TEACHING LISTENING WITH TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract: In today's educational landscape, integrating technology into language teaching has become increasingly essential. Teaching listening skills, a fundamental aspect of language learning, can be enhanced significantly through the use of modern technological tools. This article explores various methods and tools, such as podcasts, audiobooks, language apps, and online platforms, that facilitate interactive and effective listening practices. It also discusses the role of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and adaptive technologies in creating personalized learning experiences. By leveraging technology, educators can address diverse learner needs, improve engagement, and foster autonomous learning. The paper concludes with practical tips for implementing technology in teaching listening effectively.

Keywords: Listening skills, technology in education, language learning, online platforms, audiobooks, podcasts, virtual reality, adaptive learning, teaching strategies.

Listening is an important way of gaining access to information in the world today. Students can learn from listening resources on the internet by watching videos, listening to audio/podcasts, watching visuals, engaging in conversations, and reading transcripts/subtitles.To be a good teacher, you need to be a good listener. Active listening skills should be attended to, such as paying attention. People naturally tend to listen selectively because there is much to listen to and because of the possible external distractions like background noise and internal distractions like thinking about something else.Moreover, you should be aware of cultural and linguistic differences and how they affect the organization of information and linguistic cues in a conversation.Teachers also should know the two types of listening skills: top-down and bottom-up.

Top-down listening skills help students understand ideas by predicting what they will hear from what they know, what they hear, and the other cues in the environment (listening for the big picture/understanding the situation).

Bottom-up listening skills help students decode information based on vocabulary, grammar, and discourse clues (listening to interpret the words and expressions).What is more, teachers can use the three-part listening activity: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening.

Pre-listening: Before listening to a script, you can have a discussion on key vocabulary, key grammar points, prediction of the topic, and background information.While-listening: While listening to the script, you can stop at certain points and ask students to summarize and discuss new words or structures (checking understanding + instruction and modeling).Post-listening: After listening to the script, you can ask students to summarize the main message or provide their opinion and answer questions about the content or the language used (individual, peer, or whole-class).Teachers can also use a role-play activity to practice the correct words to use in a particular register. They should use authentic language and choose topics and materials of interest to students to keep them motivated and engaged.Technology has become inseparable

from many professions, and teaching is no different. It can be a beneficial tool in teaching and learning listening.

An excellent website that offers authentic, diverse, and interesting content for your listening class is TedEd. This website allows you to select the subject you are targeting, under which you will find several videos, and each video is in the form of a lesson, with questions and discussion prompts and resources. You can even create your own lesson, with your custom-made questions and resources.Voice of America is another website that offers audio and video content for your class. There is a whole section dedicated to learning English, where you will find leveled content, with each video/audio piece having the script and a list of target vocabulary. Another excellent website that offers leveled content for listening is ESL Lab. What is great about this website is that it has a long list of topics to choose from, and each one you choose will give you a page that has all that you need to have an effective listening class, from the listening audio script to the discussion questions before, during, and after it to even vocabulary practice.You can also make use of language exchange apps, where you practice your language with a native speaker. An example of these apps is Tandem. However, if you are more into podcasts, then Coffee Break Languages is a perfect fit for you. Through many podcast episodes that last no longer than your coffee break, you can activate your listening skills while learning about useful information and vocabulary. And of course, there are always the all-skills comprehensive learning English websites. Some of the best ones in the game are ESL Lounge and American English.

Finally, we can never forget the young ones. Many websites teach listening to children through stories and songs. For example, Storyline Online provides hundreds of exciting stories read by a variety of experts and celebrities as well. There is also Songs for Teaching, which is your go-to when you need to have a delightful and catchy song to serve your class objectives.In conclusion, listening is an essential skill that can be acquired both top-down and bottom-up. An ideal listening class will be divided into three parts: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. You can make use of technology to help you effectively achieve your objectives for each of these parts.

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