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This newsletter is brought to you by
Maris Hawkins and Stacey
Margarita Johnson



IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 1

PREVIEW OF
EPISODE 112

Page 2

RESPONSE TO EPISODE 111
FROM DAWN MICHAEL

UPDATES
FROM CONTRIBUTORS

Page 3

REACTIONS TO PAST
EPISODES

MIDWEEK NEWS

WHILE YOU'RE WAITING FOR THE NEXT
WTL PODCAST EPISODE TO COME OUT...



Preview of the Next Episode

EPISODE 112: TEACHING LISTENING, PART II
WITH GIANFRANCO CONTI

Did you miss part I of Stacey's interview with Dr. Gianfranco Conti? Our social media accounts are on fire--it feels like everyone heard episode 111 and wants to talk about it online. And no wonder! Right out of the gate Gianfranco breaks down in detail what the research tells us about teaching listening. Check out the response to episode 111 from Dawn Michael on page 2 below for an excellent recap of episode 111.

This Friday, we're featuring the second half of that interview in which Gianfranco shares with us about student anxiety around listening, how working memory affects listening, and how he conceptualizes the steps to successful listening lessons. As you can see, it's going to be another packed episode! Can't wait to hear your reaction on our website or social media!

Language shouldn't be an intellectual endeavor just for the few, but it should be for anyone and everyone. If we respect children by being educationally fair, something which in listening we rarely do, we could guarantee that students will be happier with languages.



RESPONSE TO EPISODE 111: TEACHING LISTENING WITH GIANFRANCO CONTI

This response is from Dawn N. Michael whom you can find on Twitter @madamednmichael



Listening to Part 1 of this interview, the first thing that excited me was Gianfranco's description of the premise of his new book with Steve Smith, *Breaking the Sound Barrier: Teaching Language Learners how to Listen*. He clarified that it's a book about the process of listening, and continued to explain the steps our brain goes through as we process language we hear: "bottom-up processing" from syllable to word to meaning to grammatical knowledge. Only when we fail to comprehend through this process to we resort to "top-down processing", coping by using background knowledge and guessing at the main idea because we can't understand every word. As a language educator trained in the communicative method during the 90s, I can say that the only other time I've been taught about phonemic, syllabic and morphemic awareness was in linguistics courses for the TESOL endorsement. Everything I've been taught to do for teaching listening in the classroom involves asking students to listen for the main idea, telling them to not worry if they don't understand everything because they shouldn't expect to, and assuming that with enough exposure to the language in whatever form, they will learn to listen. As Gianfranco points out later in the podcast, this approach favors those students who are best able to cope, and leaves behind those who become frustrated, anxious, and disengaged (often our most vulnerable students), and most importantly, does not actually teach them how to listen for understanding! Over the years, I've been stumped about trying to help students who were struggling with listening comprehension, primarily because my training had never provided me with another approach beyond "Well, we will just do more listening activities!" Another practice he blew up was "don't listen for details, listen for key words" when in fact function words (connecting words such as articles, conjunctions, prepositions) are crucial in determining meaning. I will definitely be reworking my listening practice and assessment. I'm excited to hear the second part of the interview, and to read the book, because just this 20 minutes has already shifted my views on listening instruction!

Updates from Contributors



Congratulations to Heidi Trude (episode 103) for earning the EF Excellence in Teaching Award for Language Teaching! She will travel to New York City to attend the EF Global Summit in August.



Kaishan Kong (episode 6) recently published an article in the *Modern Language Journal* titled "Embracing an Integrative Approach Toward Emotion in Language Teaching and Learning." This article was published in the perspectives column.



REACTIONS TO PAST EPISODES:

Look Back

 **Anna Ogunnaike**
@Anna_Ogunnaike Follow

Brava Maestra Michelle Nicola for documenting and sharing stories that highlight shared histories, multicultural diversity, and social justice! [#weteachlang](#) [#SocialJustice](#)

 **Steve Smith**
@spsmith45

Listen to [@gianfrancocont9](#) talking about listening and our new book. weteachlang.com/2019/08/09/111... [#mfltwitterati](#) I'll be doing a webinar on the same topic for [#CCTLangs](#) next term. Details soon.

 **Classroom Resources**
@aatsp_resources Following

An interesting podcast episode about how engaging with literature and other types of texts promote critical thinking and deeper learning...
buff.ly/2KHuki2

 **Karen Graf**
@grafespanol

If ever there were an episode that most beautifully and succinctly described my approach to language teaching and learning, this it it!

We Teach Languages @weteachlang · Jul 26
We Teach Languages Episode 42 (rerun): Choosing Critical Cultural Content over Grammar with Daniel Woolsey weteachlang.com/2019/07/26/42-...

 **MmeCref**
@MmeCref Following

On today's summer walk podcast, [@weteachlang](#) Ep098 discusses OPI and [#proficiency](#). Loved [@TeachArriba](#)'s reminder of language=tree analogy.
weteachlang.com/2019/04/05/ep-... [@EHToubs](#) [#langchat](#)

 **Anna Ogunnaike** Thank you, Stacy for featuring the work of Dr. Conti and for highlighting listening, a crucial skill that is often overlooked. Like · Reply · Message · 20h

 **Sarah Noble** Great podcast about the number 1 skill. Like · Reply · Message · 14h

 **Rebecca Blouwoff**
@MmeBlouwoff Following

How many listeners spent this whole podcast dreaming of their potential Fulbright question and its corresponding global destination? Thanks for sharing your process with us, [@profe_nicola!](#)

 **ESL Brains**
1 hr · Like as Your Page

[Bookmark this](#)

We Teach Languages is a podcast series on teaching, where you can listen to teachers and experts sharing their knowledge. Really inspiring stuff and there are so many takeaways in each of them 🤩 pure gold! See the latest one on teaching listening [t](#) [t](#) [t](#)

 **Calypso**
@wwaves_

Niente, poi Gianfranco Conti si fa ospitare per un cpd di 18 minuti su tutto ciò che a che fare con l'ascolto in L2 e mi sembra che sia una bella risposta al flame di ieri sull'inglese

 **Leah Strobel**
@LeahStrobel

Replying to [@weteachlang](#)

So many takeaways & new info for me! As a college T, esp w/ONL, I've been tasked with assigning lots of listening hmwk that is often too complex for most beg Ss, I began to advise Ss to just step away from it when they feel frustrated bec I know intuitively repetition won't help.

 **Dorie**
@doriec

Are you teaching your students to listen or to cope? Loved this episode with [@gianfrancocont9](#) and can't wait for part 2.

 **carolyn siegel**
@carolynsiegel

[@gianfrancocont9](#) and [@staceymargarita](#) confirm for me the value of exposing Ss to [#authentic](#) materials and creating meaningful interpretive activities that show Ss they have the tools to hear and understand large pieces of the content and then use it to make [#meaning](#)

 **Jill Moore**
@bjillmoore

Great advice for teaching listening. We Teach Languages Episode 111: Teaching Listening with Gianfranco Conti, Part I weteachlang.com/2019/08/09/111... via [@weteachlang](#) [#langchat](#)