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#### ABSTRACT

Pupils who are far along in their speaking vocabularies tend to do well in reading. This paper includes numerous speaking activities that bolster pupils' oral communication: the including use of puppets, role playing, committee endeavors, oral reports, oral reading, extemporaneous speaking, and giving directions. Additional experiences for pupils to engage in within the speaking and oral communication arena include engaging in discussions, interviewing, and making introductions. Speaking and listening are integrated and are not separate areas of communication. For convenience of instruction, speaking and listening may be separated to emphasize what can be done in each area to assist teachers in guiding more optimal pupil progress. (Contains eight references.) (RS)



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#### SPEAKING ACTIVITIES AND READING

Pupils who are far along in their speaking vocabularies tend to do well in reading. These pupils speak clearly and have a large vocabulary for their age levels. Each pupil needs to receive guidance and assistance to achieve as optimally as possible in oral communication. Hopefully, achievement in oral use of language will also assist pupils to do well in reading.

The oral communication curriculum needs to have clearly stated, worthwhile objectives of instruction. Pupils individually need to be encouraged to take part in formal and informal experiences involving oral use of language. Learners need to attain as optimally as possible. Expectations should be high, but feasible, for goal achievement. Those who are deficient in oral communication are at a disadvantage in school and in society where there are expectations for each learner to be able communicate needs, wants, and wishes. To be successful in society, especially at the work place, individuals need to be able to express themselves in an efficient manner. Promotions at the work place depends upon many factors, including the ability to communicate well orally.

The teacher must be creative and think of diverse ways and approaches in helping pupils do well in speaking effectively with others. Literacy and oracy skills are complimentary. With oral communication, there needs to be a listener. What is said orally and listened to can be recorded in written discourse. The recording here involves reading and attaching meaning to abstract symbols making for words, sentences, paragraphs, and larger units of written expression.

...research on typical reading acquisition shows that reading is built on a foundation of oral language competence-- in other words, not just on phonology but also on vocabulary, grammar, and so on. The idea that reading can be taught exclusively or even primarily through the visual modality, without regard to these foundational linguistic skills, is not consistent with what is known about the process of reading development (Spear-Swerling and Sternberg, 1996).

### Critical Listening to the Spoken Voice

Speaking involves a listener to ideas expressed. Critical listening to a speaker is important. Ideas need to be analyzed into component parts to become meaningful. Ideas may be expressed to manipulate



individuals in numerous ways.

First, the glittering generalities approach might be used by a speaker. Here, the positive aspects of a topic are covered only. The information presented by the speaker leaves many loopholes that need to be filled. If a speaker states that "we need to become more democratic," but does not define "democratic" nor is it said how this goal of being "more democratic' is to be fulfilled, facets of content are lacking. The speaker merely states how wonderful a life can be with increasing emphasis placed upon democracy as a way of life. Over generalizing is in evidence and the positive side is mentioned only with vague statements.

Second, a bandwagon approach is used by a speaker. The speaker indicates that everyone agrees with him/her and needs to join the crowd, be it in the buying of cereal, a specific car, a type or brand name of clothing, or of a personal computer. Others are joining the crowd and the listener needs to do the same. Charisma and a persuasive tone of voice with appealing content may be in the offing with the band wagon approach.

Third, a testimonial procedure may be used. Thus, a famous personality may endorse a product wholeheartedly, meaning the listener also needs to buy the product endorsed by the testimonial.

Fourth, deck stacking approaches are used. Thus, a product is advertised as being very nutritious with multiply vitamins. The speaker does not say which vitamins and how many are involved.

Fifth, a positive association approach is to entice consumers. Thus, a soft drink is advertised with an attractive woman nearby as well a luxury house in the background. The soft drink advertisement has nothing to do with the unusually pleasant surroundings. An association is to be made by the reader between the soft drink to be consumed and the beautiful surroundings. The speaker/advertiser hopes that the soft drink will be purchased increasingly so, due to the appealing environment, even though it is unrelated.

