



Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Listening: Level 1

New to SAE: drawing on knowledge of the world in Home Language [HL] (and in Standard Australian English [SAE] for some), and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Will carefully watch what others are doing and often imitate them.

Can comprehend through non-verbal cues given by the speaker which match own culture or when visually supported, particularly in a face-to-face situation.

Will join in a classroom activity but may not speak; will watch and listen, interpreting what is meant by gestures, intonation, etc. using their knowledge of the world through HL to try to understand.

- Will attend to targeted activities and songs (appropriate to their age group and culture) geared to their beginning ESL listening level needs (e.g. much visual support, gestures, simple language and repetition related to simple classroom interactions, classroom vocabulary, etc.) and one-to-one support with a trusted adult.
- Will tire quickly due to unfamiliar language environment.
- May ask for clarification or translation from other speakers of their HL.
- Will use their knowledge of the world through HL to understand the culture of the school (i.e. the routines and expectations of the school context), will bring cultural knowledge, attitudes, values related to HL (e.g. showing respect for an adult speaking to a child by remaining silent, avoiding eye contact out of respect).
- Will be intimidated by teachers who speak with increased volume in an attempt to assist student understanding and this may hinder development. Students may demonstrate intimidation or fear by lowering their gaze to the floor (looking down).
- May tire easily and appear to tune out because of the effort required to listen and observe (language overload). Are likely to be exhausted after a morning's classroom activities.

- Will be unable to understand classroom instruction and may feel demoralised (“stupid”) unless assured through an HL-speaking adult that learning a language is difficult and the teacher respects and admires their ‘cleverness’ in being able to operate in a number of languages.
- Will be unable to follow whole class interactions and teacher instructions even at slow speed.
- Will understand classroom instructions and information only through HL translations.
- May use their HL confidently with HL-speaking peers in the school environment (This will be beneficial to their familiarisation to school and to learning in SAE).

Additional Background Information

- May communicate confidently in one or more Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages/creoles/dialects and may be exposed to a wide range of oral language varieties, e.g. dialects of traditional languages, creoles, dialects, varieties of English, e.g. Aboriginal English, SAE, American English. The use of HL should be encouraged since self-confidence and a high level of oral competence in HL will assist in SAE development.
- May have highly developed understanding of conventions of social interaction appropriate to their community and home culture and may have highly developed non-verbal interactional skills in their HL/s.
- May have delays in HL and auditory skills due to conductive hearing loss as a result of otitis media. Students with conductive hearing loss may remain at this level for a longer period of time.

COMMENTS

Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

➤ Respecting Home Cultures and Languages

Students at this level, returning to the classroom after an extended period of absence, are likely to be aware of their responsibilities within their community and expect to be able to make independent choices about activities in which they engage.

The demands of the classroom (e.g. teacher expectation, structure, written formats), the school and the teacher may be different from the students’ cultural/family life and world view and this mismatch may create possible issues for classroom management. In order to cater for this, classrooms need to value and respect the HL/s and culture/s. This can be achieved in a variety of ways including:

- recognising and valuing the students’ home literacies;

- making connections between community and school literacies through school-community partnerships;
- recognising, with sensitivity, local histories to understand local attitudes towards SAE and the HLs; and
- providing bilingual support

Students will benefit from both bilingual support and ESL-informed listening programs. Consultation with ESL advisers, hearing impairment advisers and Speech Language Pathologists is essential to analyse needs of student and develop programs to meet them.

Students at this level need to be given some time to become familiar with and confident in the formal school setting – buildings, routines, classroom environment. Students may be from a home environment where well-known adults give advice and the child makes the choices, which could create a mismatch in a classroom where the teacher may perceive their role as the major player/instructor.

➤ **Sporadic Schooling and Age-Appropriate Learning Approaches**

Due to issues such as attendance, mobility, conductive hearing loss and transition, the academic learning of many students are likely to be fragmented. Learning gaps may be apparent, even though school records may indicate that the students have been in the school system for many years. Even though students may be at this level, this should not be confused with their potential ability to learn academically. Teaching/learning approaches need to be relevant to the age level of the student and be culturally inclusive. Older students will benefit from adult literacy learning techniques on their return to school, rather than continually beginning with methodology designed for younger learners (e.g. using early childhood narrative texts as a basis for literacy learning).

