Differentiated Instruction: Strategies for English Language Learners Listening Comprehension Development

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Differentiated Instruction: Strategies for English Language Learners Listening Comprehension Development

by

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages

Bridgewater State University

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Stefanie Moreno

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English for Students of Other Languages

Spring 2015

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Abstract

Title: Differentiated Instruction: Strategies for ELL Listening Comprehension Development

Differentiated Instruction is a hot topic right now and teachers need to keep up with the changes in the educational system. The one-size-fits-all approach that we have been dealing with for so long, no longer fits the needs, preferences and learning styles of our students. Teachers need to differentiate instruction and provide students with different avenues of learning in order to maximize their learning process. Because more attention and practice is needed on listening skills, knowledge in differentiated instruction and the different strategies to teach listening skills can be used together to help develop English language learners listening comprehension skills. Of particular interest to this research paper are researches dealing with the importance of listening in the language learning, as well as the stages of listening comprehension, the factors that may hinder it and the strategies to help ELLs overcome them. The main purpose of this literature review is to provide EFL teachers, in a synthesized way, with a review about the existing literature on differentiated instruction as well as on listening skills so that these two can be put together and help ELLs develop their listening comprehension skills while having their preferences, styles and readiness taken into consideration. Findings from researchers are presented and some conclusions and suggestions are proposed for further and practical development of this topic.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction, Listening Skills, Student readiness, Top-down and Bottom-up Strategies, Metacognition, EFL Students/Teachers, ELLs.
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Introduction

I am aware that teaching a foreign language is not an easy task. It can be more difficult when there is no structured curriculum, and the materials and the methods used to teach English are not applicable to the learners’ needs and preferences. In Cape Verde for example, schools lack materials and conditions needed to help teachers and students be more productive (e.g. authentic materials like English books designed for EFL speakers; bigger amount of English language visual aids; non-existent English language laboratory facilities; little time exposure to English as well as very few chances to practice what they are learning outside the classrooms).

The investments (material and human resources) that the government has provided to improve the teaching of English language are not enough to fulfill the needs of the students. Teachers are therefore faced with the dilemma of how best to teach listening with the limitations they face as well as how to assist the students with their specific needs and levels.

For the past decades, Cape Verde has received a large quantity of tourism investments as well as tourists from all over the world, reinforcing English as the language of communication. In this globalized world, English is most of the time, a bridge between people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Another important reason to learn the English language is to get access to information, since most research is done in the English language. For these reasons, it is important for Cape Verdean students to learn English as foreign language (EFL) and to work to improve their ability in the English language.
Currently, within the Cape Verdean public educational system this initiative is mostly seen on the secondary and post-secondary school levels. However, very recently efforts have been increased to start teaching the English language earlier on in lower grades which also increased the need for resources. In the secondary level for example, students take English classes three times a week, fifty minutes per class. Students may start studying English either in 7th or 9th grades. Basically, they work on reading comprehension activities, writing composition/essays exercises and occasionally listen to audio to work on some fill-in-the-blanks activities for listening comprehension. In the post-secondary level more higher-order critical thinking activities take place. Students are required to do some research, write more elaborate papers; they also listen to passages and watch videos to respond and discuss some higher-order thinking questions. As we see, all facets of the English language are involved and addressed in the classrooms, but the truth is, listening is often the one that is both not explicitly taught and left out of the curriculum.

My goal is to work on differentiated instruction, particularly how it pertains to ELL (English language learners) pedagogy because I deeply believe it is a method that must be developed and better known by teachers. I had the opportunity to teach in two high schools in Cape Verde and observe English classes elsewhere and I found the same problem in many of them. In a single classroom, teachers find students who are more advanced than others. Students who come from different social locations obviously have different needs and preferences. Hence, an activity that may be quite challenging for some of them may be very easy for others. Also, some content and activities may be fun or new for some but not for all. I equally observed that teachers had difficulties in having
all students engaged with tasks during the whole class. By differentiating instruction, teachers would be able to adjust the instruction in order to meet students’ needs which will also give each student opportunities to better develop personally, academically, and socially.

Therefore, this thesis focuses on differentiated ELL instruction because diverse students have different preferences and interests that should not be ignored. Diverse students have different level of readiness and different needs; consequently, they should not be treated as one. Instead, students should be provided with various avenues to learning as well as different opportunities to express their learning.

Another aspect that I have also observed in classrooms and experienced myself as a student of English as a foreign language has to do with listening comprehension skill. I remember that my teachers in high school as well as my professors at the university level did not spend the same amount of time helping us with listening comprehension as they did with reading, writing and speaking. Indeed, we had classes specifically on reading, writing and oral communication but we did not learn listening within any course. In the oral communication class, we were given more opportunities to speak the language than listen to it. Many are the daily examples of students who make errors because they misunderstand the questions in class. This reminds me of when I presented a portfolio at the end of my undergraduate coursework. My grade was determined largely by my ability to respond to the questions which depended on my ability to carefully listen to and understand what was being asked. Although listening might have been implied to be happening during the classes on reading, writing and speaking (which it surely did), I submit that there should be a specific time devoted to the teaching of listening.
comprehension. During that period, students would be taught how to listen for specific purposes, the strategies to become a good listener, the meaning of being a good listener and how to overcome the factors that may hinder listening comprehension, for example. I believe that the lack of development of listening comprehension skills negatively impacts students’ language performance, which may lower their self-esteem as well as their motivation towards the language because they may feel that they are not able to hold a conversation in the language they have been studying. I understand that by being taught listening comprehension skills, students’ ability to hold a conversation would improve tremendously. Therefore, the second part of my research project will be on strategies to help develop listening comprehension skills of ELLs.

My strong belief is that this project will provide teachers with an overview of what exists about differentiated instruction as well as some strategies to be implemented in order to develop ELLs listening comprehension skill and improve their academic achievements.
Methodology

To achieve my goals, I have conducted research through books and peer reviewed articles with studies from authors who have worked on the same areas. I have also watched and analyzed several videos (about how to listen better and the different accents in the English language) that provide additional input to my project. My review of the literature into three parts: the literature about differentiated instruction; the literature about listening comprehension and then literature combining these two together. At the end, I designed some lesson plans that may be used as examples for future lesson plans in differentiated instruction in listening comprehension, particularly in Cape Verde. This work will, in my belief, result in an organized and comprehensible source that could also be used by colleagues and students interested in differentiated instruction and developing classroom strategies for listening comprehension. My research has prepared me to develop some suggestions regarding the adaptation of my findings into Cape Verdeans classrooms in order to help improve the students’ success in English language.

Hypothesis

Effective strategies that deal directly with teaching listening comprehension must be taught in classrooms both implicitly and explicitly. Teachers will be able to raise students’ interest and keep them engaged in the lesson by differentiated instruction in listening comprehension.

Throughout this project I will be looking for answers to the following questions:
1. Within the existing strategies and activities, what can be considered an effective strategy to teach listening? Which strategies and activities effectively contribute to help students improve their listening comprehension?

2. How do we value differentiated instruction and listening comprehension in the same way?

3. How can differentiated instruction be applied into listening comprehension?
Literature Review

Some of the resources I used throughout my project, regarding listening comprehension, were written in the 1970s through early 1990s. However, the authors’ arguments are applicable today. It seems that these authors and others were bringing a focus to an area of listening comprehension that has since been folded into the other macro-level skills. I am suggesting that we bring the individual focus back. The concern of researchers about this topic since long ago made me want to combine it with differentiated instruction and see if anything new may spring out of it. It is true to say that with more students in classrooms (average of 28-36 students in Cape Verdean’s high school classrooms) and more responsibilities put on teachers, the relationship between students and teachers is more demanding and challenging. Therefore, individualization is more difficult to obtain. In the meanwhile, it is important to bear in mind that with different students in class, more flexibility is needed so that no one is left behind and success is achieved by all.

