



Active Listening Lessons

Becoming active listeners & displaying empathy

The key to this exercise is to have students become familiar with each other and comfortable speaking in public and/or groups. Since this lesson would be given most likely in a public speaking class it would aid in communication apprehension.

- Instructor will provide a brief overview of listening components. (i.e., verbal/nonverbal communication, the importance of eye contact, actively listening, showing empathy.)
- Put students in groups of five. So students won't be grouped with someone they know students will call off numbers 1-5.
- Each student gets two minutes to discuss a certain aspect of their lives. The students state their names to each other and then begin sharing the information with those in the group. Each student is allowed to ask one question and each student is expected to display some form of either verbal or nonverbal communication some time during the exercise. Students will each receive four pieces of paper to write each student's name in the group. They will "grade" each student on listening skills on a scale from 1-needs work, 2-good, 3-excellent .

Example Student Grading Sheet:

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4
Use of Nonverbals				
Eye contact				
Had positive regard to student				
Accurately reflected and clarified feelings				

Comments:

- The students will then get a chance to share with the class what they learned about their fellow classmate. The "graded" papers will then be handed in and used again at mid-term time to determine if growth has been made or areas of improvement have been worked upon.
- This exercise will also aid in getting the students to become familiar with their classmates and sharing information in groups. It will also allow them to develop empathy as a communicator since students will have free range on the topics of their choice.
- The exercise should take up the entire 50 minute class period.

Active Listening-Using Key Techniques

The key to this exercise is to get students engaged in listening and seeing how various concepts would play out in everyday life. Students will become more familiar with the various techniques and see opportunities in which they would best be suited. Since it would be driven by students they would have actual instances in which they could use them now.

- Each student gets a slip of paper. They are labeled either speaker or listener. Students draw out of a hat the following: paraphrasing, perception checking, ask questions, or say more. Each sheet of paper has a brief definition of each concept so the student can act accordingly.
- Skits are performed in front of the class for students to view. The students will then have an opportunity to guess what listening concept was used and their thoughts/ideas on what could be done differently and ways in which the speaker/listener team did a good job on working with the concept.
- Each skit will last no more than 3 minutes with a discussion period of 5-10 minutes to follow.
- Students will draft a list of times when each form of communication would work/not work.

The end goal is to provide students with a deeper understanding of each listening technique and suitable environments for their use. By asking the students to guess which technique is in place it allows them to become more familiar with them.

Discussion questions:

- Why did certain things work and why not?
- Did you feel differently as the speaker than listener? Why? What distractions did you face in each aspect?
- How did this exercise help you in understanding active listening skills?





I've Got a Distraction!

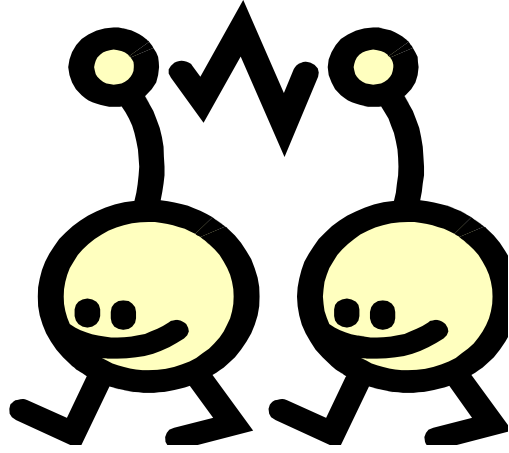
The key to this exercise is to allow students to see the effects that mental and physical distractions can play in our ability to hear.

- Several students are left to leave the room and wait until they are called back in one by one.
- The students that are left in the room will be read a very brief story on something that has happened.
- As the first student is asked in the classroom they are told the story in its entirety. The next person is then allowed to enter the classroom where the first student repeats the story they just heard. This exercise is repeated until all students are in the room.
- As the very last person is finished retelling the story the actual story is then told to all participants and to the class.

