

Language Arts Journal of Michigan

Volume 17

Issue 2 *Listening and Speaking*

Article 1

2001

Front Matter

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Recommended Citation

(2001) "Front Matter," *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*: Vol. 17: Iss. 2, Article 1.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.9707/2168-149X.1313>

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LISTENING AND SPEAKING

L A J J M

The Michigan Council of Teachers of English

Language Arts Journal of Michigan

Fall 2001 Volume 17 Number 2

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About Language Arts Journal of Michigan

The *Language Arts Journal of Michigan* is published twice a year (Fall and Spring) by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English, a nonprofit state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, and is a member of the NCTE Affiliate Information Exchange Agreement. The *LAJM* publishes articles that discuss issues, theory, theory-based practice, and research in the teaching and learning of the language arts at all levels, kindergarten through college. It publishes articles, interviews, annotated bibliographies, reviews, essays, research, poetry, and classroom practices. The *LAJM* invites teachers at all levels—elementary, secondary, college—to submit manuscripts for consideration. Articles from many perspectives on the themes are welcome.

Guidelines for Submitting Manuscripts. Manuscripts should be 4-12 pages in length, double-spaced, and use the new MLA style for parenthetical documentation and the NCTE Guidelines for Non-Sexist Use of Language. Send one original and one copy. We request that manuscripts not have been published elsewhere. Manuscripts will not be returned unless requested and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If the manuscript is accepted, a copy on a 3.5 disk will be requested (IBM PC or compatible, Microsoft Word 6.0). The deadline for the Spring 2002 issue is February 15, 2002. Manuscripts may also be submitted via e-mail to both editors as MS Word attachments. See the Call for Manuscripts near the end of this issue for further information.

Submit Manuscripts to:

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Subscription Information

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Printing

Central Michigan University Printing Services, CMU, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The subconscious is ceaselessly murmuring, and it is by listening to these murmurs that one hears the truth.

— Gaston Bachelard

Once upon a time we all learned the three R's, and while we did a lot of listening in many teacher-centered as well as learner-centered classrooms, listening was not only phonetically excluded from the three R's, it was usually also excluded from the formal instruction in the classroom. The English Language Arts has a Big Four, and listening is included. But while we say we teach reading, writing, speaking, and listening, listening often gets only lip service. In this issue our contributors have written about listening from many different perspectives. They tell us why, when, and how to focus on listening in our classrooms. They also tell us how to enhance the listening that is already taking place.

Ron Iwankovitsch introduces the issue with a plea to all of us to understand the importance of helping our students to listen and to listen well. Marilyn Brooks focuses on the integration of skills and helps us see how listening can be taught along with writing. Playing off the joy that we all get telling someone about a new book that we have read, Jean Brown presents strategies to help our students gain an appreciation of literature through good listening skills. Monica Gordon Pershey helps us see the instructional decisions we make regarding classroom listening and speaking, and how they affect our students' perception of the use of oral language to communicate. Knowing that the state standards and benchmarks in many states, including Michigan, include good listening skills, John Ludy focuses on using a systematic process to meet these benchmarks. A final strategy is presented by M. P. Cavanaugh and Colleen Warwick, who show ways to enhance listening with a *Question-Only* strategy. Rather than introduce a new strategy, Geoffrey Gresk zeroes in on an old one, brainstorming. His conclusion, however, is that brainstorming is often not an effective option because students are unaware of either the goals or the processes of good brainstorming. He ends, however, with some good suggestions and a note of hope.

Several of our contributors remind us that listening is pleasurable. Joey Latterman recalls the joy of reciting and listening to good literature, especially poetry, a timeless method of enhancing listening skills and encouraging a love of literature. Lucia Eldon gives us food for thought by discussing the listening being done by what teachers often criticize as passive students. Rose Reissman introduces us to the peer student author and suggests that students could learn much by simply listening to their peers. A playful use of language that tickles the eardrum is the subject of William J. Vande Kopple's article, as he urges us to have fun in our classrooms. Reissman returns with a second article, a nostalgic look at how she learned as a child from listening as her mother taught her about great art.

This month's *LAJM* book review, by Tammy Savage, takes a look at Laura Robb's *Teaching Reading in Middle School*. Finally, Mary Ellen VanCamp has contributed the *LAJM* bibliography "Websites for Further Information on Listening and Listening Instruction."

There are many rich ideas in these articles. If we are "listening" as we read them, then their impact could be significant in our classrooms. These authors help us see how we can truly teach reading, writing speaking, **and** listening.

Jill VanAntwerp

Susan Steffel