Differentiated Instruction

In the attempt to find how the term differentiated instruction appeared, I investigated a website in which M. Gundlach, refers to the roots of differentiated instruction in teaching. Gundlach (2012) tell us that “the history of differentiated instruction dates back to the 1600s when one room schoolhouses were the staple in education.” The teacher was responsible for the various types of students in a single classroom with no technology available to help him/her. According to Gundlach, by 1919, there were upwards of 190,000 one room schoolhouses operating in the United States. After that, with the transition from schoolhouses to grade schools, it was assumed
that children from the same age should be in the same classroom since they could learn the same materials with the same velocity. At that point, educators started differentiating instruction according to students’ chronological age. Gundlach then refers to Preston Search who, according to her, in early 1889 “worked to make it possible for students to work at their own pace without the fear of retention or failure. Preston Search pushed his teachers to build an environment where students could be successful, each at their individual pace”. At this point, educators started differentiating instruction based on students’ individual pace.

Later on, according to Gundlach, evidence suggested that there were much greater gaps in the children’s abilities than realized. That made educators such as Frederic Burk and Mary Ward and many others work together and come up with plans and movements to create textbooks self-instructive in order for students to develop at their own speed, maturity and readiness. One such was the Winnetka Plan – that attempted to expand educational focus to creative activities and emotional and social development, with no strict goals. However, according to Washburne (1953) “schools went back to their former programs, widely ignoring the varying readiness levels of their students” (p. 140). Washburne believes that happened because “textbooks were not so written as to make self-instruction possible; people were not convinced that any such radical departure was necessary – we had no intelligence tests or achievement tests in those days” (p. 140).

That is, they did not have the needed ways of assessing students according to their level of readiness such as intelligence tests or achievement tests, as he exemplifies. While we know that testing is not the only method of assessment, my point here is to express that some way to measure students’ readiness is necessary. Readiness is a developmental
stage at which a child has the capacity to receive instruction at a given level of difficulty or to engage in a particular activity (online dictionary.com, 2015).

Tomlinson, C. A., & Allan, S. D. (2000) define differentiated instruction as “a teacher’s reacting responsively to learner’s needs.” They go further by saying that “differentiation is attending to the learning needs of a particular student or small group of students rather than the more typical pattern of teaching the class as though all individuals in it were basically the same” (p.4). To help us better understand the previous statement, Tomlinson (2001) – a germinal researcher in the field of differentiated instruction- also states that “Effective differentiation will typically be proactively planned by the teacher to be robust enough to address a range of learner needs, in contrast with planning a single approach for everyone and reactively trying to adjust the plans when it becomes apparent that the lesson is not working for some learners for whom it was intended” (p.4). In differentiated classrooms, teachers do not necessarily have to come up with different activities for each student. Instead, the teacher may have all students working on a single activity but following different tasks’ level of complexity and/or appropriate levels of development and learning styles.

In the classroom, teachers deal with students from different academic backgrounds, including different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as students from different learning styles and interests. For example, in a single classroom one may find students who learn best with audiovisuals, others who learn best with examples, or others who learn best with music. There are also students who prefer working individually while others prefer working with partners or in teams, as stated by Anderson 2007, (p. 50). M. Nordlund, (2003) points out some types of students that
teachers may come across in classrooms: “students who demonstrate above-average intelligence, students who are considered ““at risk”” of school failure, students with cultural/language differences, students who are educationally disadvantaged, students who have a slow rate and student who qualify for special education services” (p. 1). Each student has his/ her own and unique way of understanding and processing information. They may see the same thing in a different manner or have different perspectives or interpretations of an action or sentences, for example, depending on the aspects pointed above by Nordlund.

For today’s schooling, a teacher’s job is not only a one-size-fits-all strategy to teach a whole classroom. Instead, as Nordlund (2003) states, “teachers are clearly challenged by the task of diversifying instruction in order to help every child meet their full potential” (p. 1). Anderson (2007) concurs by adding that “the utmost importance to the teacher who differentiates is providing a learning environment and opportunities that exclude no child” (p. 50). It is important to make each and every child feel that they belong to the class and help them overcome their own fears and master the content that is being taught. Cummins (2001) and Cummins, Brown & Sayers (2007) point out that “the social- emotional climate you establish also provides opportunity for ELLs (English language learners) to see themselves as worthy, capable and contributing members of the classroom community, both socially and academically” (as cited in Peregoy and Boyle, 2013, p. 94).

By differentiating instructions, teachers can better help students know their strong and weak points and help them enhance and strengthen the strong ones as well as help them overcome the weak ones. When discussing ELLs, I include EFL (English as a
foreign language) students, ESL (English as a second language) students and also CLD (cultural and linguistic difference) students who benefit when opportunities are provided in order for them to feel part of the classroom community since their specific needs, culture and linguistics differences must be taken into account when given specific/differentiated instruction.

Students have to acquire fluency in the four macro skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing, in order to become fluent and proficient in the target language. Therefore, in an EFL classroom the teacher has to adjust the instruction--trying to apply one or more teaching approaches--in order to help the students to master the standards. There are several approaches that can be applicable to achieve these goals. Peregoy and Boyle (2013) suggest some of them such as Sheltered Instruction or Special designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). This content-based approach “uses the target language for instruction, with special modifications to ensure student comprehension and learning” (2013, p. 94). In addition to a sheltering approach they also propose integrating language, content based instruction, social and effective adjustments and ongoing co-planning and coordination as effective English learner instructions. The authors explain the importance of setting social-affective objectives as they also reflect what the teacher value in student behavior “interpersonal relationships, empathy, self-esteem, and respect for others” (p.101). These resources highlight the importance of both providing students with a comfortable environment, propitious to learning as well as exploring students’ capacities and capabilities.

Tomlinson and Allan (2000), state that “the number of frustrated and disenfranchised learners in schools can only increase without large numbers of classroom
where teachers are skilled in meeting varied learners where they are and moving them ahead briskly and with understanding” (p. 2). Considering that, numerous researchers (such as Anderson, 2007; Holli, 2008; Nordlund, 2003; Tomlinson, 2001; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000) have classified three methods of differentiating instructions for any curricular area:

a- modifying the content

b- modifying the process of learning, and

c- modifying the product.

According to Tomlinson 2001, content is the “input” of teaching and learning. It is what is being taught or what teachers want students to learn (p.72). As defended by S. Krashen (2012) “we acquire language in only one way…when we understand the messages.” Comprehension takes place when input and knowledge are matched against each other (Faerch and Kasper, 1986, p. 264).

Heacox (2002) identified that:

there are several actions that teachers can take to differentiate the content for their students. One way teachers can differentiate the content or the curriculum they teach is by providing students with the opportunity to choose a subtopic within a main topic or unit. This allows students to explore in greater depth a topic of interest which will then be presented to the class. As each student presents the information on their subtopic, the whole class learns more about the topic in general (as cited in Bailey and Black (n.d.) p. 136).
In a non-differentiated classroom, students are only given a main topic to discuss or explore. The differentiation here, as described by Heacox (2002), allows students to delve deeper into the subtopics that most strive their interest, which will consequently increase their motivation so they will end up learning more.