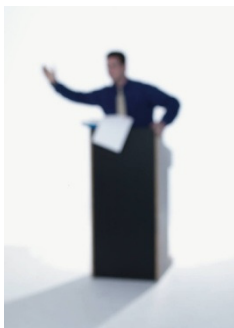
Using this exercise, students in the class will see the effects of mental and physical distractions and how they can interfere with our listening skills.

Discussion questions would revolve around:

- What happened that made you not be able to retell the story?
- Did you feel like you were actively listening?
- What were some of the elements in the classroom that lead you not to be able to hear?
- Were there nonverbal cues to let you know the next student couldn't hear?
 - What were they?



Sharing Lessons



The Art of Public Speaking

We are going to be learning about sharing information in the classroom and building good lectures based on the principals of organization and delivery.

Some ideas to think about:

- What makes a good speech? Why?
- Constructing and using the proper speech formats: Intro, body, conclusion (why are these important)
- Using tone and thinking about your audience

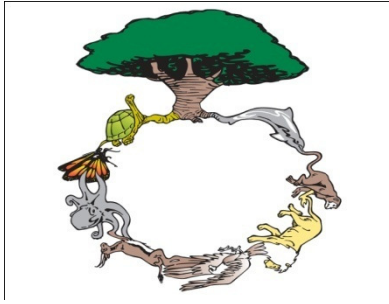
The students must construct a 1-2 minute speech demonstrating key lecturing principals listed in the selected reading. The topic is their choice. The students will be working together as a class to then demonstrate weaknesses and strengths and what makes a good lecture. Each student will be making your speech in front of the class, with the chance to evaluate each other. They will be rated on: voice, gesturing, expression/inflection, suitable content, delivery style, proper speech formats. *(Presentational aids welcome.)*

Students will round out their speeches by making a list of the good and bad points they noticed. Each student will note what they think they did the best on and areas in which they thought they could improve.

Ideas to discuss are:

- What elements stood out to you? Why?
- What do you feel are the most important elements of public speaking? Why?
- What things made you want to listen to your classmates?
- How could you better prepare yourself next time?

Students could make a list of things they felt the most important and least important on the board. These ideas could be saved and given to students the next class period, along with their evaluations. This idea would also work if students worked in pairs and interviewed each other and presented it to the class. It would give the students to share information with one another while demonstrating their skills in putting together a speech in the proper format and working on "Introductions" as part of the public speaking process.



Public speaking-A Whole New Animal

Have the students chose from a list of imaginary creatures you have made up and put on note cards. Put a quick list of questions on the board:

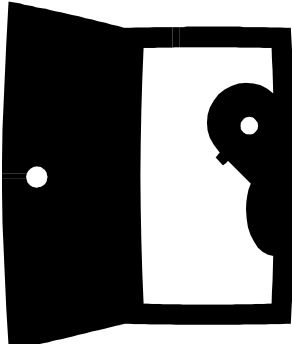
- What does it look like (size, teeth, fur, scales, nose, claws, color, tail, etc)?
- Is it a mammal, reptile, amphibian, marsupial?
- What does it eat? What eats it?
- What kind of habitat does it live in?
- Does it make a sound?
- What survival characteristics does it have (flies, swims, runs, digs, camouflages, fights, etc.)

Give your students about ten minutes to make up the descriptions of their imaginary animals using your questions as a guideline, and then have them present their short reports on these creatures. The goals should be eye contact, clear speech, and confidence (content isn't important since they are the only "experts" on their subjects!). If you have extra time, they can make a picture or diagram to use as a visual aid.

This activity will take most of the classroom time, so there will be little discussion aside from:

- Did this seem easier than making up their own speech as before? Why?
- Did you feel more or less prepared? Why?
- Did you feel more comfortable in class? What was the difference?

The goal of this activity was to make the students open up to having to speak in public and be underprepared. While it seems like it wouldn't work this exercise would be used to help bolster self esteem because they can make up the information, therefore making them more comfortable in front of the class. It is designed to get them out of themselves and into the realm of public speaking.



