

Integration

Accomplished English language arts teachers acknowledge that fluent readers and writers are not necessarily active listeners or effective speakers. Alternatively, fluent speakers and attentive listeners may not be effective writers or readers. Accomplished teachers assess each student's skills within all the strands of language arts and then build on strengths and remedy challenges across the entire discipline. For example, in the case of a student who consistently gives one-word spoken answers, an accomplished teacher might see if the student could answer more expansively via writing and then transfer those more articulate answers to the act of speaking. In the case of a student who is more comfortable with speech than writing, the teacher might have the student voice-record the response to a prompt and then use the recorded response to compose an essay. Other techniques for integrating oral and written language might include using a fishbowl discussion to spark ideas as part of a prewriting exercise, having students read their work out loud as a strategy to catch errors, and conducting a turn-and-talk activity to help students understand a text they are reading.

Accomplished English language arts teachers instruct students in the development of their inquiry skills through a combination of speaking and listening. For example, a teacher might use literature circles to help students make a variety of important connections between texts and ideas. Teachers design tasks and ask questions that inspire students to look beyond their own cultural, gender, and personal perspectives. Teachers help students consider the quality of literary selections from contrasting critical viewpoints and speculate on what criteria might have been used to select award-winning texts. Teachers support English language learners, for example, by encouraging them to provide examples of key concepts from their own lives and their native literature or to use graphic representations to illustrate thoughts they cannot yet express in English. Teachers recognize that all students benefit from strategically planned integrated instruction on speaking and listening skills in the overall curriculum. Given clear examples and explicit instruction, students of accomplished

teachers learn to pay attention to one another's comments about texts, ask pertinent questions, work collaboratively toward consensus or appreciation of divergent ideas, and ultimately realize that speaking and listening are key skills for self-discovery as well as for strengthening interpersonal relationships.

Accomplished English language arts teachers provide opportunities for students to write about what they have heard in order to retain information and reinforce the connection between listening and writing. Teachers modify the pace, duration, and scope of their lectures, including appropriate wait-time to comply with research that states that students are not able to pay close attention and write at the same time. Accomplished teachers also know when and how to have their students employ tools such as graphic organizers and note-taking strategies in order to better process and retain oral information.

Accomplished English language arts teachers focus on the interpersonal power of language and its use in conflict resolution. Accomplished teachers model and instruct students in speaking and listening skills that lead to solving problems, debating important issues, and persuading public entities to consider important issues. Such skills lead to acceptance of divergent viewpoints and enhance the quality of the learning environment, as well as foster the development of leadership skills for civic involvement. Activities that foster these skills might include discussions related to classroom-level issues such as materials usage or the responsible use of language; school-level issues such as the dress code or antibullying messages; and local, state, national, and global issues such as hunger or disaster relief efforts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that digital tools can help students build relationships outside their school and immediate community. Teachers realize that digital tools affect the connections among the modalities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in important ways. By teaching students digital etiquette and then facilitating digital conversations that span cultures and borders, accomplished teachers help to open up new worlds for their students.