Benton Lewis

Spotlight:

I use Listen Current because it closely resembles the Smarter Balanced listening assessment, which were my lowest scores. Listen Current has rigorous questions aligned to the Depth of Knowledge questions, similar to the assessment which gives students good listening practice. The content also aligns to what I'm teaching. Right now, I'm using the stories on The Great Depression and Dust Bowl and I have heard many comments like "Hey, that's just like in *Of Mice and Men*!" So, my students are making the connections also.

I  first started looking for listening lessons/ sites because the results we got back from last year's 11th grade SBAC/ CAASPP test showed the lowest performance band across the board was in the listening skills questions. I like ListenCurrent because it closely resembles the types of sound files and interface that students encounter on the SBAC / CAASPP (The CAASPP is the California version of the SBAC that we are currently using). The logic, in my mind, is that practicing listening skills in the same format that they will appear on a test should help to bring those scores up. On the SBAC/ CAASPP, students are given a sound file with a play/ pause button and the ability to go back and listen to it multiple times. At the same time, there are multiple choice questions or constructed responses (short answer) that students are answering as they listen. ListenCurrent is actually more rigorous than the SBAC/ CAASPP at times, as level 1-4 questions from Webb's  DOK (Depth of Knowledge) are evident in some of the open ended questions that go with the lesson.

I also like ListenCurrent because there are curriculum related activities and clips that other sites do not have. I am currently using the files/ lessons about the Great Depression and Dust Bowl to connect to Of Mice and Men that my 9th graders are currently reading. I am also using files/ lessons about witches and McCarthyism to go with the 11th grade curriculum to prepare my students for The Crucible. All I have to do is search for topics that are related to whatever we are reading and I can have my students work on topic related listening skills, instead of just assigning random things for them to listen to. In that way, I can actually have them process content related information while they are working on listening skills; Two birds with one stone J

My students have been a little wary of this new type of activity, but I have heard many comments like "Hey, that's just like in Of Mice and Men!" or "This was way easier than writing the boring notes that you usually give us." (I love that one in particular..haha). It has been a struggle with the technology part of it, as logging in and following instructions for how to complete the activity is something they are not used to. Many also still do not have the stamina to listen to a full sound file, or realize that they can go back and listen as many times as they need to in order to get the answers or info. But, that's why we are working on it, right?

I have still only used it once in each of my classes, so I don't have a lot of info or evidence to provide. I will be using it again the week after Thanksgiving (9th will be listening to MLK files) so I can give you more then.

I hope all (any?) of this helps. If you would like anything else from me, let me know and I will be happy to help.

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