Sharing information isn't just public speaking, it is talking one on one and getting your message across to the other person. The following exercise will allow "the speaker" the ease of knowing their subject very well with "the listener" giving them feedback as to how well they could imagine what was told to them.

Front Door: An Imaginary Journey in Sharing

Working in pairs consisting of a listener and a speaker, have each set of students imagine that they are standing outside of the speaker's house. Have the speaker verbally give the attentive listener an imaginary errand to do. The speaker must carefully explain to his or her partner how to go into the house, travel to the living, and, once there, describe where to find a special treasure somewhere in the room. Have the speaker tell the partner a story about why the thing to be retrieved is special and then have speaker verbally explain how to travel back to the front door to bring the special thing out to where the speaker will be waiting.

This improvisational speech exercise encourages confidence in one's ability to describe a sequence of events. The journey from one's own front door to one's living is well known by the speaker. The speaker may discover in discussing this exercise afterwards, that he or she imagined the house clearly and "saw" more detail than was mentioned. Telling a folktale has a similar process. The teller imagines the landscape of the tale and guides the listeners on a mental journey.

Debriefing:

- How did this exercise help in sharing information with one another?
- Think back to similar public speaking lessons. Did you feel more comfortable working one on one or in a group?
- By speaking about something familiar to you did you have an easier time describing the events?
- What did you learn by doing this exercise?



Media Literacy Lessons

Fairy Tales & Story Telling

Lesson Objectives

- Students will explore how the messages in fairytales perpetuate socially accepted hegemonic norms of beauty, gendered roles, age, ethnicity, ability, and status in the current social system.
- Students will re-frame fairytale narratives to include individuals who may not fit the ideals of beauty, gender role, age, and ability.
- Students will discuss the different gender stereotypes noted in each other classmates stories and draw on them as to what they feel could/should've be done and reasons why we ultimately gravitate towards one idea over another when it comes to these issues.

The Activity:

Students will pick a fairytale and try to make it modern day without using stereotypes.

Step One: Divide students into groups of three or four persons each.

Step Two: Provide each group with one of the fairy tale books and blank paper to recreate their stories.

Step Three: Before lecturing or discussing the beauty ideal, have students do a form of content analysis on the fairy tale focusing on and listing key concepts that seem to be present regarding:

- (a) beauty
- (b) gender roles
- (c) age
- (d) race
- (e) ability
- (f) economic status
- (g) issues of power.



Instruct students to rewrite the fairytale replacing words that present stereotypical implications of attractiveness, intelligence, moral character, and race (for example)

Allow students time to finish translating the story and to draw/ write it on either the papers.

Have each group present their revised fairytale to the class.

Discussion questions to ask:

After all groups have presented their revised fairytales, debrief.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What is the link between beauty, age, ethnicity, ability, and goodness in these stories?
- (b) What is the potential danger associated with beauty and desirability?
- (c) What role do you think the representation of beauty, age, ethnicity, or ability plays in socially created norms? What is the result of the creation of these types of norms?
- (f) What gender roles are presented in the fairytales?

Keynotes and lesson timing plans: This lesson could be done at any time in the semester as long as it goes with unit/lesson being discussed that week. Could also be used as a beginning/ending semester lesson to see what students have learned/grown.



Non Verbal Lessons



Mixed Messages

OBJECTIVES:

The student will:

- Observe body language and how important it is to sending and receiving messages
- Practice matching body language with the intended communication.

PROCEDURE:

1. Introduce the concept of body language through a demonstration that sends the class a "mixed message." For example, storm into the room, slam a book down on your desk, stand with your arms crossed, frown, stamp your foot and say, *"Today will be a great day; we will do some really interesting and fun things today."*

Then ask the class how they felt about the words you were saying. Did they believe them? Were they comfortable with them? Why not? How else were you Communicating? Which was more believable?

