

HURIER Classroom Listening Activities¹

Can they be adapted to your discipline?

Prepared by J. Newton

HEARING:

Individual: Developing Focus and Attention

Record internal and external distractions for a week (in context of your discipline). What can you do to eliminate them?

Group: Improving non-verbal listening behavior

Assign students one classmate to observe (no one knows who is observing them). Note non-verbal behaviours in listening situations over a week. Share observations. Identify areas where you could improve your non-verbal listening behavior.

UNDERSTANDING:

Appropriate use of questions and probes

Find a help-wanted ad of a job you'd like. Have another student interview you for the job for 10 minutes while the group observes:

Were appropriate questions asked?

Were probes used?

Was information revealed that could not be learned from a resume?

Note-taking

Practice different note-taking techniques in class. Compare notes and discuss the advantages of each

Group: Listening in a debate

Person C keeps time and observes. Choose a controversial topic appropriate to your discipline:

30 seconds: Speaker A presents argument

60 seconds: Speaker B summarizes A's points, then presents own points

¹ All of these examples are drawn and adapted from Judi Brownell, Listening: Attitudes, Principles, and Skills, ed. Anonymous (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996). Brownell's text contains many additional examples which could be adapted to different disciplinary settings.

60 seconds: Speaker A restates B's points before refuting them, then presents own points

Continue for 3-4 turns

Discuss:

Was it difficult to re-state other's ideas?

How did this affect your listening?

Did you feel listened to?

Do most people listen in these situations?

Group: Practice Feedback

Person A talks for 10 minutes on controversial topic relevant to discipline. Person B listens and practices paraphrasing, perception-checking and questioning. Person B cannot give advice, opinions or other responses. Person C observes. Switch roles, repeat then share insights.

REMEMBERING:

Build long-term memory strategies into each class:

- Associate by context
- Categorization
- Mediation (link concepts)
- Visual imagery
- Mnemonics – associate concepts and visual

For example, ask students to generate a visual representation of a concept. Put them all up on the board. Discuss and compare which ones best suit the concept.

INTERPRETING

Students who encounter personal problems that affect their performance in a class often must discuss these issues with their teachers. Similarly, supervisors often have to discuss employee's personal problems when they begin to interfere with their job performance. In this context, the manager or teacher may be focused on *their* job and have no real interest in the person sharing this information.

- Does this happen often? Have you had personal experiences of this?
- In what (discipline specific?) contexts may people project empathy without truly experiencing it? Is this inevitable?
- What can either party do to remedy these situations?

Administer the self-assessment of non-verbal behaviour to the class (attached at end of handout)

EVALUATING

Ask class to bring examples from the media to class of logical fallacies related to your discipline.

What type of fallacy is this? How effective is it? Who would fall for this?

Bring in an example of a persuasive speech to class.

What is the writer's objective?

What logic and reasoning are used?

What are the major premises and how are they supported?

RESPONDING

Discuss examples of discipline-specific situations in which a defensive climate resulted in unproductive interactions. Select one to role play.

Role play it as it occurred, with the unproductive interactions

Role play again, using supportive listening behaviours:

- Use "I" language
- no blaming
- problem-solving
- empathic
- provisional

Same as above. Role play using an assertive example.

Self-Assessment of Nonverbal Listening Behaviour			
	You as a Listener		
	Need to Develop	Effective	Need to Eliminate
A. Face and Head Movements			
1. Head Nods			
2. Calm, yet expressive facial movements			
B. Eye Behaviour			
3. Blank Stare			
4. Averting eyes when another looks at you			
5. Spontaneous eye contact when listening			
C. Hand and Arm Movement			
6. Stiff, lack of appropriate gestures			
7. Frequent touching behaviour			
8. Repetitive or distracting hand movements			
D. Body Position			
9. Slouching			
10. Relaxed but alert			
11. Rigid posture			
E. Body Orientation			
12. Body positioned toward other			
13. Physical distance from other			
14. Sit close to others			
15. Lean away from others			

Source: Judi Brownell, *Listening: Attitudes, Principles and Skills*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon 1996: 208