

Quicklistens

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For several years teachers on the English Proficiency Programme at Victoria University of Wellington have incorporated a daily fluency programme (Millett, 2008, 2014) into their classes. The EPP is an English for academic purposes programme which prepares international and second language New Zealanders for university study. One reason for including a daily fluency programme is that fluency development is one of four essential strands of teaching outlined by Paul Nation (Nation, 2007). Another reason is that students consistently rate the daily fluency component of the course very highly. The idea of fluency practice is that students use and practise the language they already know. This means that the materials are easy and present nothing new. A daily fluency programme includes all four language skills:

1. Quickwrites - 5 to 10 minutes free writing with emphasis on fluency and flow of ideas
2. Quickspeaks - 3 to 5 minutes speaking without stopping to a listening partner
3. Quickreads - Speed reading (available on this site)
4. Quicklistens

What are Quicklistens?

Quicklistens are regular, quick, focused listening exercises. They are based on ongoing audio stories utilising the principles of graded readers: high student interest; repeated exposure to high frequency vocabulary and grammar; and the fluency principles mentioned above.

How are they done?

1. Choose a question booklet from this site that suits your learners.
2. Purchase the Graded Reader/CD/mp3 from the publisher using the detailed reference.
3. Copy one question booklet for each student.
4. Introduce the story. A good way to do this is to use the introduction, glossary, list of chapters, maps, character descriptions or other information provided in the graded reader.
5. Every day play a chapter of the graded reader CD while the students answer the quick questions in their question booklets.
6. Go over the answers in class or include the answers at the back of the question booklet.

Other activities such as reviewing, predicting, focus on question grammar, pronunciation practice, discussion of answers, summaries and pair or small group discussions may be incorporated into the activity depending on the length of time a teacher wishes to spend.

Quicklistens work very well for individual study for students who need to spend more time on listening. Give them a booklet with answers and the CD/USB and they can do it in their own time.

References

- Millett, S (2008) A daily Fluency Programme *Modern English Teacher* 17, 2: 21-28
Millett, S (2014) Quicklistens: using what they already know *Modern English Teacher* 23, 4:64-65
Nation, P (2007) The four strands. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 1 (1), 1-11.