2. Discuss the concept of body language with the class. (We all communicate on two levels: in verbal and non-verbal ways. Feelings are often communicated through body language).

3. Ask for volunteers to demonstrate, through body language, the words (feelings) written on index cards; have the class identify the feelings being demonstrated.

MATERIALS:

10 index cards labeled with the words pictured to your right>>

Words for the cards are listed below:

- Scared • Hurt • Worried • Snobby • Excited • Guilty
- Bored • Sad • Irritated • Angry

Discussion Questions:

- Ask students how we interpret different modes of communication.
- Have students give examples of a time they misunderstood someone and why? What was said/done?
- What are effective ways of communication nonverbally?
- What are ineffective ways?
- What have they learned through this lesson?



We Have to Move Now!

Students will explore nonverbal communication and gestures using this exercise. Students can be in groups or can be done in class using multiple people.

1. Cut several strips of paper.
2. On each strip of paper, write down a mood or a disposition like guilty, happy, suspicious, paranoid, insulted, or insecure.
3. Fold the strips of paper and put them into a bowl. They will be prompts.
4. Have each student take a prompt from the bowl and read the same sentence to the class, expressing the mood they've picked.
5. Students will read the sentence: "We all need to gather our possessions and move to another building as soon as possible!"

First they will read the sentences with the group turned around and will mark what mood or disposition they think it is. Then they will have the students perform them with gestures. Again, students should write down assumptions they make about each student as they read their prompts.

Discussion Questions:

- Have students discuss what made one mood or disposition different from the other? How so?
- What made it different from seeing them as opposed to hearing them?
- How many times do we misinterpret what people say? When is it most prevalent?
- In person?
- On the phone?
- Via Email/text?



Can only words tell you what I mean?

This is a role type of activity play.

- **Preparation:** cards where the students will find their instructions and blank cards for the follow up (max 6 per student) enough pens of course, and some material to fasten the cards on the black board.
- **Procedure:** All students are supposed to be participants in an international conference and mingle around while waiting for dinner to be served. Every student gets a card with instructions how to behave (e.g. keep distance to people or stand close by, look people in the eyes while talking to them or don't look into people's faces) and what topics to talk about (e.g. ask about people's families, their salaries, political situation in their countries, the weather, cultural events and so on). According to the rules/habits in their own culture the students will experience situation where they feel comfortable or not. Students will look closely at nonverbal clues to see what the other might be feeling or why. They will also take notes of the different gestures and how/why these are important in their culture.
- **Goal:** At the end of the activity, the learners will be able to realize how people from other cultures behave when meeting other people, especially when talking about things they don't want to and what topics they can talk about in public. The exercise should open the students up to becoming aware of other cultures and themselves. Students will be encouraged to talk about their cultural rules if wanted.

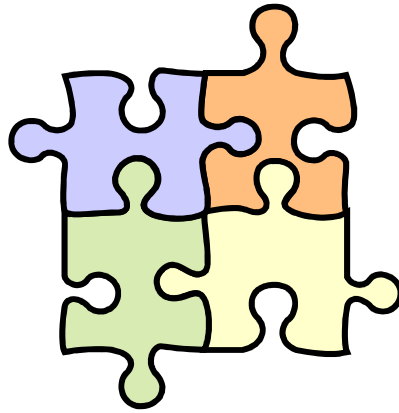
Discussion & Follow up:

To follow up the role play all participants shall write max 3 cards about positive and max 3 cards about negative experience. Then everyone will put their cards on the black board. All participants will see how the others felt and why and discuss it.

By the end of the discussion the group should have found out that people behave different in different cultures and you can't discuss any topic in any culture openly. Students should learn to be aware of your own and other cultures.



Small Group Communication Lessons



Picture Pieces Game

Time Required: 30-40 minutes

This problem solving exercise requires that the leader choose a well known picture or cartoon that is full of detail.