Students with sporadic schooling, when at school, need to be given time to observe other students' behaviour, without teacher pressure for engagement in activities. This observation time allows students to establish the 'unwritten' rules for operating in this new environment and become aware of what their 'place' is in the classroom. Respecting these students' initial choices will assist in developing rapport with students and building trusting relationships with them. Students are more likely to engage in activities when they have developed confidence that they can participate without 'shame'. Once students are comfortable in this environment, they will benefit from explicit explanations of these 'unwritten' rules, e.g. following teacher directions; answering questions on their own.

➤ **Concept Development**

At this early stage of additional language development, it is strongly recommended that concepts are introduced and practised first in HL, before their introduction in SAE. Concepts will be more likely to be learnt, if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.

➤ **Awareness of Language and Cultural Differences**

Silence may indicate that the student is drawing on HL patterns of communication, where silence is an accepted, valued part of interaction and where it is the listener's right to choose whether or not to participate.

Teachers may need to introduce awareness of language differences in communication patterns between HL and SAE (e.g. nodding of head to indicate that the listener is listening).

As this awareness develops, teachers may need to rely on strategies other than verbal and non-verbal responses to check listening comprehension (e.g. close observation during tasks).

Teachers will need to provide short, focused listening times and make explicit the need to listen at these critical teaching moments.

Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Listening: Level 2

Beginning to comprehend and use routine social language in immediate, familiar environment and to explore learning in SAE: drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Can comprehend and respond to high frequency greetings, courtesy phrases and simple directions.

Will rely heavily on face-to-face contact and accompanying body language, with repetition and/or simplification on the part of the speaker.

Can respond physically and verbally to simple directions and instructions if supported by gestures, repetition and rephrasing as needed.

Will have a very limited understanding of interactions amongst SAE speakers in class activities and amongst peers.

- Will respond to familiar isolated words in connected speech, sometimes inappropriately.
- Will continue to listen and observe, absorbing language and cultural knowledge.
- Will need time to absorb new information, and to process questions asked in SAE before a response can be expected.
- Will welcome opportunities to use their HL with HL-speaking peers and adults to comprehend learning procedures and content in activities.
- May tire easily and appear to tune out because of the effort required to listen and observe (language overload). Are likely to be physically exhausted after several hours of classroom activities.
- May not perceive certain sounds in SAE in certain positions due to HL consonant/vowel configurations (e.g. not hearing consonants at the ends of words).
- Will attend to targeted activities and songs (appropriate to their age group and culture) geared to their beginning ESL listening level needs (e.g. much visual support, gestures, simple language and repetition related to simple classroom interactions, classroom vocabulary, etc.) and one-to-one support with a trusted adult.
- May ask for clarification or translation from other speakers of their HL.

- Will have difficulty understanding even simple directions if background noise inside/outside the classroom is present, e.g. students talking, sporting activities outside classroom.
- Will use their knowledge of the world through HL to understand the culture of the school (i.e. the routines and expectations of the school context), may bring cultural knowledge, attitudes, values related to HL (e.g. showing respect for an adult speaking to a child by remaining silent, avoiding eye contact out of respect).
- Will be intimidated by teachers who speak with increased volume in an attempt to assist student understanding and this may hinder development. Students may demonstrate intimidation or fear by lowering their gaze to the floor (looking down).
- Will be unable to understand classroom instruction and may feel demoralised (“stupid”) unless assured through an HL-speaking adult that learning a language is difficult and the teacher respects and admires their ‘cleverness’ in being able to operate in a number of languages.
- Will have great difficulty understanding new information without rich contextual support (e.g. pictures, shared experiences, kinaesthetic support) and bilingual assistance.
- Will require bilingual assistance in instructions, concepts, topic vocabulary and contextualisation to succeed in tasks.
- Will draw on listening abilities in their HL, within the range of registers experienced in their HL community dependent upon health factors including fluctuating hearing loss, permanent hearing loss, etc.
- May use their HL confidently with HL-speaking peers in the school environment (This will be beneficial to their familiarisation to school and to learning in SAE).