Langa & Yost (2007) list some examples of possibilities to differentiate content such as (1) select specific areas of interest within the focus area; (2) select a variety of books and resource materials; (3) group students according to readiness levels or interest levels; (4) reteach to small groups who need support or explanations - exempt those who have mastered the material - ; (5) allow students to work alone or with peers (as cited by Logan, B., 2001 (p. 3). The examples listed above contribute for the learning to occur in a more relaxed way. Authors like Dulay et al., 1982 and Krashen, 1981a declare that “the relaxed atmosphere, or low-anxiety environment, is considered conducive to content learning and language acquisition” (as stated by Peregoy and Boyle, 2013, p.104). After the “input”, students need time to practice/process the new ideas and information so they will not lose or confuse them.

Modifying the process, on the other hand, involves the use of varying activities, techniques, and teaching strategies to help learners make sense of meanings (Pham, H., 2012, p. 16). Effective activities are essentially sense-making processes, designed to help students progress from a current point of understanding to a more complex level of understanding (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 79). Tomlinson (2001) also believes that in order to differentiate the process, activities should be interesting to the students, help students to think at a high level and use key skill(s) to understand key idea(s) p.79.
J. Lantolf (2000) also stresses the importance of guiding/leading students instead of doing the tasks for them (p.18); as A. Ohta (2000) notes, Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD)

specifies that development cannot occur if too much assistance [scaffolding] is provided or if a task is too easy. Development is impeded both by helping the learner with what she or he is already able to do, and by not withdrawing assistance such that the learner develops the ability to work independently (ibid, p.52).

Vygotsky defines ZPD as the difference between what a person can achieve when acting alone and what the same person can accomplish when acting with support from someone else (ibid, p.17). In differentiating the process, teachers should also try to consider students’ ZPD discussed by the above authors so that the scaffolding provided is neither less nor more than the necessary.

Langa & Yost (2007) also list some possible steps for differentiating process. These include the use of independent learning, flexible groups, flexibility in task complexity and peer teaching (as cited by Logan, B., 2001 (p. 3). Castle, S., Deniz, C. B., & Tortora, M. (2005) define flexible grouping as “a classroom organizational strategy that is designed to address a broad range of student needs within a single classroom” p. 140. That is, flexible grouping is a strategy that allows students to be grouped according to their needs. By modifying instructional process, classes become more meaningful and applicable to learners in an academically enriched context, as stated by Pham, H., 2012, (p. 16).
Another strategy, when modifying the instructional process, is to allow students sufficient wait time so they can process the new information before giving their answer. As stated by M. Rowe (1988) “Increased wait time provides students with an opportunity to think … and help students organize their thoughts and convictions related to any major topic” (p. 95).

Finally, the last of the three methods of differentiating instruction suggested by Carol Tomlinson is modifying the product. Here, learners can finally demonstrate their knowledge or understanding of a topic. Teachers can analyze what learners understand and how well they can apply their knowledge in practical situations. Anderson (2007) suggested that differentiated products challenge students at all levels to make decisions, be responsible for their own learning, as well as affording them opportunities to demonstrate what they know through products that are representative of their unique learning preferences, interests, and strengths (p. 51).

C. Desrochers (2005) affirms that “defined as information on the results of one’s efforts, feedback that is clear, specific and timely motivates students to improve. Conversely, the absence of prompt and useful feedback reduces interest in learning” (Background section, para.1). Therefore, it is important for teachers to promptly provide feedback so that learners know exactly where they are and what needs to be improved. Writing a story or a poem, debating or investigating an issue, creating a song and comparing and contrasting ideas and opinions are some of the possible strategies of differentiating the end product that are suggested by Pham, H., (2012, p. 16). These steps of differentiating instruction provide, as the name implies, different options to bring
Differentiated instruction: Strategies for ELLs listening comprehension development

information to all students as well as allowing them to express/practice the content learned in different ways.

In order to achieve proficiency and to become fluent in the English language in any other language, students have to acquire fluency in the four macro skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. However, since there are greater amount of materials on the other skills than on listening, and also because in Cape Verde students face enormous difficulties with listening skills, my focus now turns to listening comprehension skills. How can we apply knowledge on differentiated instruction onto the listening class? What is the role of listening in language learning/acquisition?

**Listening comprehension: overview**

It seems that the skill of listening has not received the appropriate attention it deserves. Research has shown that for successful second/foreign language acquisition and/or learning, it is crucial to consider listening as an active skill that needs special attention as well as the other domains of the language. For instance, Vandergrift (1999) maintains that “Listening skill is anything but a passive activity” (p.168) and it surely is not. Gilman and Moody (1984) state that “it seems so logical, simple, and so obvious that one needs to be able to hear sounds before producing them; that in order to speak a language one must have a “feel” for the language and be able to understand a message” (p. 331). Again, listening comes first; therefore it is essential to develop this skill in order to be able to make use of the target language. Research has also shown that adults spend 40-50% of their communication time listening, 25-30% speaking, 22-16% reading and only about 9% of their time writing (Rivers – as cited in Gilman and Moody 1984, p.331). However, one can find more research and methodology on reading, writing and
speaking than on listening. What occurs is that, as K. Carrier (2003) maintains, “it is frequently assumed that because students have many opportunities to hear spoken English throughout the school day, this exposure will improve their ability to comprehend oral English” (p. 384).

In the meanwhile, I stop to think of the ELLs who do not get to have enough exposure to the English language, either because they do not practice it with their relatives at home or because English is not otherwise part of the language they speak in their daily life. These students need to first of all, understand the importance of developing their listening comprehension skills as well as to be taught the strategies that facilitate their comprehension.

Morley (2001) takes us back into the history of the listening skills in order to show the different status it has faced – from being a neglected skill to one of increased importance. Morley (2001) tells us that it was in the 1970s that listening was recognized to be an equally important skill as well as reading, writing and speaking by Rivers (1966) and others. Morley also affirmed that in the 1990s, attention to listening in language instruction increased dramatically and aural comprehension became an important area of study in second and foreign language acquisition (p. 69). Meanwhile, as supported by Vandergrift (2007), even though research in the area of listening processes and strategies is increasing, it still remains the least understood and least researched of the four skills (p. 191). Therefore, conducting my own research seeks to better understand more about this skill, its importance and impact in the language learning and teaching processes as well as the best strategies to help learners develop their comprehension on listening.
Listening comprehension: An active skill

Even though listening comprehension skill has now considered of utmost importance, it seems that researchers have not reached a general agreement about its definition. Chastain (1971) defines listening as the ability to understand native speech at normal speed in unstructured situations (p. 163); the author stresses that students’ receptive skills need to be closer to native level so that effective communication is possible. Wipf (1984) provides a very thorough definition in which he states that listening is a complex problem solving skill that entails receiving, decoding and reacting to sounds being received from a speaker, and finally make retention of what was gathered and being able to contextualize it (p. 345). O’Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989) offer another excellent and more comprehensive definition that—listening comprehension is an active and conscious process in which the individuals construct meaning by using cues from contextual passages and relate what they hear to existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirement (p. 434). While there is not a unique definition of listening, researchers defend this notion that listening is not a passive skill as it requires cognitive effort from the listener such as interpreting sounds, their meanings and yet contextualizing them to get their specific meaning in each situation. That is, listening is much more than just decoding sounds. Therefore, as stated by Morley (2001), it is crucial that teachers instruct students to know that "achieving skill in listening requires as much work as does becoming skilled in reading, writing, and speaking in a second language" (p. 72).

