

## **Pedagogy and Strategies for Teaching Speaking and Listening**

Accomplished English language arts teachers provide relevant experiences to help students practice the full range of speaking and listening skills necessary for successful participation in the world. Teachers seek to advance students' abilities for a variety of purposes and audiences by creating rich conversations—in whole groups, small groups, and with a partner—that are built around significant content. Language arts teachers also realize the importance of engaging students in authentic conversation about their interests to establish a bridge for future learning.

Accomplished English language arts teachers establish a learning environment in which language is used in ways that show respect for others. Teachers help students understand the emotional power of language; for example, they may directly address the effect of using labels and name-calling. These teachers go beyond merely pointing out the potential hurtfulness of language; they analyze the countereffect of positive and respectful language. Accomplished teachers create a trust-filled learning environment in which all students will risk participation in oral activities; teachers know how to support students who sometimes struggle when asked to think out loud, speculate in front of others, and compose publicly. For example, a teacher might have students share ideas by rotating through several small groups before presenting to the class as a whole. The teacher could also ask students to prepare their thoughts in writing before class and then use these notes for in-class discussion.

Accomplished English language arts teachers support the development of students' listening skills and abilities in a variety of ways. Teachers model active listening in the day-to-day management and monitoring of the class. They show that by listening closely to students' ideas, they can raise the overall level of discussion. They demonstrate through their reactions that they notice and value skillful word choices and rich metaphors. Accomplished teachers also demonstrate how listeners should respond when they are confused by what they have heard, for example, by tactfully but persistently requesting clarification.

Accomplished English language arts teachers may use formal public speaking assignments to teach students to be members of an attentive audience. Students of accomplished teachers learn that attending to a formal speech involves appreciating how visual elements such as facial expression, gestures, and graphic aids can enhance or detract from a message. Teachers also explain how the auditory features of tone, volume, and speed can convey meaning and affect audience engagement. Accomplished teachers instruct their students in the skills of taking appropriate notes, summarizing key points, and drawing inferences.

Accomplished English language arts teachers use ideas generated during small-group and whole-class discussions as scaffolding for more formal public speaking assignments. Teachers make students aware of the need to follow the conventions of formal speech in formal oral presentations. Teachers encourage students to attend carefully to such elements as clarity, relevance, and organization; types of arguments used; and word choice and word order. Teachers explain that it is essential to avoid vocalized pauses, slang, colloquialisms, and mistakes in usage and to speak with adequate articulation and projection. Teachers emphasize the importance of audience awareness and model the appropriate style of presentation for different purposes. Teachers also instruct students in the use of visual aids that can help the audience understand the message and that enhance the speaker's credibility. For example, a student might build a model, develop a poster, or use digital presentation aids to more effectively convey an idea or support an argument.

Accomplished English language arts teachers have students practice speaking skills in academic discussions. Accomplished teachers help students develop their academic vocabulary so they can participate in such discussions, and teachers group students strategically. Teachers instruct students in the techniques of effective dialogue so that they stay on task, co-construct meaning, respectfully challenge ideas, negotiate conflict, and appreciate divergent viewpoints. Teachers might have students map their peers' participation in a discussion, analyze the flow of the discussion, and categorize the contributions. Teachers also provide the necessary support and conditions to ensure that all students can contribute to the discussion. Accomplished teachers explain to students how the skills acquired in classroom discussions and debates will be applicable to future academic and workplace settings.

Accomplished English language arts teachers recognize that some students have speaking and listening challenges that require specific teacher attention. A teacher might need to spend extra time on appropriate audience behavior in a class where students interrupt, are blatantly inattentive, or are rude. There might be students in the class who are English language learners, others who have auditory processing difficulties or hearing impairments, or some who communicate via sign language. Accomplished teachers work closely with appropriate specialists to implement strategies within the classroom structure to ensure that these students participate successfully in the oral and aural discourse of the classroom. Teachers also build community by sensitizing classmates to the challenges of their peers and suggesting ways to empathetically support their efforts.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that technological tools are available in many learning environments; therefore, they adopt appropriate digital tools to enhance students' speaking and listening skills. Teachers may record students' own speech to help students identify patterns such as fluency, pacing, and articulation, or teachers may provide video models of effective speaking techniques.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are themselves fluent and adept users of the spoken word; they read aloud to their students and are familiar with speech and debate. Teachers demonstrate effective speaking in their day-to-day leadership of the class by conveying directions and information clearly and cogently and by sharing stories and accounts with a style and vividness that students might want to emulate. For example, an accomplished teacher might orally retell a myth or legend with verve, changing vocal pitch and accent to bring dialogue to life. Accomplished teachers model for students how the spoken word can clarify writing, and how debate can help formulate opinions that can be conveyed in writing.