COMMENTS

Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

➤ Rate of Progress

It is difficult for students of this age to operate successfully in SAE in the classroom at Level 2. It is important to recognise, acknowledge and respect student abilities, achievement and potential (e.g. comprehending 2 or more languages – many students are not aware of how able they are as language learners). It is also a priority to recognise and respect the HL community, culture and world view of the student which are central to identity at this stage of development. Building a trusting relationship will form a sound basis for accelerating further progress in students’ listening.

➤ **Transparency (similarity between Torres Strait Creole/ Kriol/ Aboriginal English and SAE)**

Teachers need to develop awareness of language varieties and language differences in the community (e.g. SAE, AE, TSC) so that the listening needs of their learners can be identified and addressed. As Malcolm (2001) states in reference to Aboriginal English,

Education systems have, for the most part, implicitly denied its [Aboriginal English] existence by assuming that if Aboriginal children speak English they speak the same English as non-Aboriginal people, and should be subjected to literacy instruction and testing based on SAE. When they fail to achieve comparable literacy levels in SAE to those of other Australians, what is questioned is never the rightness of denying their cultural identity by ignoring their unique English heritage, but rather the students' ability, or their home situation, or their social disadvantage, or their lack of motivation.

This is equally relevant for Torres Strait Islander speakers of Torres Strait Creole and Aboriginal speakers of Kriol.

Learners may plateau at this level because of lack of understanding of transparency (similarity between creole/Aboriginal English and SAE), and have difficulty moving to Level 3. This means that differences in vocabulary and grammar between the languages/dialects need to be explicitly taught to assist in comprehension. Transparency is best explained through a HL adult and SAE teacher in partnership.

Assessing students who speak TSC/AE is likely to be more difficult if high frequency AE/creole vocabulary is comprehensible to the SAE speaker. Assessment may need to be suspended until students have developed more SAE language.

Learners may plateau at this level because of lack of understanding of transparency (similarity between creole/Aboriginal English and SAE), and have difficulty moving to Level 3. This means that **awareness-raising of differences** in vocabulary and grammar between the languages/dialects needs to be sensitively introduced. This transparency is best explained to students through an HL-speaking adult and SAE-speaking teacher in partnership.

➤ **Concept development**

At this early stage of additional language development, it is strongly recommended that concepts are introduced and practised first in HL, before their introduction in SAE. Concepts will be more likely to be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.

➤ **Awareness of Language and Cultural Differences**

Silence may indicate that the student is drawing on HL patterns of communication, where silence is an accepted, valued part of interaction and where it is the listener's right to choose whether or not to participate.

Teachers may need to introduce awareness of language differences in communication patterns between HL and SAE (e.g. nodding of head to indicate that the listener is listening).

As this awareness develops, teachers may need to rely on strategies other than verbal and non-verbal responses to check listening comprehension (e.g. close observation during tasks).

Teachers will need to provide short, focused listening times and make explicit the need to listen at these critical teaching moments.

Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Listening: Level 3

Developing listening competence in SAE for a range of social and classroom events and moving into learning through SAE: drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Are beginning to comprehend and use an extended range of social and classroom language.

Can comprehend best in face-to-face contact, and when repetition, simplification and paraphrasing are provided by the teacher.

Can comprehend and respond (e.g. yes/no) to routine enquiries (e.g. ‘Did you have a good weekend?’) with little difficulty.

Can follow a short sequence of instructions (e.g. ‘Bring your book to me and show me your work’).

- May tire easily and appear to tune out because of the effort required to listen and observe (language overload) e.g. working memory may be overloaded by more than two instructions/pieces of information; concentration may be overloaded after more than 15 to 20 minutes; too much teacher talk.
- Are able to pick out some key points from teacher talk in an academic activity on a familiar topic where contextual support (pictures, gestures, etc.) is provided; however may not comprehend all the main ideas, and will miss details.
- Will have difficulty with comprehension when background noise inside/outside the classroom is present (e.g. other students talking, ceiling fans on high speeds, lawn-mowing).
- Will need time to process new language, and to respond to questions asked in SAE. Teacher strategies, such as asking another student to help out in the time gap, may discourage students and hinder future risk-taking which is critical at Level 3 for future speaking development.
- May hide difficulties in comprehension by using stock phrases (e.g. yes; I understand), non-verbal strategies (smiling; nodding) and avoidance strategies (pretending to work; keeping busy; writing very slowly).
- May seek out a peer or teacher aide who has similar HL to discuss things with and to confirm understandings.
- Will be intimidated by teachers who speak with increased volume in an attempt to assist student understanding and this may hinder development. Students may demonstrate intimidation or fear by lowering their gaze to the floor (looking down).

