

Integrative Teaching of Language Skills

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- Why Should We Integrate the Four language Skills?
- What Kind of Instruction Lends Itself to Integrating the Skills?
- What Kinds of Activities Can We Use to Integrate the Skills Effectively and Meaningfully?

**Question I: *Why Should We Integrate the Four
Language Skills?***

What important word appears in both definitions?

Communication.

So, our task is to teach our students to use this *method or system of communication* called English.

language (n.)

- 1. The method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way.
- 2. the system of communication used by a particular community or country

OK. So, how do we communicate?
What does it mean to communicate?

- To express our thoughts and feelings
- To share ideas, information and news
- To interact with others in a meaningful way
- To do all of the above through all four language skills

Since

In the real world, we often employ all four skills in tandem in order to communicate i.e., we use all four language skills in many of our day-to-day interactions,

**Then,
The four 'macro skills' (listening, speaking,
reading and writing) are all an integral part
of typical language proficiency and use.**

The integrated-skill approach, as contrasted with the purely segregated approach, exposes English language learners to authentic language and challenges them to interact naturally in the language. Learners rapidly gain a true picture of the richness and complexity of the English language as employed for communication.

Oxford, 2001

In order for students to communicate fully in English, they need competence in all four language skills.

Question II: *What Kind of Instruction Lends Itself to Integrating the Skills?*

- Two Forms of Instruction which Lend Themselves to Skills Integration
- Promoting Interaction at All Phases in a Lesson

Two Forms of Integrated-Skill Instruction

1. Rebecca Oxford (2001) identifies two types of instruction which are “clearly oriented toward integrating the skills.”
2. **Content-based Instruction:** “... students practice all the language skills in a highly integrated, communicative fashion while learning content such as science, mathematics, and social studies.”
3. **Task-based instruction:** “... students participate in communicative tasks in English.”

Content-based Instruction (CBI)

- **Three Models of Content-based Instruction**
- **Theme-based Model:** integrates the language skills into the study of a theme (e.g., life in America; crime and violence; innovation and innovators) – According to Oxford, this is the “most useful and widespread” form of CBI.
- **Adjunct Model:** co-enrolled in two separate courses, one for language and one for content
- **Sheltered Model:** subject matter is taught using English “tailored to the students’ proficiency level.”

Task-based Instruction (TBI)

- According to Rebecca Oxford (2001), ...
- Students interact and collaborate in pairs and groups on tasks which mimic or mirror real-world tasks.
- Attention is paid to language meaning more than language forms.
- Students often work together to produce a non-linguistic outcome, such as creating an advertisement, acting out a scene from a movie or play, making a plan to go to the movies, or producing a class book or recipes.
- TBI can be used at all levels, but the tasks become more complex at higher levels of proficiency in English.

According to David Nunan (2013), tasks have the following characteristics

1. Meaning is primary.
2. Learners are not given other people's meanings to simply repeat.
3. There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities.
4. Task completion has some priority.
5. The assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.

So, what are some examples of appropriate tasks?

- A cookbook comprised of recipes from all the class members
- A PowerPoint presentation on a topic of interest to the class
- A poster presentation on a topic of interest to the class
- A guidebook to the school or program in which the students are enrolled
- A handbook and presentation on making a home emergency kit

- Encouraging Interaction at Every Stage of a Lesson Plan Leads to Better Skills Integration
- Promoting interaction both within and outside the language classroom can have a positive impact on language learning. It gives learners opportunities to receive comprehensible input and feedback, try new hypotheses about how English works, and listen to and incorporate feedback in the form of recasts.
- By incorporating interaction into every phase of a lesson, we can engage all four skills throughout the lesson more thoroughly.

Question III : What Kinds of Activities Can We Use to Integrate the Skills Effectively and Meaningfully?

Classroom Activities

Jigsaw Activities

- Same principle as information gap activities in that each student in a group is provided with only some of the information he/she needs
- Students work together until everyone has finished the activity
- Each student becomes an “expert” on something and then shares that knowledge with “experts” on other topics
- Much of the learning is student-to-student; teachers become facilitators

Classroom Activities

Dictogloss

- A dictogloss is a classroom dictation activity where learners are required to reconstruct a short text by listening and noting down key words, which are then used as a base for reconstruction.
- Example: Learners discuss the sea and vocabulary related to it. The teacher then explains the task, and reads a short text on the sea to the class, who just listen. The teacher reads the text again, and the learners take notes. In groups, the learners then reconstruct the text. This in turn can be followed up with comprehension questions.
- The dictogloss is often regarded as a multiple-skills and systems activity. Learners practice listening, writing and speaking (by working in groups) and use vocabulary, grammar and discourse systems in order to complete the task.

And now ... an example of a dictogloss!

Ask students to take out a sheet of paper. Read a paragraph about an interesting topic three times. Ask students first to just listen. The second time, ask them to listen and write. And the third time, ask them to listen and complete the dictation. Finally, ask them to work with a partner and compare what they've written.