As Faerch and Kasper note, “comprehension takes place when input and knowledge are matched against each other” (p. 264) as cited in O’Malley et al. (1989).
However, as stressed by these authors, there is rarely a perfect match between input and knowledge, and this is why special efforts from the teachers may be required (p. 422). O’Malley *et al.* (1989) support this idea by arguing that “second language listeners may have difficulty in understanding language spoken at typical conversation rates by native speakers if they are unfamiliar with the rules for segmentation, even though they may understand individual words when heard separately” (p. 420). Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) also tell us that while native speakers and highly proficient second language learners complete the complex process of speech comprehension smoothly, second language learners at lower levels of language proficiency (whether it be due to a lack of auditory experience with varying accents, limited vocabulary, imperfect control of the syntactic and semantic structure of the language, or other limitations with regard to the elements necessary for communicative competency) need to rely on listening strategies to assist them in comprehending the aural communication (pp. 980-981).

**Stages of listening comprehension**

Rivers (1983b) in her germinal work ‘*Speaking in many tongues*’, discusses the speech perception and identifies three stages of listening comprehension. The first stage is sometimes called sensing. The listener must construct rapid synthesis of impressions that result from his/her familiarity with the phonetic system, the morphophonemic rules, and the broad syntactic categories. Therefore, some “noise” elements are rejected because they did not fit in with the initial construction so; they can have no further effect on our interpretation. The second stage is the identification through segmentation and grouping. This process is an active and detailed identification of the sounds along with lexical and syntactic signal that is received sequentially within the phrase structure of utterance. The
third stage is the rehearsal and recoding of the material in the long term memory, by recoding it in a more retainable form so it does not fade. These three stages take place instantaneously (pp. 79-83) and it is certainly an active process involving cognitive processing. The existence of different stages requires the need for different steps and strategies by the listener so that the oral language input being received is appropriately understood.

**Listening comprehension strategies**

Most of the previous research on second/foreign language listening refer to three types of strategies to overcome difficulties with listening comprehension: cognitive (manipulation of information/material), metacognitive (e.g. planning, monitoring, evaluating) and socioaffective (interaction with others) strategies (O’Malley et al. 1989; Hancock & Brooks-Brown, 1994). Serri et al. (2012) clarify that even though there are other strategies with other names, they do not differ in nature; “they are just different in their names and in their classification that different researchers used them according to their survey's aims” (p. 843).

Teachers should "provide listeners with the background information needed to understand the message before asking students to listen to a segment of discourse" (Dunkel, 1986, p. 101). As suggested by Oxford (1993), pre-listening tasks such as discussing the topic, brainstorming, presenting vocabulary, sharing related articles, must be used to foment the appropriate background knowledge and help learners determine the goal of the listening activity (p. 210, as cited in Koichi, N. (2002). Moreover, Goh & Taib (2006) recommend “using a variety of methods which include reflection and discussion, teacher modelling, integrated sequences of activities that focus alternately on text and
process, as well as perception practice that facilitates recognition of segments of speech” for a comprehensive program in metacognitive instruction (pp. 230-31).

Metacognitive strategies involve knowing about learning and controlling learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning activity. O’Malley et al. (1989) reveal that “monitoring has been described as a key process that distinguishes good learners from poor learners” (p. 422).

Vandergrift, L. and Tafaghodtari, M. (2010) also tell us that “learners with a high degree of metacognitive knowledge and the facility to apply that knowledge are better at processing and storing new information, finding the best ways to practice, and reinforcing what they have learned” (p. 473). O’Malley et al. (1989) go further explaining that monitoring consists of maintaining the awareness of the task demands and information content; and that there are two metacognitive strategies that support monitoring: (1) selective attention, or focusing on specific information anticipated in the message, and (2) directed attention, or focusing more generally on the task demands and content (p. 423).

Previous research has also shown that more/skilled learners use more metacognitive strategies than less/skilled learners. According to a study presented in O’Malley et al. (1989) - in which all participants were from Spanish speaking countries in Central or South America - results revealed that effective listeners used three specific strategies: self-monitoring, elaboration and inferences while ineffective listeners were concerned with the meaning of individual words (p. 434). Elaboration is making use of the knowledge one already has or make connections of portions of the text that were not completely understood (O’Malley et al. 1989, p. 421).
Top-down and bottom-up strategies are also common strategies for listening comprehension. Peterson (2001) defines top-down processing as a process "driven by listeners' expectations and understandings of the context, the topic, the nature of text, and the nature of the world" (p. 88) and bottom-up processing as a process "triggered by the sounds, words, and phrases which the listener hears as he or she attempts to decode speech and assign meaning"(p. 88). Studies have also indicated that effective listeners make frequent use of top-down processing, occasionally applying bottom-up strategies while ineffective listeners often rely solely on bottom-up strategies. Hancock, C. & Brooks-Brown, S. (1994) explain that top-down strategies incorporate knowledge of the world in general and topic familiarity in particular, while bottom-up strategies typically focus on word recognition.

Focusing and processing at the word level somewhat hinders many second language (L2) learners to take advantage of the more general (top-down) strategies and affects their comprehension of the text in a negative way (p. 120). Goh & Taib (2006) mentioned that poor listeners will be distracted by their preoccupation with difficult words or ideas (pp.231-32). Therefore, as pointed out by the authors, learners can be helped to see that not all strategies are appropriate for all tasks, and that the effectiveness of strategies is often influenced by various factors (ibid, p. 230).

Note taking is another strategy defended by some researchers to help improve students’ listening comprehension skills (Arslan, M. 2006; Carrell, P., Dunkle, P., & Mollaun, P., 2000; Trafton and Tricket, 2001). Carrell, P., Dunkle, P., & Mollaun, P. (2000) reveal that in 24 studies reviewed by Harley (1983), listeners who took notes and reviewed them performed higher than those who did not (p.4). Furthermore, a more
recent study was conducted by Carrell, *et al.* (2000) and they found positive effects for notetaking on shorter lectures (but not in the longer lectures) p.53.

M. Arslan (2006) supports Carrell, *et al.* (2000) in an experimental research in which he describes note taking in a science class of 5th graders in Kayseri (Central Anatolia, Turkey). Arslan (2006) found gained results in favor of note taking as an effective learning strategy. He reveals that researchers found notetaking to be effective on recalling and assisting students’ learning (Introduction section, para. 3). The author also explains that according to Kiewra (1985), instead of writing down everything that a teacher says, it is suggested that students summarize or do some self-questioning. These types of note taking, according to Trafton and Tricket (2001), “involve significant levels of engagement and are thus more effective” (as cited by Arslan, 2006, Introduction section, para. 4). To improve the accuracy and efficiency of students’ notetaking, and increase students’ retention of course content, Heward (1997) suggests providing students with guided notes that he defines as “teacher prepared handouts that guide a student … with standard cues and specific spaces in which to write key facts, concepts, and relationships” p.44.

Sometimes it is useful for teachers to, as defended by Chamot (1990, p. 499), directly inform students about the strategies they are using so they can practice, generalize and use it in other occasions -outside that particular session- (as cited by Carrier, 2003, p. 387). That is, let students know what type of strategies they are using and why they are using them so they can understand the benefits or non-benefits of the different strategies they use.
Potential factors affecting listening comprehension

There are many problems students may feel when first listening to a new language, especially those students for whom the stress and intonation in the new language is different from their own language(s). Underwood (1989) points out some potential problems that could make listening comprehension difficult. First of all, the speed at which speakers speak cannot be controlled by the listener. As stated by Underwood (1989) “many language learners believe that the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension, as opposed to reading comprehension, is that listener cannot control how quickly a speaker speaks” (p.16).

Second, “it is extremely hard for the teacher to judge whether or not the students have understood any particular section of what they have heard” (Underwood, 1989 – p.17). It is not always possible to listen to words/passages more than once, or go back over parts that are necessary for making the comprehension possible.

