Teaching the receptive skills: reading (R) and listening (L)

When teaching reading and/or listening, the task of the T is to improve/enhance R/L comprehension (rather than check SS’ memory!!!!), and to develop reading/listening skills appropriate to a variety of R/L situations and purposes. Tasks set for R/L should clearly reflect the interrelationship bw text, situation, purpose, and sub-skill to be developed.

Three-stage model: Pre-, while- and post

Pre-reading/listening
As emphasized, rarely do we listen/read without having an idea of what we will read/hear. In the classroom, it is unfair and methodologically faulty to plunge SS into a L/R text, as it makes it extremely difficult for them to use their natural R/L skills. → SS should be tuned into it so that they know what to expect, in general and in particular. With all the difficulty SS face particularly about L, important to provide a lot of pre-listening/reading support, to make SS confident enough to listen/read effectively.

Pre-L/R activities: aim to prepare SS for L/R, in the sense that help SS focus on what they will see/hear; narrow down their minds to what come;, activate prior knowledge and linguistic; that is, bring in the forefront lexis and syntax necessary for comprehending the text.

Activity Types
Lead in to topic: eg.: SS look at pictures, T gives background information, SS read something relevant
Predicting, speculating about content of upcoming R/L passages, e.g.: SS write questions about topic they would like to get answers to in text to come
Discussion of topic, situation
Written exercises related to the text to come (can be topically or linguistically= grammar, vocabulary, relevant)
Pre-teaching, revising essential linguistic items – lexis and syntax
While reading/listening

These are the reading/listening activities proper, which SS are asked to do while reading/listening. Aim: to help SS develop the reading/listening sub-skills necessary to extract message from written/spoken language. → should not test R/L comprehension, let alone memory, but help to learn to read/listen, that is, develop the skills applied in real R/L situations → prediction, matching what we see/hear to what we expect and interpret the meaning of utterances. Activities must be chosen appropriately.

Activity Types

Marking/checking/arranging items in pictures

Putting pictures (or other things, e.g.: paragraphs, words, events, etc.) in order,
Completing/drawing pictures,
Completing texts (gap filling)
Following a route on e.g.: a map
Completing charts, grids – transfer information from text
True/false statements
Answering multiple choice Qs, or Wh Qs
Spotting differences, mistakes
Seeking specific items of information

Post-reading/listening

Embrace all the work done after the R/L, some related to it strongly, extensions of what was read/heard; some related loosely.

Activity Types

Checking comprehension of reading/listening text in a variety of ways: talking about it; discussing students’ reactions
Language work: tasks related to lexis, syntax, pronunciation, stylistic elements, etc. found in text SS have read/listened to
Skills work: mainly speaking and writing, related to topic of R/L, but can also be further receptive skills exercises, reading or listening, related topically.