Sixth, a plain folks setting is provided with the product being emphasized, which is to be sold. The ordinary people concept is stressed due to the thinking that most individuals are common in society and not ivy league college/university graduates. Historically, the common man (or woman) has been glorified in being able to rise through the ranks from poverty to riches and fame. Thus, if plain folks like and support a product, then the majority of individuals in a nation should also prize the product highly.

Seventh, an upper class appeal can be enticing to some people. An appeal in a commercial is then made to going higher on the socioeconomic level. A new product being advertised then needs to be purchased to rise on the socioeconomic ladder in order to compare with wealthier individuals who have larger, spacious homes.

Eighth, name calling is used by some when the other person or



side disagrees with the personal ideas being presented (Templeton, 1997). A person then might be called a "leftist' with communist connotations. Or an individual may be labeled a Nazi. I was called a Nazi, during my junior and senior high school years -- 1940-1946, before and during World War Two by a few persons. We had German services in church and being a General Conference Mennonite, I was a conscientious objector toward participation in war. These two traits, German services in church and being a conscientious objector, made a person a Nazi. Another name used here was to call a person a "Hitlerite," referring to Adolph Hitler, Germany's dictator from 1933-1945.

Pupils need to be aware of the dangers of name calling, not only to the receiver of the negative name, but also what it does to have hatred within the caller of these names. Both lose here in that the self concept of the individual might be lowered due to being on the receiving end of the name calling as well as being the name caller. Respecting and being a caring person are so necessary for the welfare of all in society. Being filled with hatred, psychologically, seemingly is not good for anyone in society. In the oral communications curriculum, there are basic criteria which need to be followed so that all feel valued and prized. These criteria are the following:

- 1. each person needs to be treated with respect in school and in society.
- 2. all need to participate actively in developing rules and regulations for classroom conduct.
- 3. pupils individually should be involved in appraising student conduct in terms of these standards.
- 4. standards for pupils in the classroom to abide by may be modified and changed as the needs arises.
- 5. safety, security, belonging, and esteem needs should be met for each learner.

Teaching and learning should be based on the best theories available in education (Ediger, 1996). I will now discuss learning opportunities in oral communication for pupils to achieve the five objectives above.

## **Using Puppets**

The use of puppets can be a good way to assist pupils to express themselves more proficiently when using oral communication. Shy, withdrawn leaners tend to feel more relaxed in speaking when puppets are used. I recommend, if at all possible, that pupils make these puppets, be it sack puppets, sock puppets, and/or stick puppets. The puppets may be used in different units of study in an integrated curriculum. Thus, if pupils are studying a farm unit, they may make stick puppets pertaining to different kinds of livestock. Speaking parts



may be developed, based on pupil background knowledge, for a committee presentation to the rest of the class members or within a neighboring classroom of learners. Or, in studying life on an assembly line in a factory, pupils may develop speaking parts for the different roles of involved workers. Assembly lines have fewer and fewer workers due to automation. Here, pupils may do research using needed reference sources to discuss how the role of the worker has changed due to automation. Effective oral use of language should be in the offing. Puppets may be made and used to play different roles of participants in the discussion. There is novelty and newness involved in the use of puppetry. Individual pupils tend to forget their shyness and reservations when participating in role playing with puppet use. I would like to suggest the following pointers when stressing puppetry as a part of the learning activities provided in ongoing lessons and units of study:

- 1. emphasize quality art work when puppets are being made. Multiple intelligences emphasizes that talents in art work should be prized highly by all in the learning community.
- 2. an integrated curriculum in reading and the language arts may be emphasized when art work receives its due emphasis in worth and value.
- 3. speaking activities need to be carefully developed in an ongoing lesson or unit of study.
- 4. pupils need to practice their speaking parts after the role of each has been decided upon by pupils, with teacher guidance.
- 5. standards and goals for oral communication need to be carefully defined. Each pupil should be challenged to achieve as optimally as possible.