A third aspect pointed by Underwood (1989) has to do with the limited vocabulary knowledge of the listener. “Choice of vocabulary is in the hands of the speaker, not the listener.” If the listener does not understand a word used by the speaker, the tendency is to stop and try to figure out the meaning of that word which immediately leads the listener to miss the next part of the speech. I have often times caught myself off track while listening trying to decipher the meaning of unknown words, mostly with homonyms. These three problems so far described are emphasized by Vandergrift (1999) to be the “the most important reason for teaching listening comprehension strategies, and provide the rationale for the continued inclusion of listening activities throughout a language program, even at advanced levels” (p. 169).
Underwood (1989) points out a fourth problem which has to do with the listener’s failure to recognize signals that the speaker is using to move from one point to another. In formal situations, discourse markers like ‘secondly …’ or ‘finally…’ or ‘then…’ generally show that there will be a moving to a next/new point. In informal situations however, signals like repeating a point, giving an example or using of different intonations that may indicate the introduction of a new idea can be very ambiguous to a foreign language and can easily be missed. As supported by Scarcella and Oxford (1992) “ordinary speech contains many ungrammatical, reduced, or incomplete forms; it also has hesitations, false starts, repetitions, fillers [e.g., ‘uh,’ ‘hmm,’ ‘yeh’ ,] and pauses, all of which make up 30-50 % of any informal conversation” (p.146, as cited in Koichi, N. (2002).

Another problem pointed out is that it can be difficult for the listeners to interpret words they hear especially if the speaker and the listener do not share common meanings and assumptions. For example, some expressions and tone of voice can be misinterpreted by listeners from other cultures. Listening comprehension requires efforts from the listeners to concentrate on the language and figure out the meaning of what is being said, especially with idioms, colloquialisms and slangs, for example.

Underwood (1989) also pointed out the established learning habits in the classroom aimed to have students understanding everything in the English lesson as a potential problem. Teachers traditionally want students to understand every word they hear while listening. They ensure that students meet this goal by repeating and pronouncing words carefully, by speaking slowly and pausing frequently. The author explains that because of this, students tend to feel worried if they fail to
recognize/understand a word or phrase when they are listening and may be further discouraged.

Also, in Yao’s (1995) study, she found that the speaker’s speed, accent, vocabulary, as well as the listener’s background knowledge and listener’s interest affected listening comprehension. Of these factors, the speaker’s speed and accent were the most important factors that influenced students’ listening comprehension. The students found that clear pronunciation and speech were important to their comprehension (as cited by Serri et al, 2012, p.845). For example, in one of the episodes of ‘Do you speak American?’ by Cran, W. & Buchanan, C., (2005), the journalist Robert MacNeil talked to Pam Head (a gas station owner from Boston, MA) who shared her experience when talking to a girl from Texas. Pam Head reveals her astonishment when the girl from Texas did not understand her pronunciation of the word car [kə], as in Texas they pronounce car as [kær]. Consequently, they had to interrupt the course of the conversation until they were able to overcome that barrier (pronunciation) in listening comprehension and move forward. The previous example shows how even among people from the same nationality there may be barriers in conversation if what the listener is listening to is not comprehended by him/her. This reinforces the importance of developing listening comprehension skills so that communication can take place. Exposing students to different accents of the target language for example, will help them to not get familiar with only one accent of that same language.

Assessing listening comprehension skills

Nowadays we have various sources offering authentic audio and video materials that may be used for instructional and assessment purposes. However, it is crucial that
teachers know how to deal with all the existing materials. Dunkel et al. (1993) affirm that assessment of L2 listening comprehension is difficult because of the non-existence of a uniform agreement on the components of listening comprehension and factors affecting comprehension as well as for the non-existence of a general consensus on the best techniques for assessment (p. 180).

Hancock, C. & Brooks-Brown, S. (1994) list the academic purposes of listening assessment: “recognizing the message, checking comprehension, delivering information, diagnosing listening problems, determining proficiency level, ascertaining general listening capability, and identifying listening strategies” (p. 129). Sometimes it is easy to find academic listening purposes that replicate real life purposes -recognizing the message delivering information, checking comprehension-, but that is not always the case; sometimes it becomes quite challenging to find and identify academic listening purposes that reflect real-life tasks (e.g. diagnosing listening problems). Therefore, as maintained by Wiggins (1990), the key to authentic assessment is to design tasks to stimulate real world tests of ability. It becomes the task of the test designer to think of such academic assessment purposes and design valid and reliable tests that adjust to Wiggins’s criteria of authenticity: requires students to be effective performers with acquired knowledge, presents students with a full array of instructional tasks so that “students can craft polished, thorough and justifiable answers, performances, or products” (Wiggins, 1990, what is authentic assessment section, para.3). It is important to explore authentic materials (such as videos, films, radio broadcasts, television programs, and so forth) in the classrooms in order to have students working on real life listening context simulations. H. D. Brown (2001) highlights the necessity to help students be
aware of the importance of listening comprehension skills, explaining that "authentic language and real-world tasks enable students to see the relevance of classroom activity to their long term communicative goals" (p. 258).

It is imperative to also emphasize that assessment should be continuous (formative) so teachers and students can keep track of the learning process. Heritage (2007) describes formative assessment as a “systematic process to continuously gather evidence about learning. The data are used to identify a student’s current level of learning and to adapt lessons to help the student reach the desired learning goal” p.141. Wiggins (2004) maintains that formative assessment emphasizes the importance of focusing on understanding and improving student learning instead of merely measuring student learning (as cited by Dahlman, Hoffman and Brauhn, n.d.). In addition, Heritage (2007) further explains that in formative assessment, students are active participants with their teachers, sharing learning goals and understanding how their learning is progressing, what next steps they need to take, and how to take them (p. 141).

Good teaching is inseparable from good assessing and teachers need to contextualize the tasks given to students and these must be realistic and rich in contextual detail, supporting multiple approaches, styles and solutions (Wiggins, G, 1992, pp. 27-33). He goes further adding that the designers of the tasks must “achieve an aesthetic effect that causes pride or dismay in the results” (p. 28). That is, the designers of the tasks must think of tasks that are meaningful so they can positively impact students, provoke thought and keep students interested in them. Therefore, the necessity to provide differentiated instruction for listening comprehension is important.
Differentiated instruction for listening comprehension

There are far more studies on differentiating instruction in English reading and writing than there are studies on English listening. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2014) reports that in 2011–12, the overall percentage of ELL students enrolled in US public schools for example, were 9.1 percent or an estimated 4.4 million students.

Many teachers are already differentiating instruction by allowing students to choose their own activities to work on and topics to be discussed in class as well as other strategies. Therefore my aim with this research project has been to both provide new information for teachers who lack it but also highlight and provide encouragement for teachers who already know and apply this knowledge into their classrooms.

According to Tomlinson (2001), “the teacher thinks and plans in terms of ‘multiple avenues to learning’ for varied needs, rather than in terms of ‘normal’ and ‘different’ when engaging in activities. The goal for each student is maximum growth from his current ‘learning position’” (Tomlinson, 2001). Tomlinson also clarifies that if students can’t learn everything, teachers need to “make sure they learn the big ideas, key concepts and governing principles of the subject at hand” (p.13). Students do not have to understand every single word they hear; some are key words, others sounds can be ignored while others help understanding the message and we need to be conscious about them (TedTalk, 2011).

