Traits of effective teachers of oral language

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Explicitly teach speaking skills

Exploratory talk

Presentational talk

Conversational talk

(page 16)

Explicitly teach listening skills

Informational listening

Critical listening

Appreciative listening

Responsive listening

(Chapter 5)

Engage in dialogue, not monologue

Less teacher talk

More quality student talk

Plan speaking and listening activities across the curriculum

(Chapter 2)

Explicitly teach vocabulary

Plan vocabulary teaching across the curriculum

Build and foster word consciousness

(Chapter 3)

Model, scaffold, support and guide speaking and listening learning in the classroom

Prompt and guide students to deepen their thinking and collaborate with others

(page 22)

Create a safe, respectful talking environment

Value: tentativeness, risk-taking, waiting, reflecting

Organise the learning space for oral language and group work

Teach students to work collaboratively with others

(page 26)

Other grouping ideas

There is a range of grouping organisations that promote collaborative learning. Once introduced to students, these groupings can be used across the curriculum to encourage students to take on different roles and responsibilities and to all contribute to a group task. This is a successful way to introduce students to cooperative learning strategies, which are essential life skills.

Below are a few of the most common grouping organisations.

Doughnut circles

Students sit or stand in two circles. The outside circle faces inwards and the inside circle faces outward, so that everyone is facing a partner. The teacher sets a talking task, for example, share ideas on a topic, share facts, introduce themselves, share a fact or opinion, share one success from a lesson, share their goal(s). For ideas for talking topics for doughnut circles, see PM36 — 4 pages, PM37 — 5 pages and PM55 — 3 pages.

Students have a turn each to speak. The teacher could call *'Switch'* when it is time to change partners. After they have both spoken, the inside circle moves one partner to the left (this could differ, for example, five

Doughnut circle using a Talk topic (PM36).

spaces to the left or three spaces to the right). A good listening activity is to ask students to share what their previous partner said with their new partner. Students could also take notes on what partners have shared.

Jigsaw grouping

This grouping organisation is effective when planning an in-depth collaborative task. The students are initially organised into 'home' groups of equal numbers. Each student in the group is given a number: 1, 2, 3 or 4.

Students with the same number then move to form a group with other students who have the same number. This new 'expert' group is allocated the same topic. For example:

1 = *information about the habitat of a panda*

2 = *information about the diet of a panda*

3 = *general information about the panda*

4 = *conservation information about pandas.*

Expert groups share their learning and record ideas on the Four square notes (PM19).

The students work together to learn about their expert topic. The teacher may give the groups a section of text to read, a video clip to watch or some research links. The students could take notes or record information on a graphic organiser.

After the expert group has prepared its information, the members return to their home group and each team member shares his or her 'expert' information.

Four square notes (PM19) could be used to record the information learned from each expert in the group.

Word jar

🕐 5–10 mins   PM54   🏠 Home-talk activity

(Adapted from Baeger, 2006)

Purpose

- To build and foster word consciousness and learn new words

Types of speaking: exploratory, presentational and conversational

Types of listening: informational and appreciative

Materials

- *Word jar* template (PM54)

Grouping

- Individuals or whole class

Procedure

1. Photocopy one copy of the *Word jar* template (PM54) per student.
2. Alternatively, students contribute words to a whole class *Word jar* (either a real jar or an enlarged copy of the word jar).
3. When students or the teacher notice an interesting word, it is added to either the class word jar or their own individual word jar.

Some ideas for using the word jar

- The students could periodically *'Walk and talk'* (refer page 41) and share their word jars with other students and swap good words.
- Students could tick the words in their word jar every time they use them.
- Students could sort their words (or words in the class word jar) into different types of words such as academic words, funny words, descriptive words.
- Students could create categories for an open word sort (refer page 74).
- The words could be collected in a treasure chest, bag or a box rather than a jar.
- Students could take their word jar home as a *Home-talk* activity.
- The teacher or a student could:
  — randomly choose a word from the *Word jar* and describe it to the class without saying the word
  — act out the word for students to guess
  — play *Charades* (page 83) using a word.

Would you rather never have to shower again or never have to brush your teeth again?

Would you rather only be able to whisper or only be able to shout?

Would you rather eat a live spider or a dead worm?

Would you rather always have to say everything that you are thinking or never speak again?

Would you rather have the ability to fly or to be invisible?

Would you rather stay at your current age or be 10 years older?

Would you rather live in the city or the country?

Would you rather help set the table before dinner or help clean up after dinner?

Would you rather have a pet cat or a pet dog?

Would you rather be able to talk to animals or speak all foreign languages?

Would you rather be a kid your whole life or an adult your whole life?

Would you rather go to the dentist or go to the doctor?

Would you rather be a deep-sea diver or an astronaut?

Would you rather have X-ray vision or magnified hearing?