Speaking parts may be recorded by cassette or videotape to be reviewed by participants in the puppetry activity as well as by those who were observers. Maybe, there are parts in speaking that will result in being revised and modified. The new approach, as modified by feedback from the audio-visual presentation, might be tried out in the classroom. Developing interest in puppetry use should be an end result and not to destroy interest in learning. It is so very important to develop and maintain a powerful factor in learning and that is pupil interest.

# Using Role Play Activities

Pupils at a very young age love to play different roles in the preschool years. What child does not like to put on the parents' shoes and role play the parent? These kinds of activities are very excellent to emphasize on the elementary school and higher years of schooling. Thus, high school students love to have roles in plays which are put on for the public as well as for students. Adults try out for parts in local



play performances. It is a motivator to perform in front of others. Those who participate in plays also have made lasting friendships from these performances.

I believe all should have opportunities to be in plays, if they so desire. Elementary and secondary school pupils seemingly feel quite relaxed while performing in front of groups. As Adults, more seem to have fear in getting up in front of others. In the elementary school years, performing within a classroom can be very rewarding. The threat of criticism should not be used when role playing is used as a learning opportunity. The teacher needs to develop standards for pupils to follow in classroom role playing so that positive attitudes toward others is developed. Role playing may stress a story from literature or a biography in history.

With creative dramatics, no speaking parts are written down. Pupils decide cooperatively upon who will play which role. It is good to give everyone a chance for role playing. Each person in the creative dramatics activity needs to have the content well in mind when playing a specific role representing an individual in literature or in history. This is especially important since no play parts are written, but rather individuals play their respective role and orally provide the speaking parts when sequence demands it.

In formal dramatics, pupils collaboratively in a committee write play parts for each person in the literary or historical context. The parts may be memorized or read to the class or audience. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are stressed in this learning experience.

In addition to creative and formal dramatics, pupils may engage in sociodrama. With sociodrama, pupils play the role of another person to see how it feels to be in someone else's shoes. For example, if a pupil has been ridiculed, that individual and the one who did the ridiculing change roles. Thus, each person may attempt to feel how it feels to be ridiculed as well as the one who did the ridiculing. Feelings experienced need to be discussed. Hopefully, pupils will learn the consequences of belittling others.

Pointers for pupils to remember in role play activities are the following:

- 1. try to feel the role that is being played.
- 2. use voice inflection with stress, pitch, and juncture when communicating orally.
- 3. use gestures and facial expressions as nonverbal factors in communication.
- 4. speak clearly and accurately when oral communication is in progress.
- 5. use feedback from the observers and from videotape to improve the next dramatization.



#### Committees in the Classroom

There are many occasions in school and outside the school setting whereby pupils need to be capable in a discussion setting. Relevant decisions are made when working together with others to discuss important ideas. Discussions may break down if involved people do not stay on the topic, but digress to the irrelevant. Ideas need to circulate within the committee doing the discussing and not between the chairperson and one other person and back to the chairperson in that repeated sequence. All need to participate and no one dominate the discussion. If content is not presented clearly and accurately, there will be wasted time in obtaining meaning from what is being said. Respect for the ideas of others needs to be in the offing.

Pupils may change off in terms of being leaders within the committee endeavors. The teacher may appoint different leaders or the committee itself may select leaders. The leader needs to try to secure comments from all members. Hardly might one consider it a committee decision if one or two members do all the deliberating. Leadership qualities indicate a need for caring and polite individuals. These qualities also stress a desire for all to participate, but no one dominating the discussion within the committee settling. A pleasant tone of voice needs to be used by discussants with clarity of ideas presented for the discussion. Questions need to arise by participants when comments and problem areas are not clear and distinct.