In doing differentiated instruction, the teacher needs to first know his /her students. In order to help students move from their current learning position, as defended by Tomlinson (2001), the teacher would need to pre-assess the students by having them
fill out questionnaires, for example. That will allow teachers to have thorough data concerning students’ readiness, interest and learning profile when making lesson plans. Peregoy and Boyle (2013) talk about teachers being effective participant-observers in their own classroom. The authors believe this will help teachers get to know and interpret some aspects of the classroom, such as the activities students feel comfortable with, the way they behave and so forth which will be valuable when planning the lessons (p.13). Only when teachers know their students, they will be able to design tasks that will help them move forward.

In a differentiated classroom, students should be given clear instructions on what they should do, the responsibilities they have to take, and the ways they should be doing the tasks. This, as suggested by Hess (1999), can be done by using “whole-group instruction for introducing ideas, planning or sharing results” (as cited in Protheroe, 2007, p. 37). Hess (1999) also reports on the activities a differentiated classroom implements. According to this author, teachers in a differentiated classroom:

- Keep the focus on concepts, emphasizing the understanding and sense making, not retention and regurgitation of fragmented facts; use ongoing assessments of readiness and interests, and pre-assess to find students needing more support and those who can leap forward. They don’t assume all students need a certain task (as cited in Protheroe, 2007, p. 37).

Furthermore, differentiation allows for flexible grouping, in which teachers let students work alone sometimes and also in groups based on readiness, interests, or learning styles (ibid. p. 37).
This knowledge can be applied when differentiating for listening comprehension; teachers need to provide differentiated instruction so that no student is left behind. What is taught, the way students work on the content as well as the way students present/reveal their learning must be differentiated. We should follow Goh & Taib’s (2006) recommendation regarding the use of a variety of methods to facilitate comprehension; this will truly provide students with different avenues to learning listening comprehension skills. After getting to know the students, teachers will be able to group them into flexible grouping with basic, intermediate or advanced levels of English proficiency and academic knowledge.

The teachers will design activities for before–listening, while listening and after-listening sessions. In the ‘before–listening session’ the teacher provides students with a variety of resources from which they can choose materials from; the teacher should also help building the background knowledge of the topic. The purpose, content and language objectives should be made clear to the students because if students do not know what to do, they will find something else to do, and misbehavior or inattention arises (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2013, p. 195). I believe this would greatly help students as they can better focus on specific vocabulary words and on listening for specific purposes. Another advantage of doing so is that students will feel less anxious and more relaxed in class as they know what they are expected to do. After students have chosen the materials and/or known the objectives of the lesson, the teacher builds up the context and makes decisions about grouping students as well as of which information should be provided to the students before the actual listening activity starts.
In the ‘while-listening session’ the teacher analyses how many times the material should be repeated, lets students know what they are expected to do while listening and provides hints and support whenever necessary. In the ‘after-listening session’ some clarifications may be needed (the teacher may talk about it or have the class discuss about it); students may have to answer to questions either orally or written. Here, students can be placed in groups and work on post-listening activities that help them consolidate the content learning. The teacher may also need to sometimes, evaluate students’ learning for different reasons (e.g. comprehension’ check, detect listening problems, and identify strategies (Hancock, C. & Brooks-Brown, S., 1994). In the meanwhile, it is important to have in mind Wiggin’s (1992) suggestion about the need to design tasks that are thought provoking in order to call students’ interest and keep them engaged.

Hedge (2001, p. 252) held that activities for this stage [post-listening] could be integrated with other skills through developing the topic into reading, speaking or writing activities (as cited by S. Kan 2011). Echevarria, Vogt, & Short (2013) also tell us that “Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are complex cognitive language processes that are interrelated and integrated. As we go about our daily lives, we move through the processes in a natural way, reading what we write, talking about what we’ve read, and listening to others talk about what they’ve read, written, and seen…Although the relationships among the processes are complex, practice in any one promotes development in the others” (pp. 176-177).

For example, the whole class may be given the same listening text to watch/ listen to but students will be given different worksheets to work on with different hints as well as more or less clues according to their readiness. Teachers should be able to have
students working in activities that will challenge them (not too easy, not too difficult) just like Lantolf (2000) defends. This will keep them engaged on the activities so that some students will not finish the task too early while others are still working on their task, avoiding class disturbance. For instance, basic learners may be asked to listen to the text and fill in the blanks, while intermediate learners may be asked to take notes in order to respond to some questions with full sentences and some key expressions. More advanced learners may also be asked to take notes in order to respond to some questions with full sentences and some key expressions, adding some ideas from the text as well. Appendix A, activity 2 is an example of students working on different tasks related to the same topic, based on their level of readiness (language proficiency and background knowledge).

Teachers should allow students to work in flexible groups so they get the opportunity to work by themselves, work in small groups and sometimes work in larger groups as well as with the class as a whole as suggested by Langa & Yost (2007). In addition, having students working in cooperative groups will allow them to work together towards a common goal (achieve academic and social learning goals), as the “individuals are accountable for their own learning and that of the group” (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013, p.105).

**Rationale for lesson plans**

I designed my lessons for students in 8th, 9th and 10th grades in high schools in Cape Verde because these were the levels I did my teacher training in, so I have a clearer idea of students in these grades. Therefore, I had to think of the levels of students’ readiness, the size and arrangement of the classes and on the average number of students
in classes. Their average age was also something I thought of while planning my lessons so I could think of topics that would interest them and keep them engaged in class in the attempt of diminishing the problem of having students finishing their assignments earlier than others, avoiding class disturbance.

I decided to use the Massachusetts frameworks for Language & Arts Standards as I believe they are very detailed and help teachers meeting the language and content objectives.

Differentiated instruction seems to be an effective teaching approach that helps teachers incorporate the four language domains in a more natural and effective way even though it may be quite overwhelming for teachers to make the lesson plans on their own. In the appendices, there are examples of lesson plans for differentiated instruction for listening comprehension that I developed based on what I have learned throughout the literature review. For example, I tried to have students make inferences/predictions as much as possible as I believe it raises their interest on the topic/task which keeps them more engaged in the tasks. By asking students to first listen to have a general idea and only then pay attention to some key words in order to respond to the questions, I tried to follow Rivers (1983b) in her discussion of the stages of listening comprehension developed on page 19 of my literature review.

Another example is asking students to listen to the audio, then simulate the next exercise with the teacher and the class as a whole first, after that they work on it with their peers and only then they are asked to actually write about it; just as described by Gilman and Moody (1984) on page 16 of my literature review, where the authors stress that before being able to produce the language, students need to first hear it and be able to
understand it beforehand. I have students working with their peers in pairs, small or whole class activities so they can challenge and support each other. Based on Carol Tomlinson’s studies, I took students’ readiness, interests and preferences into consideration as they are the key principles when differentiating the content, process and product.
Suggestions

The primary goal of my thesis was to investigate the essence of differentiated instruction and the different ways teachers can apply it into their classroom. The aim was to first, get to know more about differentiated instruction and then examine the advantages as well as the difficulties of the implementation of this method for both students and teachers. The lack of practical research investigating listening comprehension strategies for English language learners was the motivation that guided me to combine differentiated instruction and listening comprehension together. In addition, I developed sample of lesson plans that combine them together.

I suggest that teachers, in a team with their coworkers (I suggest teamwork as I believe more inputs will be gained), apply the suggestions made by researchers cited in this thesis and examine whether the metacognitive strategies (top-down strategies) actually reveal to be more effective for their English language learners. More solutions on how to help students overcome the barriers to listening comprehension are also needed. This project did not investigate the stages of listening, this is an area in which more research is needed.

Any follow up to the current research should aim to provide teachers with more practical examples of lesson plans and results of studies that applied differentiated instruction in listening and improve the activities included in the lesson plans developed here, especially in the assessment part.