- Will be unable to understand classroom instruction and may feel demoralised ('stupid') unless assured through an HL-speaking adult that learning a language is difficult and the teacher respects and admires their 'cleverness' in being able to operate in a number of languages.
- Will have great difficulty understanding new information without rich contextual support (e.g. pictures, shared experiences, kinaesthetic support).
- Will require bilingual assistance in task instructions, concepts, topic vocabulary and contextualisation to succeed in tasks.

COMMENTS

Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

➤ **Transparency (similarity between Torres Strait Creole/ Kriol/ Aboriginal English and SAE)**

Teachers need to develop awareness of language varieties and language differences in the community (e.g. SAE, AE, TSC) so that the listening needs of their learners can be identified and addressed. As Malcolm (2001) states in reference to Aboriginal English,

Education systems have, for the most part, implicitly denied its [Aboriginal English] existence by assuming that if Aboriginal children speak English they speak the same English as non-Aboriginal people, and should be subjected to literacy instruction and testing based on SAE. When they fail to achieve comparable literacy levels in SAE to those of other Australians, what is questioned is never the rightness of denying their cultural identity by ignoring their unique English heritage, but rather the students' ability, or their home situation, or their social disadvantage, or their lack of motivation.

This is equally relevant for Torres Strait Islander speakers of Torres Strait Creole and Aboriginal speakers of Kriol.

Learners need to further develop understandings of transparency (similarity between creole/Aboriginal English and SAE) and language differences. This means that differences in vocabulary and grammar between the languages/dialects need to be explicitly taught to assist in comprehension. Transparency is best explained through an HL adult and SAE teacher in partnership.

➤ **Concept development**

At this early stage of additional language development, it is strongly recommended that concepts are introduced and practised first in HL, before their introduction in SAE. Concepts will be more likely to be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.

➤ **Facilitating progress in listening in SAE**

It is difficult for students of this age to operate successfully in SAE in the classroom at Level 3 without bilingual support. It is important to recognise, acknowledge and respect student abilities, achievement and potential (e.g. comprehending 2 or more languages – many students are not aware of how able they are as language learners). It is also a priority to recognise and respect the HL community, culture and world view of the student which are central to identity at this stage of development. Building a trusting relationship will form a sound basis for accelerating further progress in students' listening.

At this level of listening, teaching should not be limited by the students' level of SAE, but supportively engaged in academic activities expected at their age level.

With intensive ESL-informed scaffolding and staging (e.g. breaking down the task, HL discussion, etc.) complex tasks developing higher order thinking can be given using bilingual support (this is because it is not efficient to learn new concepts in SAE at the lower levels of the Bandscales (up to at least Level 4).

If engagement in tasks requiring complex SAE is left until students have higher SAE proficiency, it may be too difficult to 'catch up on' the necessary concepts. It is also vital to be aware that reducing the intellectual rigour of tasks in order to meet students' English proficiency may in fact also lead to students withdrawing from classroom activities due to lack of interest/relevance.

➤ **Awareness of Language and Cultural Differences**

Silence may indicate that the student is drawing on HL patterns of communication, where silence is an accepted, valued part of interaction and where it is the listener's right to choose whether or not to participate.

Teachers may need to introduce awareness of language differences in communication patterns between HL and SAE (e.g. nodding of head to indicate that the listener is listening).

As this awareness develops, teachers may need to rely on strategies other than verbal and non-verbal responses to check listening comprehension (e.g. close observation during tasks).

Teachers will need to provide short, focused listening times and make explicit the need to listen at these critical teaching moments.