Children's literature provides excellent opportunities for interesting topics to discuss. The following, among others, are fascinating areas from children's literature for pupils to discuss:

- 1. Character, What are the clues to characters suggested in the writing? From what is said or the action taking place, what inferences can be made about the individual? Why does the character act the way he does? What are his values? Did anyone change in the story? Why?
- 2. Setting. Can you see where the story is happening? How do those in the story act because of the setting? Is there a basic struggle between the people in the story and the nature of the place where they live?
- 3. Mood-- feeling-- tone. What words are used to tell you how the writer feels? What is the tone of voice of the storyteller? Is it serious? Humorous? Is this a true experience?
- 4. Story pattern. What would you tell if you had only the first paragraph to guide you? Can you tell what happened by reading only the first paragraph? Is there a theme or lesson that the writer is illustrating? Who is telling the story? What difference does it make? (Anderson and Lapp 1979).



The voice plays a major role in holding listeners' attention. Good speakers change the speed of their voices, vary loudness, pitch their voices attractively, and avoid mannerisms that affect listeners negatively.

Young persons need to experiment with variations in speed, pitch, loudness, and tone. Probably, the best way to to experiment is to record an oral report on tape. This technique is especially good if the presentation is a team endeavor, for group members can listen to themselves in playback, assessing their vocal expression, the overall organization and clarity of their presentation, and their general knowledge of the topic...

Effective communication is as dependent on the body as it is on the dynamic use of the voice. The use of visuals is one way to encourage gesturing and movement of the body in oral reporting. The student who uses a time line to show relationships will point to each entry on the line as he/she talks; the student who works from the map will point to locations on it. Pointing, moving forward, and holding up are all nonverbal devices necessary when using a visual. These gestures add action and force to a presentation.

if the school or community owns a cam corder, it can be used to videotape presentations for eventual self study. Each student views his/her contributions to a program and evaluates it in terms of questions as: Did I make eye contact with my audience? Did I gesture automatically? Did I change my facial expressions as required? In viewing a videotape, young people often can spot their problems and without prompting improve on them during future reporting sessions (Hennings, 1994)

. Pointers to stress for committee endeavors to function well include the following:

- 1. listening carefully to ideas expressed is salient and provides the background information so necessary for a discussion group to function well.
- 2. developing a sense of community is vital so that group cohesion is possible.
- 3. quality sequencing in ideas expressed makes it easier for all to follow the discussion.
- 4. evaluating periodically of what has been covered assists the group to notice achievement.
- 5. respecting each other's ideas helps release the creative thoughts of committee members.

### **Giving Oral Reports**

Pupils should have ample opportunities to present oral reports in



front of the classroom. To give quality reports, pupils need to have the subject matter well in in mind pertaining to what will be reported. An outline continuing the salient points of the oral report provides assistance to the speaker. Videotaping the oral report provides ample opportunities pertaining to securing feedback on the presentation. The reporter needs to observe the speed with which ideas can be presented so that all listeners may obtain the contents as readily as possibly. Quality stress helps the speaker to get ideas across to peers. Stress emphasizes saying words louder or softer in oral communication. To say a word louder tends to place emphasis upon that word. It draws attention to that word with louder stress. Pitch emphasizes pitching words higher or lower so less of a monotone voice is in evidence when speaking. In music, there are notes that are higher or lower on a scale and the reader of music needs to pay attention to the pitch of each note in order to read music accurately. The speaker also needs to raise and lower the voice to use it effectively in oral communication. A third factor that is relevant in speaking is to emphasize juncture. With quality juncture, pauses are indicated at the proper place in ongoing subject matter. If a reader or reporter does not pay careful attention to commas, periods, and question marks, among other punctuation marks, there will be misinterpretation, and run on sentences and words may result. Pupils with teacher guidance need to practice giving reports using the concepts of stress, pitch, and juncture.

