

- Class iPads for video recording during the speaking/listening activity.
- Device to play the Jack Hartmann song and show story visuals (for example: projector, tablet).

References

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