



TEACHING AND INTEGRATING LANGUAGE SKILL

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Annotation

Great topic -language skills are essential to effective communication and learning. When we talk about teaching and integrating language skills, we're usually referring to the four core areas:

Keywords: Integration, language, skills, reading, writing, listening, speaking, methodology, communicative, instruction, communication, educational material, approach, evaluate. Instead of teaching these in isolation, integration means

combining them in meaningful, communicative activities — the way we naturally use language in real life. Here's a breakdown of how this might work:

Why Integrate Language Skills?

Reflects real-world communication (we rarely use just one skill at a time)

Reinforces learning through multiple channels

Builds fluency and confidence

Creates context-based, meaningful language use

How to Integrate Language Skills in Teaching

1. Theme-Based Lessons

Choose a theme (e.g., travel, technology, environment)

Include reading a short article, discussing it, listening to a related podcast or video, and writing a reflection or summary

2. Task-Based Activities



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Have students listen to a story, discuss it in pairs, read a related article, and then write a report or role-play a conversation

3. Project Work

Projects can require research (reading and listening), discussions (speaking), presentations (speaking and listening), and written reports (writing)

4. Interactive Classroom Techniques

Debates

Interviews

Group discussions with follow-up written tasks

Listening comprehension with note-taking and summarizing

Example: Integrating Skills in a Lesson

Topic: Environmental Issues

Listening: Watch a short documentary clip

Speaking: Discuss the main issues in pairs

Reading: Read a related article

Writing: Write a letter to the editor or an opinion essay

Would you like me to help you design a sample integrated lesson plan? Or focus on a particular age group or level?

The article under discussion describes integration of the language skills into the teaching process of the English language. The authors of the article consider that Integrated Skills focuses on the four main English skills reading, writing, speaking and listening through a “Communicative Language Teaching” methodology. Integration of the four skills is concerned with realistic communication, exposes English language learners to authentic language and challenges them to interact naturally in the language. This approach allows teachers to track students' progress in multiple skills at the same time. Integrating the language skills also promotes the learning of real content, not just the dissection of language forms. Finally, the integrated-skill approach can be highly motivating to students of all ages and backgrounds. In general, integration is defined as the process of combining two or more things into one. Within education, integrated lessons take on a similar meaning in that they combine two or more concepts into one lesson. These integrated units involve many different concepts across all major subject areas. Integrated Skills



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focuses on the four main English skills - reading, writing, speaking and listening - through a "Communicative Language Teaching" methodology. New grammar patterns are learned in the context of a conversation or a real-life situation. Students will engage in various activities to practice English including listening tasks, role playing, and stimulating discussions.

Perhaps teachers and administrators think it is logistically easier to present courses on writing divorced from speaking, or on listening isolated from reading. They may believe that it is instructionally impossible to concentrate on more than one skill at a time [1]. Even if it were possible to fully develop one or two skills in the absence of all the others, such an approach would not ensure adequate preparation for later success in academic communication, career-related language use, or everyday interaction in the language. An extreme example is the grammar-translation method, which teaches students to analyze grammar and to translate (usually in writing) from one language to another. This method restricts language learning to a very narrow, noncommunicative range that does not prepare students to use the language in everyday life [2]. Integration of the four skills is concerned with realistic communication. This means that we are teaching at the discourse level, not just at the level of sentences or individual words and phrases. Discourse is a whole unit of communicative text, either spoken or written. However, integrating the four language skills can be demanding of the teacher.

- We need to have a good understanding of discourse, and to be able to use textbooks flexibly. Choose instructional materials, textbooks, and technologies that promote the integration of listening, reading, speaking, and writing, as well as the associated skills of syntax, vocabulary, and so on.
- This can also be time-consuming, requiring a lot of preparation.
- Another limitation is the problem of designing suitable materials that take account of students' different skill levels. The four skills tend to develop at a different pace: receptive skills are stronger than productive skills, for example. Reflect on their current approach and evaluate the extent to which the skills are integrated.
- This means that teachers have to be skilful in selecting or designing integrated activities for their students. Learn more about the various ways to integrate language skills in the classroom (e.g., content-based, task-based, or a combination).



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- Even if a given course is labeled according to just one skill, remember that it is possible to integrate the other language skills through appropriate tasks.
- Teach language learning strategies and emphasize that a given strategy can often enhance performance in multiple skills [3].

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. Moreover, this approach stresses that English is not just an object of academic interest nor merely a key to passing an examination; instead, English becomes a real means of interaction and sharing among people. This approach allows teachers to track students' progress in multiple skills at the same time. Integrating the language skills also promotes the learning of real content, not just the dissection of language forms. Finally, the integrated-skill approach, whether found in content-based or task-based language instruction or some hybrid form, can be highly motivating to students of all ages and backgrounds [4].

With careful reflection and planning, any teacher can integrate the language skills and strengthen the tapestry of language teaching and learning. When the tapestry is woven well, learners can use English effectively for communication.