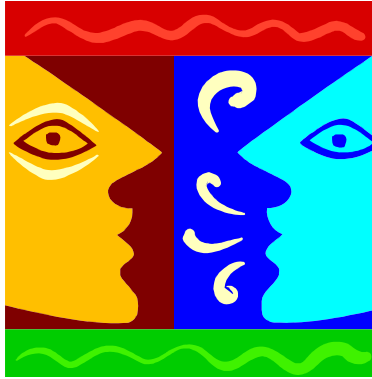
1. Divide students into groups of five. Each group is given a picture that needs to be cut into as many equal squares as there are participants in the exercise.
2. Each participant should be given a piece of the “puzzle” and instructed to create an exact copy of their piece of the puzzle five times bigger than its original size.
3. They are posed with the problem of not knowing why or how their own work affects the larger picture. The leader can pass out pencils, markers, paper, and rulers in order to make the process simpler and run more smoothly.
4. When all the participants have completed their enlargements, ask them to assemble their pieces into a giant copy of the original picture on a table.
- 5.

Goal:

This problem solving exercise will teach participants how to work in a team and it demonstrates divisionalized ‘departmental’ working, which is the understanding that each person working on their own part contributes to an overall group result.

Discuss:

- What problems did you encounter in your group? Why?
- How did you solve them?
- Why do you think it’s important to be able to work as a group?
- Have students make a list of tactics that they could use when dealing with difficult group members. Make sheet visible throughout course as a reminder of the exercise and ways to deal with difficulty.



Structured Controversy

1. Divide the class into groups of four.
2. Identify a controversial topic and gather material that gives information and background to support different views of the controversy.
3. Students work with one partner, forming two pairs within the group of four.
4. Each pair takes a different side of the issue. Pairs work outside of class or in class to prepare to advocate and defend their position.
5. The groups of four meet, and each pair takes a turn stating and arguing its position while the other pair listens and takes notes without interrupting.
6. Each pair must have a chance both to listen and take notes and to argue their position. Then all four talk together as a group to learn all sides of the issue. Next, each pair must reverse its position and argue the opposite position from the one it argued before.
7. Lastly the group of four as a whole discusses and synthesizes all the positions to come up with a group report. There may be a class presentation in which each group presents its findings.
- 8.

Discussion:

- Did you find it hard to listen to the students who were arguing the different side?
- What nonverbal did you see? Did you find yourself giving off any nonverbals? (Have students think carefully)
- Did you find any people difficult to deal with? Why? Was it because their viewpoint was different? What ways do you think you could use to diffuse the tension or not get angry yourself?
- What have you learned through this exercise?



Speaking and Listening Assessment Project
Activity
Small Group Communication
Standards Poster

Description: Students will have the opportunity in their assigned groups to not only discuss good and bad group member behavior, but to create a poster that will serve as a list of rules for their own group's conduct.

Objectives given to students to think about: the roles and functions of group members, strategies to minimize group conflict, demonstrate ways to make groups more productive, present a variety of classroom projects that would benefit from a small group setting.

Materials Needed: Newsprint or poster board and markers for each group.

1. In each of the students' assigned groups, they will need poster board or other large sheet of paper and markers.
2. They need to create a list of what their group will be committed to or good group member behaviors and a list of what the group will avoid or deviant group member behavior.
3. They can display it on the paper in any manner they choose and can present the material in any manner as well.
4. After the posters have been created each group member must sign the poster somewhere to show that they agree and will abide by what the group set up (it also serves as identification). They will present their ideas to the class. These posters can be displayed near the area where each group is assigned to work as a reminder and morale booster.

Discussion: After the posters are presented, discuss with the students the idea that the poster they just created is going to serve as the rules for their group. Any conflicts, arguments, or issues that come up between group members will be settled with the assistance of the group rules they constructed. The poster should be a good way to minimize negative conflict and create the opportunity for more productivity from the group. They will also know the boundaries of their group and how their roles within the group will function.