

CUES TO ENHANCE THE FOUR BASIC SKILLS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Language is a tool that makes human beings uniquely different from other animals as they have the ability to communicate. And it is the ability to communicate well that distinguishes one individual from another. The purpose of communication is to get your message across to others clearly and unambiguously. Success and communication is very closely related with each other. It is a known fact that in the effective use of any language, the four basic communication skills such as Listening, Reading, and Speaking & Writing play a vital role. In today's competitive world, LSRW skills provide the right key to success and play a predominant role in student's life which would help them to shine both in personal and professional life. Lack of communication skills will certainly affect the future of any student these days as most of the careers and job opportunities have made it mandatory that employees should be proficient in English language. The LSRW method plays its pivotal role in the enhancement of Communication. When we learn a language especially English, all the four skills are to be given equal importance. This paper would suggest some of the guidelines for the English language learners through which all the four basic skills (LSRW skills) can be equipped.

Keywords: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing.

INTRODUCTION:

Language is never learnt. It is acquired. If one wants to acquire language, he/she should follow natural way of learning things. We all know how we learnt our Mother Language (MT/L1). As a child, we 'Listened' language spoken around us for 3 years. At the second stage, we 'spoke' in broken words and sentences for couple of years. At the third stage, we 'read' some picture books. Even alphabets were remembered as pictures. It is only in the last and fourth stage that we learn to 'write'. Thus, to say, L-S-R-W is natural way of acquiring language. In LSRW, L stands for Listening, S stands for Speaking, R stands for Reading, and W stands for Writing.

To be competent in using a language, one must develop these skills. In schools and colleges, teachers should provide learners with opportunities to develop each skill. Teachers can make use of activities rather than teaching theoretically. When a teacher makes use of activities

that have been specially designed to incorporate several language skills simultaneously (such as reading, writing, listening, and writing), they provide their students with situations that allow progress and development in all areas of language learning. This paper brings out some of the guidelines to equip LSRW skills which would make one's language effective.

LISTENING SKILLS:

Listening is the one way to improve our communication skill. Listening skills can also be called as the Receptive Skills because one can acquire or receive information through it. It is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening is key to all effective communication, without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood – communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.

Many successful leaders and entrepreneurs credit their success to effective listening skills. Richard Branson frequently quotes Listening as one of the main factors behind the success of Virgin. Effective listening is a skill that underpins all positive human relationships, spend some time thinking about and developing your listening skills – they are the building blocks of success. In order to equip Listening Skills, one can follow the guidelines given below:

GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS:

1. Face the speaker and maintain eye contact – eye contact keeps you focused on the conversation at hand and keeps you involved
2. Focus on using inviting body language, such as making eye contact, uncrossing your arms, and turning your shoulders so you're facing the person speaking. Use your body to show your interest and concern such as nodding your head.
3. Avoid thinking about what you're going to say next. Try not to get ahead of the speaker by finishing his or her thoughts in your mind before the person is finished speaking
4. Participate in active listening by encouraging the speaker with nods and affirmative words.
5. Paraphrase and repeat what you heard when it's your turn to talk. Don't interrupt – If you're interrupting the person speaking to get your point across, you're not listening
6. Ask questions or request examples for clarification and to get a better understanding of what is being said.
7. Stop doing other things — fidgeting, texting, reading, etc., — while someone is speaking to you.
8. Focus on content, not delivery. If you find yourself counting the number of times someone clears their throat, touches their nose or says uh, your attention is not on the subject matter and you need to refocus more on the message.
9. Ask open ended questions. Closed questions close the door to further conversation by giving a yes or no answer. Whereas, open questions allow for access to further dialogue. For example, the speaker might say, "I don't like my hair" The listener might respond, "What about your hair don't you like?" or, "Tell me more about your feelings regarding your hair".
10. Pay close attention to a speaker's body language – posture, eye movement and facial expressions. This will give you cues to the meaning behind the words being spoken and what he or she is really trying to convey.

SPEAKING SKILLS:

Speaking Skills can also be called as the Productive Skills with which we can express our thoughts and ideas. Nowadays Speaking Skills has started to dominate other three skills. Because the first impression of an individual is formed through the words he utters than the words he writes or reads. So, it has become mandatory for the students to acquire speaking skills in order to excel both personally and professionally. Usage of simple language while communicating will work out than the fancy language.

Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies -- using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language -- that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. These instructors' help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn.

GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS:

The following are the some of the exciting ways to learn English and make the learning process fun!

1. Speak, Speak, and Speak in English.
2. Use Google Translate for pronunciation.
3. Listen to news bulletins and songs in English to listen to the pronunciation of words.
4. Read Out Loud: Read the newspaper or a magazine out to yourself.
5. Learn a new word everyday and practice it in different sentences. Use the word until you have learnt it and keep using it regularly.
6. Watch movies in English and pay attention to new vocabulary and pronunciation.
7. Make Friends. Talk with them about things that you have learnt and exchange ideas.
8. Do Interesting Activities in English. Anything you enjoy doing, make sure you do it and communicate it in English.
9. Have a debate with your friends in English. Try to use as much vocabulary as you can to get your point across.
10. Use a Dictionary.

READING SKILLS:

Reading skills is also one of the Receptive skills. Reading also helps the individuals to get new vocabularies for speaking and writing .It is a vital skill in finding a good job. The importance of reading skills in today's society is enormous; with the advent of the Internet, people don't just rely on newspapers and postal correspondence. E-mail, texting, e-books and even reading the news on your cell phone is part of everyday life.

Many people have trouble with reading. Reading is hard for some people and it can take time. Reading is a process of the brain where you look at symbols on a page, and your mind sees the patterns of characters and understands the meaning in them. If you develop good reading skills, it'll be very helpful to your future. Aren't your school teachers always saying 'Read more books!?' Here are a few steps and tips to get started.

GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE READING SKILLS:

Preparing for Reading:

1. Find something to read like children's book, a newspaper article, a short story, or something on wiki how.
2. Go to the library and pick up lots of books.
3. Find a place to read where you can concentrate.
4. Schedule a routine time to read.

Implementing the basics of Reading improvement:

1. Begin your reading by looking at the pictures, or listening to the music to get a feel for what you are going to be reading about.
2. Start with titles, names, or other larger print items that you may know or ever thought about.
3. Read the page carefully. Don't rush, take your time.
4. Sound out each letter as best you can and you will notice they form some sort of word.

Advancing your Reading Skills:

1. Read as much as you are able to do. When you start getting bored or need a break, take one. Reading should be fun and enjoyable, don't force it. After your break, return to where you were, and continue.
2. Reread the material.
3. Use context clues to find out a word's meaning.
4. Memorize a text.
5. Reread. If you don't understand what you are reading, read over the sentence(s) again.
6. Keep reading. Try to read as much as you can on your free time.

Reading will help you in lots of ways; your vocabulary will become larger and more sophisticated and you will notice your grades change for the better. Have fun reading!

WRITING SKILLS:

Writing plays a predominant role in our day today life. It is an equally productive skill in the written mode and a skill that enables an individual to write accurately, lucidly, coherently, grammatically and legibly for effective communication with ease and speed. Writing provides a relatively permanent record of information, opinions, beliefs, explanations, theories in time (history) and space (letters, books, documents etc.). Writing is more complicated than it seems at first, and often seems to be the hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way. Like speech, writing has been considered as a powerful mode of communication. Writing is the primary basis upon which one's work, learning, and intellect will be judged—in college, in the workplace, and in the community. It makes one's thinking visible and verifiable

GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS:

Strong writing skills in English come from practice and determination. No one is born as an excellent writer. Learning to be an excellent writer in English takes a lot of time and practice.

Anyone can be a good writer if they are determined enough.

Below are 8 Tips to Improve Your English Writing Skills:

1. Keep all of your Writing in one place
2. Practice Writing in English daily
3. Pick a topic and WRITE!
4. Write more than one draft
5. Use Online Resources to correct your Grammar
6. Think outside the box (or Lines)
7. Have a friend to edit your Writing
8. Find the best place for you to write.

Writing is a process; the more you work on your writing the better it (and you) will get.

CONCLUSION:

Developing communication skills (LSRW Skills) can help all aspects of one's life, from professional life to social gatherings and everything in between. The ability to communicate information accurately, clearly and as intended, is a vital life skill and something that should not be overlooked. The above mentioned tips to improve LSRW skills will definitely act as guiding principles for the learners who learn all the four skills. It's never too late to work on your communication skills and by doing so improve your quality of life.

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