A last word is that it is my belief that the more we expand our knowledge on how to best differentiate instruction and how to best assist our students in developing their
Differentiated instruction: Strategies for ELLs listening comprehension development

listening comprehension skills, the better prepared we will be to provide adequate instruction and help them develop and strengthen their skills.
Conclusions

In this thesis, I have examined some of the existing literature about differentiated instruction and listening comprehension and tried to combine them together so that students can develop their listening comprehension skills while having their readiness, preferences and styles taken into consideration. It is my belief that if teachers understand the process involved in listening comprehension and the different avenues they can provide students to develop their comprehension skills, both teachers and students will end up tremendously gaining from it.

To start with, teachers need to be conscious of the importance of listening comprehension in language learning/acquisition process. They need to know the stages of listening comprehension, the potential factors that affect listening comprehension, and the studies that have proven the effectiveness of strategies to be used as well as how to better assess students in order to help them develop their skills.

Vandergrift, L. & Tafaghodtari, M. (2010) reveal that “research has demonstrated that L2 learners can be taught to use a number of cues to facilitate their comprehension of oral texts” (p. 472). Throughout my paper I tried to find answers for the questions I came up with at the beginning, and now I am able to say that both top-down and bottom-up strategies should be used and sometimes explicitly taught in class to develop students’ awareness about them. An important aspect also noted by Vandergrift, L. & Tafaghodtari, M. (2010) is that “systematically leading language learners through the process of listening as part of regular listening activities encourages these learners to develop greater awareness of the metacognitive processes involved in listening” (p. 474). Again, teachers need to give more attention to listening comprehension and a significant amount of time
must be devoted to its development in order to improve students’ overall performance and achievement.

Metacognitive strategies which involve thoughts about thoughts, knowledge about knowledge or reflections about actions (E. Papaleontiou-Louca, 2003, p. 9) are defended to be of extreme importance as students need to be aware of the tasks’ demands and information content (O’Malley et al., 1989).

Teachers should help students have a clear understanding of what their teachers expect them to do (Dunkel, 1986; Oxford, 1993) as this lowers their anxiety level (Dulay et al., 1982, Krashen, 1981a) which contributes to a more relaxed environment for the teaching-learning process to occur. Therefore, it is important to let students know what the content and language objectives are as well as allow them to choose topics or subtopics that they would like to listen to and discuss; group work where they listen to and interact with their classmates to feel more comfortable and confident with the English language as well as group work where they edit the reports of their peers after being exposed to authentic materials.

We can definitely apply knowledge of differentiated instruction for listening comprehension as I developed into more details under the differentiated instruction for listening comprehension section. The different strategies referred to differentiate instructions may be more or less challenging to be implemented by EFL teachers in Cape Verde. I say this because while planning my lessons and thinking of the classroom settings (+/- 28 students in class; 50 minutes long) in Cape Verdeans high schools, I had a difficult time differentiating according to students’ learning profiles because I believe I
would have hard time with classroom management. Moreover, having students working on different tasks may lead to noise and difficulty managing time for students to share their knowledge/findings with the whole class helping their peer deepen their knowledge of a topic, for example.
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Appendix A

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<tr>
<th>Name: Stefanie Moreno</th>
<th>School: High School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Subject Area: Language Arts</td>
<td>Grade Level: 8th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency level of ESL: basic to intermediate</td>
<td>Size of Class: 28 students</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Students’ Background Information:
Students will now be introduced to the past tense of the verbs.

Lesson Title:
The Magic Bean

Brief Overview of Lesson:
This lesson will introduce students to the past tense of some verbs. The teacher will highlight the fact that the Verb To Be is an irregular verb but will not go into details about the past tense form of any verbs. Students explore their listening skills through the activities developed by the teacher. They will be divided into different groups according to their readiness levels (listening abilities and vocabulary knowledge) so they can better perform the tasks.

Note: Next class students will go back to the text again and explore the past tense of the verbs present in the text.

Lesson title:
“The Magic Bean”

Differentiate what? | The process & product
Differentiate how? | Through students’ readiness.

Content Area Standards:
Mass Frameworks, Language & Arts Standards:
Speaking and Listening Standards 6-12
Comprehension and collaboration 8th grade

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

Content Objectives:
Past tenses of regular verbs and irregular verbs. Students will be able to know how to listen for key words.

- The teacher will determine if the content objectives were met when students respond to the questions by correctly listening for specific purposes.

**Language Objectives:**

Students will know how to make predictions using visual aids. Students will also have practiced the use of regular past tense form + some irregular verbs.

**Key Vocabulary:**

Beans / beanstalk
Expression “once upon a time”
Cow
Angry
Giant
Cupboard
Golden harp

**Supplementary Materials:**

Printings of “The Magic Beans” text

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Grouping Options:**

Students will be placed in different groups (of 5 students) according to their readiness.

**Comprehensible Input:**

Use of a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear (e.g.: visuals, gestures, examples, body language)
Students are allowed use learner dictionaries and ask for aides from their peers.

**Strategies:**

The teacher uses the activity to smoothly introduce students to the past tense form of regular and irregular verbs.
Prediction of the story
One-on-one teaching (e.g.: for instruction’s clarification)

**Lesson Delivery Procedures:**
**Approach/Lead-in:**

The teacher will first ask students to predict the story of The Magic Beans by ordering the pictures the way they believe the story goes. (Activity 1)

**During Instruction:**

1) The teacher will play the audio 1st time pausing it twice so students can reflect on the previous activity.
2) Then the teacher asks students to order the story again, now that they have listened to the story.
3) Students will work in pairs and look up the meaning of words in the dictionary and also learn how to pronounce it.
   - Teacher will be assisting them.
4) Students will now listen to the audio for the 2 time and work on activity 2 in groups of 5, according to their readiness.
   - see appendix next page
   - Some groups will share their findings/answers with the class.

**closure:**

The teacher now asks students to write about what they would like to find in the giant’s castle.

- Students with basic levels will be expected to write while students with intermediate levels will be expected to write a small paragraph about it.
Activity 2: Circle the wrong word and write the correct one. (basic level students)

a. Jack and his mother were very rich.
                                
b. All they had was a dog.
                                
c. When Jack’s mother sees the beans she was very angry.
                                
d. Jack’s mother threw the beans out of the door.
                                
e. He went outside and started to climb the tree.
                                
f. The giant’s table, there was a hen and a guitar.
                                
g. Jack and his mother lived sadly ever after.
                                
Activity 2: Answer the following questions: (intermediate level)

1. How did Jack find the magic beans?

2. What happened to the giant?

3. What was the ending of the story?
Appendix B

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name: Stefanie Moreno</th>
<th>School: High School</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject Area: Language Arts</td>
<td>Grade Level: 9th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency level of (EFL) students: Low-Intermediate to Intermediate</td>
<td>Size of Class: 28 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ Background Information:
Students already studied the present tense of the verbs; they have practiced writing small paragraphs and how to structure it.

EFL background Information:
The audio is an authentic material recorded by the teacher in order to help students better develop their communicative skills as well as to give students opportunity to develop the skills they will need to comprehend what they are likely to find in real situations.

Lesson Title:
Daily Life Routine

Brief Overview of Lesson:
This lesson will provide students with opportunities to listen for main and specific purposes. Students will be able to list different things people do in their daily activities. Students will get to know more about their peers and teacher as they share their daily life activities.

Differentiate what?
The process & product
Differentiate how?
Grouping and homework options.

Content Area Standards:
Mass Frameworks, Language & Arts Standards:
Speaking and Listening Standards 6-12

Comprehension and Collaboration 9-10
1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning
Content Objectives:

1. Students will be able to use context to guess the meaning of new vocabulary words.
2. Students will know how to listen for key words and main idea.