Some pointers to emphasize when giving oral reports are the following:

- 1. go over oral reports with pupils to determine what makes for an effective presentation.
- 2. assist pupils in working on quality presentations in reporting orally to the class.
- 3. have pupils work in dyads, two working together, to refine methodology in giving oral reports.
- 4. have pupils present oral reports in small groups of three to four pupils to develop confidence and polse in the given of these reports.
- 5. let pupils appraise their own videotape results of oral reporting in terms of desired criteria.

## Oral Reading to Classmates

Pupils need to have ample opportunities to read orally to others in the school setting. Too frequently, oral reading has stressed the round robin approach whereby pupils in a class have been placed into three different ability levels in reading. The teacher works with one of the three groups at a time. One facet of instruction here is pupils taking turns reading orally to the teacher. The teacher then may evaluate



reading skills possessed by each learner and those needing more assistance for improvement. This approach is used somewhat routinely each sequential day of instruction. Boredom and the routine set in. Pupils here do not have a chance to practice oral reading skills in terms of desired criteria.

Oral reading to an audience has a different goal. Here, each pupil may practice reading a selection until it is suitable to read to a larger audience including pupils in the classroom, other classrooms, and to parents. Peers in practice sessions may listen to the oral reading and provide suggestions, in terms of desirable criteria, for improvement. There may be five or six pupils who have modified/refined a selection for oral reading.

Reader's theater is very similar to the oral reading experience just discussed. In reader's theater, five or six pupils may practice reading play parts written out, as is true of formal dramatics. Each person accepts his/her role in the play and reads with voice inflection, stress, pitch, and juncture. The play parts are practiced in oral reading by the respective reader until they are good enough to present in front of an audience, such as classmates, parents, and others interested in the presentation. Pupils individually may hold their very own book as they take their respective turn in reading orally. Generally, pupils in reader's theater sit in a semicircle on tall stools so they are clearly visible to listeners. A reader then role plays the part being read. The oral reading experience then has elements of the traditional round robin approach as well as dramatic qualities. Thus the involved pupil needs to play the character in the story as if he/she is an alive person making decisions.

There are definite pointers that may be used by teachers in having pupils read well orally:

- 1. Learners need ample time to practice reading a selection orally until it has been refined and mastered.
- 2. Guidance needs to be given pupils in using proper enunciation and pronunciation.
  - 3. Content must be conveyed clearly and accurately to observers.
- 4. Each pupil's presentation needs to be evaluated in terms of making progress over that of previous performances.
- 5. Self evaluation is important and, especially, if videotaping of a performance is being emphasized.
- 6. Pupils should be encouraged to enjoy oral reading and read more literature as a result.
- 7. Teachers need to model good oral reading of stories and other print discourse to pupils (Ediger, 1997).



### Glving and Following Directions

In society, people are asked to give directions when going to a specific place. I think it is frustrating to a person when asking where a place is located and there is vagueness or a lack of knowledge in the response. I believe individuals can become better observers of landmarks so that helpful answers may be given to those asking for directions. Pupils should be given much time to practice giving directions in order to reach a specific destination. Pupil/teacher planning may be used to indicate which landmarks are important to know in a community or area. The following landmarks are important and were brain stormed by a a class of fifth graders:

- 1. parks and school buildings.
- 2. selected stores and offices.
- 3. major highways and streets.
- 4. museums and libraries.
- 5. the train depot and airport.
- 6. important bus stops.
- 7. selected churches and governmental buildings.

To assist pupils in becoming more conscious of following directions, the following projects were completed by pupils with teacher quidance in an ongoing unit of study:

- 1. making a relief map.
- 2. developing a diorama.
- 3. working a written exercise.
- 4. completing a test.
- 5. developing a selected dish of food.
- 6. learning to play a game.
- 7. making a simple musical instrument.
- 8. providing a set of directions for others to locate or find a specific object.
  - 9. performing a folk dance.

Quality listening needs to be practiced by pupils in all curriculum areas. The integrated curriculum is then in evidence. In the reading curriculum, pupils need to distinguish between letters and sounds when analyzing words for proficient reading. Thus, reading emphasizes good listening by pupils, not only to hear diverse phonemes clearly, but also to develop much background information for reading different selections. Comprehension of content in reading comes from diverse sources such as listening to a related discussion covering content read or new subject matter to be read.

