WEBINAR ON LISTENWISE.COM

A Reflection on What Went Well... (And What to Work On for the Next Time Around)

Paige Chant | IST 611

WEBINAR DATE/TIME: Saturday, June 10, at 1 pm (ET)

ATTENDEES: ██

RECORDING LINK: https://syracuseonline.adobeconnect.com/p5o3hfnijh7i?

WEBINAR AGENDA

- Why Listening Comprehension Matters
- Introduction to Listenwise
- How to Use Listenwise in Your Classroom
- Benefits of Listenwise –– For You & Your Students
- Sample Lesson Plan
- Independent Exploration
- Ideas & Inspiration for Using Listenwise

FEATURES LEARNED

- Teacher Dashboard
- Classes & Assignments
- Transcript Functionality
- Assignment Resources
- Teacher's Guide
- Class Activities
- Standards

WHAT WORKED WELL...

The most successful part of the webinar was the participatory nature of the activities –– and the active engagement of my attendees! I relied heavily on the ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) when designing the webinar: I wanted it to be as engaging and relevant as possible, so I included introductory and exit polls to gauge my attendees' professional interests, in-webinar exercises to inspire practical learning, and crowd-sourcing sessions to gather ideas for future work. I also grounded the webinar in the motivation for addressing listening comprehension in diverse learning environments, then provided concrete ways that Listenwise could help attendees achieve just that.

Using webcams for myself and the attendees, as well as having attendees to talk via audio connection rather than just typing in the chat box, also contributed to a welcoming and interactive atmosphere –– an especially important aspect when teaching in online environments. I also received positive feedback from attendees about the aesthetic quality of the visual slides, which helped encourage attention and engagement.

WHAT TO WORK ON FOR THE NEXT TIME AROUND...

I found myself fumbling a bit when it came time to wrap up the webinar -- I spent so much time preparing the introduction, interactive lessons, and actual webinar plan that I overlooked the importance of a solid closing. (Admittedly, I was also battling a head cold, which accounts for my waning energy toward the end -- and the poor voice quality!) When conducting future webinars, I definitely want to spend more time crafting and delivering an intentional closing that recaps for attendees what was learned and how it can be used.

I would also like to figure out a way to consult my notes when instructing in a way that doesn't feel disruptive to the flow of the webinar. I had printed out my notes and set them up by my computer screen ahead of time, thinking that I could glance at them as needed without much interruption. But when watching the recording afterward, I realized that looking at my notes forced me to look off-screen, which could be distracting for attendees -- and in fact proved to be more challenging for myself than I anticipated.

Finally, for the time spent in independent exploration (which was an adaptation of Professor Arnone's "community of practice" learning strategy), I might think about giving attendees a more concrete goal: I was fortunate to have an engaged group of audience members for my webinar, but for larger groups, assigning attendees a more specific task to explore or work on together might prove beneficial in conveying relevance, building confidence and satisfaction, and sustaining attention -- especially if they are not as naturally engaged as my attendees, happily for me, happened to be.

VALUABLE LESSONS & INSIGHTS

- When conducting webinars, or when teaching in any kind of online learning environment, it is essential to set the tone for a warm, welcoming, and interactive atmosphere -- as much as possible, the technology platform used should fade into the background rather than obstruct, or distract from, participants' learning.
- One important strategy for setting an intentional tone and atmosphere for participatory learning in digital environments is to create visually engaging slides. Designing webinar materials with strong aesthetics can help increase attendees' focus and attention.
- Participatory webinars that invite attendee engagement, particularly concerning attendees' own skills and interests, is essential for effective learning to take place. This often requires extra planning, expertise, and some healthy risk-taking on the part of the webinar instructor -- after all, you have to think on your feet and improvise as needed to integrate attendees' engagement with the material -- but it's always worth it!