Language Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to use content vocabulary learned throughout the lesson. Students will also have practiced the use of present tense form.

If there are words during the audio that remained unknown he teacher will play it again and ask the class if they know the meaning. If not, the teacher can provide more contextual examples or ask students to use the learner dictionary to look up for the meaning of determined words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Vocabulary:</th>
<th>Verbs:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>go/dance/eat/drink/sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td>wake up/brush/comb/cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td>toast/prepare/check/get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>catch/wait/help/ etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hang out</td>
<td><strong>Hint:</strong> Pay attention to regular vs non-regular verbs-ending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Other words (pointed out by students).

Supplementary Materials:

Selected audio
Speakers
Projector
slide presentation

Time: 50 minutes

Grouping Options:

Students will pair up and work on the activity and then discuss with the class as a whole.

Teacher preparation:

1. Create the dialogue to be played in class
2. Prepare the slide presentation to illustrate the dialogue.
Differentiated instruction: Strategies for ELLs listening comprehension development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensible Input:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear (e.g.: visuals, gestures, examples, body language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are allowed use learner dictionaries and ask for aides from their peers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-on-one teaching (e.g.: for instruction’s clarification)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prediction of the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of background knowledge on present verb tense.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Delivery Procedures:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach/Lead-in:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start the lesson by telling students what are the language and content objectives of the lesson: students will be listening to an authentic audio in which they will need to listen for main idea as well as key words. They will then work in pairs asking and answering to several questions about their daily life activities which will then be reported to the class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During Instruction:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Teacher starts the lesson with a warm–up activity: brainstorming about their daily activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Teacher tells students that they are going to listen to the audio “Ms. Sanches’ day”. In the meanwhile teacher projects a picture of Ms. Sanches and ask them to predict what the audio is about and/or what does Ms. Sanches’ Day look like (top-down processing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Teacher then plays the audio “Ms. Sanches Day” for students to listen only. <strong>Purpose:</strong> listen for general understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) The teacher asks students to read the questions before listening to the audio again (the questions are also part of the slides’ presentation). <strong>Purpose:</strong> listen for specific purposes = finding words to respond the questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) After that the teacher plays the dialogue again; this time projecting slides with visuals related to what is being said. <strong>Purpose:</strong> help more visual students understand the content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Teacher let students ask her questions about her daily routine and answers the questions while helping them elaborate on their questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) <strong>Practice time:</strong> Students work in pairs and prepare a mini-dialogue about their daily life activity. Hint: Students A are expected to ask questions to their partners (Student B). Students B are expected to respond to those questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) <strong>Time to switch:</strong> Students A now tell their daily routine to students B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9) To finish, students could report to the class what their partner’s daily routine looks like. Hint: remember to use the 3rd person of singular this time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content objectives:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher will determine if the content objectives were met when students use context to guess meaning of new vocabulary words as well as when they respond to the questions by correctly listening for main and specific purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language objectives:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher will be able to determine if the language objectives have been met by checking if students are correctly using content vocabulary throughout the lesson as well as by verifying if they make correct use of the verb tense to express their and their partners’ daily activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>closure:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After working on the dialogues, students will share their partners’ daily routine using the 3rd person of singular.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students should go home and write down their own daily routine in a word document, slide presentation or auto recording their voices which they will then submit it and share it with the class on the next class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note on Differentiation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. if there are students who prefer working alone, they can do so but will still have to prepare to report in 3rd person singular; they may think about someone else’s daily activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If students don’t feel comfortable sharing their homework with the whole class they may use slides, record their voice and play it etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix C**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Stefanie Moreno</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Area:</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level:</td>
<td>10th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency level of (EFL) students:</td>
<td>High-intermediate to advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of Class:</td>
<td>25 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson Title:**
The Gift of the Magi

**Brief Overview of Lesson:**
Students are introduced to a special Christmas story called The Gift of the Magi. I will give a brief explanation about a new concept: a pen name. The teacher will then pre-teach the key words as well as the unfamiliar words. Students are welcome to look them up in a dictionary. Students will listen to the audio two times with different purposes. While listening to the audio for the 1st time the teacher pauses it and asks students to predict the end of the story. Then, students will, in teams, identify and discuss about the different themes presented in the text. They will then summarize their ideas and discuss with the class as a whole. We will have a short discussion activity about Christmas and the concept of giving gifts.

**Differentiate what?**
Content and Process

**Differentiate how?**
Flexible grouping, variety of resource materials.

**Essential Question:**
What is the meaning of Christmas and of gift giving?

**Content Area Standards:**

**Mass Frameworks, Language & Arts Standards:**

**Reading Standards for Literature 6–12**

**Grades 9-10 students:**

**Key Ideas and Details**
1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Speaking and Listening Standards 6–12**

**Grade 9-10 students**

**Comprehension and Collaboration:**
1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues,
Differentiated instruction: Strategies for ELLs listening comprehension development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building background: Adaptation of Content</th>
<th>Close reading: pre-teaching of key vocabulary words. Pictures were included onto the text in order to facilitate comprehension.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Objectives: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify main themes of a text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Practice their top-down processing and bottom-up strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Objectives: Students will be able to compare and contrast different points of view using the new vocabulary words learned from the audio/text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Vocabulary: Compare, agree, disagree (verbs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Eve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imputation/ Valued/ Building /Prayer /Christmas/ mendicancy/ Immovable/ frightened /combs/ Magi/ Wise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (identified by the students)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Materials:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <a href="http://missionlanguagelab.blogspot.com/2013/12/a-special-christmas-story-gift-of-magi.html">http://missionlanguagelab.blogspot.com/2013/12/a-special-christmas-story-gift-of-magi.html</a> (14min)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Concept map for Theme exercise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pencils, highlighters, paper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: 50 minutes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouping Options:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students work in groups of 4 to identify and compare themes on the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students with lower level of readiness will pair-up with more advanced learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensible Input: Interaction of students and teacher to clarify meaning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concept map
One-on-one instruction.
Pair work
Use of a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear (e.g.: audio transcript, illustrations on the text, examples).

Lesson Delivery Procedures:

Approach/Lead-in:

The teacher will start the class by briefly explaining who the author of the text is and the meaning of his “pen name”.

During Instruction:

1) The teacher introduces the concept and characteristics of the story “The gift of Magi.”
2) The teacher plays the audio the 1st time and students listen for main idea.
   • The teacher pauses the audio half way and asks students to predict the end of it.
   • Students try to predict the end of the story.
3) The teacher pre-teaches the key words such as fob, meretricious, etc.
4) The teacher plays the audio a 2nd time and gives students the audio transcript telling them what step 7 is about.
5) Students identify any other unknown words and clarify their meaning working together with the class and the teacher.
6) The teacher presents a concept map and demonstrates how to use it to think about themes in a text/audio.
7) Students work in teams to identify and compare themes on the text
8) Students present evidences and explain why they support their themes
9) The class and the teacher discuss the themes presented, the way they were presented and the overall meaning of the audio/text for them.

Content objectives:

The teacher will determine if content objectives have been met when students do their concept map: work on and talk about their themes; when sharing and supporting their teams’ choices.

Language objectives:

The teacher will be able to determine if the language objectives have been met when working together with students to clarify meanings; when students’ groups compare themes, explain which evidences support their themes and when the class is discussing the overall meaning of the text.
**closure:**

| After working and comparing the themes, the class will discuss about the overall meaning of the text for them as well as their opinion about the meaning of gift giving on special dates. |  |