## **Extemporaneous Speaking**

When readiness permits, pupils tend to enjoy extemporaneous



speaking. Here, pupils may be given at random a topic to speak on. A topic from the current unit being studied in reading may suffice. The involved learners are given three minutes, or more, to prepare a talk on the topic. If pupils have been reading on the topic "Animals of the Arctic," a learner may be given the topic of "Polar Bears," at random. The involved pupil then prepares a talk in the allotted time given. Recall of information is necessary. The pupil needs to think quickly on foods eaten, habitat, raising of offspring, and dealing with enemies. The pupil then must arrange the items sequentially to report orally to the class. The talk may be videotaped and critiqued by a group of classmates. The pupil realizes that knowledge needs to be recalled rather quickly, and thinking on one's toes is important. The talk needs to be given clearly and sequentially.

Pointers that may be given to ald pupils to achieve more optimally in speaking include the following.

- 1. the teacher needs to be a model in quality speaking activities.
- 2. pupils should have numerous opportunities to choose their very own topics for oral communication endeavors in the classroom.
- 3. learners need chances to appraise their progress in oral communication.
- 4. diagnosis of pupil deficiencies is necessary so that remediation may occur.
- 5. peers working together may assist each other to achieve in oral communication endeavors.

### Using the Telephone

Much use is made of telephones in society. Messages may be given clearly and effectively. With answering machines, the receiver of calls may return each when convenient. The answering machine is handy for school personnel since messages may be left on the voice recorder to be returned at a more opportune time. Cellular phones has expanded opportunities for the making of phone calls. With cellular phones, calls can be made and responded to, outside the home settling. I believe it is the school's responsibility to develop within pupil's knowledge, skills, and attitudes to use telephones successfully. One of my student teachers together with the cooperating teacher wrote and implemented the use of the following criteria pertaining to telephone use:

- 1. be polite in all telephone conversation.
- 2. speak at a rate where optimal communication may take place.
- 3. communicate loudly enough so that the receiver may hear the message clearly.
  - 4. clarify contents where this is needed.



### 5. be a good listener!

#### Conclusion

How does quality oral communication assist pupils to become good readers? With oral communication, pupils practice using words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. There should be good sequence in what is said (Ediger, 1997). Meaning needs to be inherent in messages conveyed. What is said might be written down and read by the listener. These features are inherent in all reading that is done. Oral communication requires a listener. The listener provides feedback to the speaker in terms of quality communication. There is oral communication that is directly related to reading such as oral reading and reader's theater. There are numerous speaking activities that pupils should become proficient in. These include use of puppets, role playing, committee endeavors, oral reports, oral reading, extemporaneous speaking, and giving directions. Additional experiences for pupils to engage in within the speaking and oral communication arena include engaging in discussions, interviewing, and making introductions. Speaking and listening are integrated and, in reality, not separate areas of communication. For convenience of instruction, speaking and listening may be separated to emphasize what can be done in each area to assist teachers in guiding more optimal pupil progress.

The section on oral communication may be ended by listing salient objectives for pupils to achieve. These are:

- 1. to converse with others courteously and easily.
- 2. to take part in discussions, sticking to the topic, and accepting the thinking of others.
  - 3. to sequence information properly and use it effectively.
- 4. to plan, develop, and carry out an interview effectively and courteously.
  - 5. to be competent in the use of the telephone.
- 6. to use parliamentary procedure appropriately when participating in meetings.
  - 7. to provide clear directions, announcements, and explanations.
- 8. to tell stories with quality sequence and in an enthusiastic manner.
  - 9. to introduce individuals properly to each other.
  - 10. to participate actively in choric reading.
- 11. to take part in dramatic experiences in ongoing lessons and units of study (Greene and Petty, 1975).



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