Equity Issue

➤ Need for an Interpreter

Students at Level 3 (and below) will not be at a stage of SAE proficiency to participate equitably in an interview with SAE-speaking authority figures (e.g. if in trouble, and needing to defend actions) and may use HL features of communication which may cause cross-cultural miscommunication. For example, one of these features in Aboriginal English is gratuitous concurrence which is '*the tendency to agree with the questioner regardless of whether or not you actually agree with, or even understand the question.... It is a very common feature of Aboriginal conversations throughout Australia, and is customarily used to indicate a readiness for cooperative interaction, or resignation to the futility of the situation*' (Queensland Government, 2000). Other issues relate to questioning strategies, quantifiable specification (using formal systems, particularly numbers, to give specific details) and negative questions (see *Queensland Government, 2000* for details). Students will require an HL-speaking adult in interviews with SAE-speaking authority figures, to check on comprehension and interpret if necessary (to ensure equity).

Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Listening: Level 4

Extending the range of language beyond own immediate social environment and experimenting with learning through SAE: drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees) if in an urban context.

Can understand social SAE in most familiar contexts but still need additional help from SAE speaker (e.g. gestures, modified speech, provision of wait-time).

Are beginning to comprehend in academic learning activities if help is given by the SAE speakers (as above) and if contextual support (e.g. reference to pictures, diagrams, materials, etc.) is provided; however, will continue to have difficulty following talk in classroom activities because of need for processing time.

Are able to follow general classroom task-related instructions with clear steps and modelling of the task.

Will require intensive ESL support and bilingual assistance to comprehend spoken input in tasks *containing an abstract level* (e.g. comparison, classification; science concepts such as magnetism, strength, force, orbit; maths concepts such as maths formula, algebra and trigonometry; history concepts such as exploration, distances travelled).

- Are able to comprehend longer discourse on familiar topics, but require intense concentration to do so, and will tire easily.
- Are beginning to get the gist of TV shows (e.g. narrative movies).
- Will still rely heavily on contextual support (e.g. pictures, shared experiences, kinaesthetic support, facial expressions, attention-directing gestures by teacher) when listening to teacher and other input and in classroom interactions.
- May lose comprehension when high background noise inside/outside classroom is present (e.g. other students talking; ceiling fans on high).
- May attend to multiple sources without necessarily giving attention cues.
- May be continuing to use strategies which give the impression that comprehension has taken place (e.g. nodding, smiling, copying actions of others, silence).
- Will need time to process language encountered (e.g. before having to answer a question, during teacher talk, during class discussion). Teacher strategies such as asking another student to help out in the time gap should be avoided. This will cause difficulties in academic learning activities at SAE-speaker speed (e.g. group discussion).

- Will have short concentration span if topic of lesson is unfamiliar.
- Will miss many details of the language they hear.
- Will have difficulty with complex structures (e.g. although, how often..., etc).
- Are restricted by a limited SAE vocabulary.

COMMENTS

Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

➤ **Concept development**

Students at this level are in the early stages of learning to learn new concepts in SAE. Concepts will more likely be learnt successfully if introduced and *practised* in HL first where possible (e.g. discussion of topics, task requirements, etc.).

Students at this level are likely to find it difficult to learn new information THROUGH SAE, especially when learning abstract concepts, as they cannot be given visual contextual support. Bilingual support is therefore essential, especially where concepts may not be part of the HL culture and where in-depth exploration around the topic is necessary.

➤ **Awareness of Language and Cultural Differences**

Teachers need to develop their own awareness of language differences between SAE and the language varieties used in the community (e.g. SAE, AE, TSC), because transparency makes it difficult to make an accurate assessment of students' SAE level (See comment Level 3).

Silence may indicate that the student is drawing on HL patterns of communication, where silence is an accepted, valued part of interaction and where it is the listener's right to choose whether or not to participate.

➤ **Facilitating progress in listening in SAE**

A junior primary student at Level 4 Listening may not exhibit the same need for support as the middle primary/middle schooling student at Level 4. The younger child is couched in a highly contextualised, language-rich environment which is focused on the language development of all students.

