

Technical and Production Skills: Positive Listening Experiences

Notes to the Teacher

1. Ask students to jot down on a piece of paper several reasons that effective listening is important and the consequences of not listening to others. Have them discuss their answers in small groups.
2. Introduce the objective, and distribute the worksheet.
3. Ask students to complete the worksheet individually.
4. Tell students they will be asked to share their positive listening experience with another student. The student who was listening will be asked to reiterate what was said. The student who was speaking will be asked how he/she felt during the exchange.
5. Write the following words on a board, transparency film, or flip chart paper: *words, tone of voice, nonverbal behaviors*. Tell the class that a communication researcher, Albert Mehrabian, found that each variable had a particular degree of importance in speaking. The impact of a speaker's message to another person is as follows: words = 7%, tone of voice = 38%, and nonverbals = 55%. Facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, and tone of voice have a tremendous influence on what comes through to the listener.
6. Ask the students to pair up and decide who is going to relate his/her experience first. Tell them not to switch roles until you have told them to do so.
7. Instruct the listener to summarize in general terms the incident that was just described. The student who was speaking should confirm/clarify what the listener heard.
8. Have the students switch roles and repeat the process.
9. Ask some of the following questions for a class discussion.
 - A. What are you more aware of now than when we began this exercise?
 - B. What are your personal habits and tendencies that sometimes get in the way of effective listening?
 - C. What would be the consequences of poor listening in the workplace?
 - D. What do you think "selective listening" is, and what do you think about it?

Variations/Extensions

1. Ask the class to identify poor listening behaviors, the ones they experience most often, and the ones that are the most annoying.
2. Have students work in small groups to brainstorm reasons people may be poor listeners and what people can do to become better listeners.
3. Show video clips of scenarios that illustrate effective and ineffective listening.