As there is a main aim of each lesson you teach it is necessary to provide at least one sub aim. This can either be a skill, system, or, pronunciation aim. Also, remember that certain aims fit very well together. For example, let's take a speaking lesson and we will add a pronunciation sub aim.

A great way to integrate the pronunciation aim is in the free production stage; whilst the learners are speaking, introduce a feature of connected speech (e.g. weak forms), or intonation practice e.g. rising/ falling intonation. This is also an occasion to single out a difficult phoneme to focus on the correct manner, place, and voice of articulation. Also keep in mind, prioritizing errors. The best way to do this is to choose errors which impede communication, or if teaching a multilingual class try to identify a common pronunciation error.

Integrated skills by exploiting a task



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Now let's look at adding a written aim to a reading lesson. The obvious aims of a reading lesson are to understand the text and to exploit it for vocabulary. So how do you integrate a writing task into a lesson that is focused on receptive skills? Well let's have a look. For example, after completing a reading text (e.g. an advice column) instead of writing responses to the column, give the learners an example response and then get them to write the problem. This is more effective as it requires a bit more thinking, or deeper processing, and is slightly more challenging. This addresses tense/aspects which are used, vocabulary, and style informal/formal, and structure. Another writing task from any type of reading lesson is to summarize the text in a set amount of words. This enables the learner to articulate wording and paraphrase accordingly. After finishing the summary, incorporate a peer correction stage by providing a short criteria sheet for learners to assess their partners.

What about listening and writing aims for a speaking task? In the production stage, try implementing a quiz or a survey. The students generate their own questions using the target language/structures taught, and then have them ask and answer while recording their partner's answers. Learners are then focusing on questions forms, rising and falling intonation, and note taking skills while speaking (throw in some phrases for clarification) and listening to each other (e.g. back channeling signals 'oh' 'huh' or 'really'). As you can see, the survey has additionally integrated a system's aim (questions forms) pronunciation (rising /falling intonation), and writing (note-taking skills). So next time, ask yourself: What skills can I exploit from this activity? How can I integrate additional skills, and how can I encourage more engagement from it? Did you enjoy this article? Our blogs are published by the teacher training team at English for Asia in Hong Kong. We are the largest Trinity TESOL training centre outside of Europe and are committed to raising standards across the entire TESOL industry. You can help too by sharing articles with your own networks and teaching faculty. Children need to use language in different settings and in different ways to develop their communicative skills to the fullest. And they need to know that language can be fun to use. In teaching the language arts to children, teachers may follow a traditional or a nontraditional mode of instruction or attempt to select the best of both philosophies in an eclectic approach. In the traditional approach, the language arts are generally taught as separate subjects with



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skills being introduced as small parts of larger units—the underlying premise being that once the parts are learned, the whole is learned. This is called direct instruction. In the nontraditional approach, also called the whole language approach, the student is taught from whole to part. As Goodman (1986, p. 19) puts it, “Language is actually learned from whole to part. We first use whole utterances in familiar situations. Then later we see and develop parts, and begin to experiment with their relationship to each other and to the meaning of the whole.” This is an inquiry approach. According to Dixie Lee Spiegel (1992, p. 39), a leader in literacy research, “One of the most important benefits of whole language is that we are at last becoming literacy educators, not just reading teachers and occasionally writing teachers. Writing is increasingly viewed from the perspective of a process of communication, not as a set of mechanics to be mastered and then applied. Even very young children are being perceived as both writers and readers. . . .” The language arts are best taught as integrated language modes; however, teachers need to understand fully each of the language arts. The integrated language arts curriculum is described by Searfoss (1989, p. 1) as follows: In an integrated language arts curriculum, reading instruction is nestled among instruction in writing and oral language, resulting in greater command of all these language tools than is possible when they are taught in isolation. Children must read about what they hear and talk about; they must write about what they read and hear and talk about; they must talk about what they read and write and hear.

There are many situations in which we use more than one language skill. For this reason alone, it is valuable to integrate the language skills, but there are other reasons why integration can enhance the students’ communicative competence. Many educationalists stress the importance of building new knowledge and skills on to what students already know and can do. So, if students are able to read a short story, this skill will help them to write their own story. Instead of just having listening, the students can have speaking, reading and writing practice. This can raise their motivation to learn English. Integrating the skills means that you are working at the level of realistic communication, not just at the level of vocabulary and sentence patterns. Realistic communication is the aim of the communicative approach and many researchers believe that handling realistic communication is an integral part of



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essential conditions for language learning. Two types of integrated-skill instruction are content-based language instruction and task-based instruction. The first of these emphasizes learning content through language, while the second stresses doing tasks that require communicative language use. Both of these benefit from a diverse range of materials, textbooks, and technologies for the ESL or EFL classroom. “Content-Based Instruction.” In 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. Content-based language instruction is valuable at all levels of proficiency, but the nature of the content might differ by proficiency level. For beginners, the content often involves basic social and interpersonal communication skills, but past the beginning level, the content can become increasingly academic and complex.

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