For middle schooling students at Level 4, learning the second language consumes all of their energies, as the curriculum involves highly cognitive and linguistic listening demands in an environment of reduced contextual support. Because of a combination of gaps in SAE understandings, fatigue and need for processing time, they will be unable to apply higher level thinking to classroom activities in the second language. It is therefore important that middle schooling students receive explicit, supportive bilingual language instruction and that key concepts are developed in the HL in which they are highly proficient in order to increase opportunities for greater engagement in activities. If development of higher level thinking skills is left until students have higher SAE proficiency, it may be too difficult to ‘catch up on’ the application of necessary concepts (such as classification and judgment) as required in academic tasks.

Equity Issue

➤ Need for an Interpreter

Students may lose comprehension in interviews with SAE-speaking authority figures and may use HL features of communication which may cause cross-cultural miscommunication. For example, one of these features in Aboriginal English is gratuitous concurrence which is *‘the tendency to agree with the questioner regardless of whether or not you actually agree with, or even understand the question....It is a very common feature of Aboriginal conversations throughout Australia, and is customarily used to indicate a readiness for cooperative interaction, or resignation to the futility of the situation’* (Queensland Government, 2000). Other issues relate to questioning strategies, quantifiable specification (using formal systems, particularly numbers, to give specific details) and negative questions (see Queensland Government, 2000 for details). Students will require an HL-speaking adult in interviews with SAE-speaking authority figures, to check on comprehension and interpret if necessary (e.g. to ensure equity if in trouble and needs to defend actions). Teachers will need to take special care to advocate for an interpreter for students at Level 4, because their ease of comprehension in many social situations may hide their need for assistance in situations of pressure.

Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Listening: Level 5

Consolidating SAE use in an expanding range of social contexts but limited in their ability to comprehend complex ideas in SAE in academic learning activities: drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Are able to comprehend SAE in most social situations.

Are able to comprehend most extended teacher and peer talk in academic learning activities on familiar topics, if contextual support is available, though will lack ‘depth’ of comprehension of more complex discourse.

Are able to grasp the gist of new topics delivered with extensive contextual and teacher support though will lack precision, and need paraphrasing and explanation.

Are able to grasp the connection of ideas, and details within an extended spoken discourse on a new topic only if extensive support and time to process are provided (e.g. viewing *‘Behind the News’* with teacher introduction).

- Are able to follow clearly classroom task-related instructions if well-delivered, i.e. with clear steps, logical sequence, repetitions as needed, etc. (e.g. in science – Put the beaker on the bench, fill it with water, etc; write a report about an environmental issue.).
- Will continue to require intensive ESL support and bilingual assistance to comprehend spoken input in academic tasks *containing an abstract level* (where visual contextual support cannot be given sufficiently), with instructions, concepts, topic vocabulary, world knowledge and contextualisation (e.g. comparison, classification; science concepts such as magnetism, strength, force, orbit; maths concepts such as 3-dimensional shapes, diameter, regrouping/trading, counting on; history concepts such as exploration, distances travelled) to enable students to understand the requirements of tasks.
- Lapses in comprehension in spoken texts can be caused by gaps in vocabulary, overload of new vocabulary, and lack of correspondence in concepts and in world views. May lose the thread once lapse occurs. Will experience strain after considerable time listening to SAE delivered at normal speed.
- Will miss some specific detail because of lack of ‘depth’ of language (e.g. limited range of vocabulary, lack of understanding of complex structures such as relationships, modality [might, could], problem/solution [if...then]).
- May interpret idioms literally (e.g. Pull your socks up!), finding it difficult to ‘read between the lines’ and therefore often misunderstand or miss humorous intent.
- Will continue to have difficulty comprehending if there is too much background noise and if subject matter is culturally overlaid.

- Are likely to retain a low profile in class to combat negative reaction from other students (i.e. not “styling up” or “big-noting” themselves).
- Will often show remarkable ability and ease of understanding, but when demands escalate (before tests, with limited time available), or under excitement or pressure (interview with principal/teacher if in trouble at school) may lose comprehension. Will require an HL-speaking adult in interviews with SAE-speaking authority figures, to check on comprehension and interpret if necessary (to ensure equity).

COMMENTS

Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

➤ **Concept development**

Students at this level are in the early stages of learning to learn new concepts in SAE. Concepts will more likely be learnt successfully if introduced and *practised* in HL first where possible (e.g. discussion of topics, task requirements, etc.).

➤ **Facilitating progress in listening in SAE**

Level 5 listening, particularly in academic contexts, presents difficulties for many ESL learners, especially those without a solid grounding of content knowledge or with interruptions in their schooling. Many learners find it hard to move beyond Level 5; yet further progress is essential for more sophisticated language expected at their level of schooling.

➤ **Awareness of Language and Cultural Differences**

Silence may indicate that the student is drawing on HL patterns of communication, where silence is an accepted, valued part of interaction and where it is the listener’s right to choose whether or not to participate.

Equity Issue

➤ **Need for an Interpreter**

Students at Level 5, under pressure, may lose comprehension in interviews with SAE-speaking authority figures and may use HL features of communication which may cause cross-cultural miscommunication. For example, one of these features in Aboriginal English is gratuitous concurrence which is *the tendency to agree with the questioner regardless of whether or not you actually agree with, or even understand the question.... It is a very common feature of Aboriginal conversations throughout Australia, and is customarily used to indicate a readiness for cooperative interaction, or resignation to the futility of the situation* (Queensland Government, 2000). Other issues relate to questioning strategies, quantifiable specification (using formal systems, particularly numbers, to give specific details) and negative questions (see *Queensland Government, 2000* for details). Students will require an HL-speaking adult in interviews with SAE-speaking authority figures, to check on comprehension and interpret if necessary (e.g. to ensure equity if in trouble and needs to defend actions). Teachers will need to take special care to advocate for an interpreter for students at Level 5, because their ease of comprehension in most social situations may hide their need for assistance in situations of pressure.

Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Listening: Level 6

Becoming competent users of SAE in most social contexts: use of SAE in learning contexts is sound but gaps need filling: drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Can comprehend social SAE with ease.

Can understand extended teacher talk on familiar and new curriculum topics (within the range of ability expected at their phase of schooling) with only occasional lapses of understanding, though lapses will generally not affect overall comprehension.

Can sustain understanding of main ideas in group discussions involving an increasing number of interactions, but will have some gaps in comprehension where there is a quick interaction of ideas.

- Can understand educational television programs for their age level with support normally given during the teaching cycle class but occasional lapses in comprehension will occur.
- Will need to ask for repetition and paraphrasing in cases of rapid or culturally overlaid utterances. Punning or other humour may cause difficulties.
- Will have a well-developed listening vocabulary in most areas, though gaps will still be evident (e.g. may not be aware of the technical use of common vocabulary [e.g. material, degree, arrest]).
- Are familiar with everyday idioms, but may misunderstand less frequent references and idioms (e.g. back of Bourke; knee-high to a grasshopper).
- Will have difficulty understanding the language used by speakers when evaluating cultural attitudes, assumptions and beliefs (e.g. in reading texts), because of the complexity of language used and possible unfamiliarity with culture-specific aspects of some texts.
- Will continue to need ESL support to comprehend spoken input in academic/classroom tasks *containing an abstract level*. Will also need support with spoken input which is culturally overlaid (e.g. in videos).

➤ **Awareness of Language and Cultural Differences**

Silence may indicate that the student is drawing on HL patterns of communication, where silence is an accepted, valued part of interaction and where it is the listener's right to choose whether or not to participate.

Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Listening: Level 7

Competent users of SAE in all social and learning contexts (within the range expected for their phase of schooling): drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and literacy (to varying degrees).

Can readily comprehend (within the range of ability expected at their phase of schooling) all spoken discourse normally encountered at the learner’s age and phase of schooling.

Will be able to comprehend instructional television programs geared to their age level.

- Are able to focus listening and comprehend despite high levels of background noise.
- Can comprehend most idiomatic expressions, slang, cultural nuances and verbal subtleties specific to the Australian context. Will continue to have difficulties with some low-frequency idiom, and with some humour which is based on socio-cultural understandings in the Australian context.
- Will continue to have gaps in comprehending English where there are no HL equivalents, or because their experience in this area has been in HL only.

COMMENTS

Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

➤ Awareness of Language and Cultural Differences

Silence may indicate that the student is drawing on HL patterns of communication, where silence is an accepted, valued part of interaction and where it is the listener’s right to choose whether or not to participate.

References

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