

Lesson D2–4

Developing Listening Techniques

Unit D. Employability in the Agriculture Industry

Problem Area 2. Developing Communication Skills

Lesson 4. Developing Listening Techniques

New Mexico Content Standard:

Pathway Strand: Communications

Standard: II: Use oral and written communication skills in creating, expressing and interpreting information and ideas including technical terminology and information within AFNR.

Benchmark: II-C. Listen effectively to learn in both formal and informal situations.

Performance Standard: 1. Appreciate personality preferences to achieve full meaning in processing and sharing information. 2. Recognize the meanings of posturing to interpret nonverbal communications and messages. 3. Apply active listening skills to obtain information and clarify oral communications.

Student Learning Objectives. Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

1. Understand the importance of good listening skills in oral communication.
2. Identify the phases of the listening process.
3. Identify factors that contribute to poor listening.
4. Identify techniques for effective listening.

List of Resources. The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

Recommended Resources. One of the following resources should be selected to accompany this lesson:

Cheek, Jimmy G., et al. *Effective Oral Communication*. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Publishers, Inc., 1995. (Textbook, Chapter 24)

Hunter, Sharon, et al. *Developing Leadership and Personal Skills*. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Publishers, Inc., 1997. (Textbook, Chapter 9)

Other Resources. The following resources will be useful to students and teachers:

Agriculture Sale Communication (U6030); Steps in Preparing for the Agricultural Sales Call. (U6033). University of Illinois, Vocational Agriculture Service, 1401 S. Maryland, Urbana, IL 61801.

Applied Communication. 1988. Agency for Instructional Technology, P.O. Box A, Bloomington, IN 47402.

Ricketts, Cliff. *Leadership: Personal Development and Career Success*. Albany, New York: Delmar Publishers, 1997.

Understanding the Importance of Effective Communications Through the Spoken Word (#8369); Understanding the Importance of Effective Communication Through the Written Word (#8370); Improving Communications Skills Through Organized Activities (#8371); Utilizing the Media for Effective Communication—Public Relations (#8372). Instructional Material Service, Texas A&M University, F.E. Box 2588, College Station, TX 77843.

List of Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities

Writing surface
Overhead projector
Transparencies from attached masters
Copies of Student Lab Sheets

Terms. The following terms are presented in the lesson (shown in bold italics):

Attending
Bias
Hearing
Listening
Recalling
Receiving
Understanding

Interest Approach. Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. Below is a listening activity that could be used for an interest approach.

Try this listening game to see how well your students listen and follow directions. Have your students number 1 through 9 on a sheet of paper. Read the instructions below to the students only once, pausing briefly for them to respond. This is a listening test.

1. Write yes no matter what letter your name begins with.
2. Of the words hammer and nail, write the shorter.
3. Write no even if you think cement is heavier than feathers.
4. Write the numbers 2, 7, 9, 5, and 8 and circle the largest.
5. If you circled 7, make a square; if not, make a cross.
6. If screwdrivers screw screws, complete this sentence correctly, "Hammers pound _____."
7. If 3 times 2 equals 8, make a circle; if not, make two dots.
8. Give the wrong answer to this question: "Does wood come from trees?"
9. If Washington was not the first President of the United States, write the shorter of the words red and green; if he was, sign your name.

Summary of Content and Teaching Strategies

Objective I: Understand the importance of good listening skills in oral communication.

Anticipated Problem: Why are good listening skills necessary when communicating with others?

- I. Listening is only one part of communication, but it is the basis for successful communication.
 - A. If you do not listen closely to the communicator, part of the message may be lost.
 - B. The listener is responsible for making the effort to understand the message.
 - C. Listening and hearing are not the same.
 1. **Hearing** is the physical process of detecting sound.
 - a. Hearing involves receiving sound waves through your ears and transmitting them to your brain.
 - b. Hearing is the first step of listening.
 - c. In general, the listener hears only 70% of the message and remembers 50% or less.
 2. **Listening** is a conscious mental effort to understand what you hear.
 - a. Listening consumes 45% of all the time spent communicating.

- b. An effective listener's goal is to receive, attend, evaluate, and recall the message.
- c. Listening is an active process, not a passive one.

Several teaching techniques can be used to help students understand the importance of good listening skills in oral communication. Providing text materials will enhance student learning. Chapter 9 in Developing Leadership and Personal Skills and Chapter 24 in Effective Oral Communication are recommended. Use LS: D2–4A to have students practice responding to oral responses. This will demonstrate how well they listen.

Objective 2: Identify the phases of the listening process.

Anticipated Problems: What is the process to follow in proper listening?

- II. Listening is an active process requiring four phases—receiving, attending, understanding, and recalling.
 - A. The first phase of listening is **receiving** or hearing
 - 1. Receiving begins by paying attention to the speaker.
 - 2. Concentrate on the message rather than the speaker.
 - 3. Consciously focus on what is being said.
 - B. The second phase is called **attending** or the desire or interest to listen.
 - 1. Your present motivation, beliefs, and attitude affect how attentive you are.
 - 2. The power and authority of the message source can also influence your attentiveness.
 - 3. The environment or setting can also be an influential item.
 - C. The third phase in the listening process is called understanding.
 - 1. **Understanding** is your interpretation of the message.
 - 2. Interpreting the message is best accomplished by putting it in your own words.
 - 3. Because you think faster than someone can talk, you have time to process and organize information while you are listening.
 - D. The fourth phase of listening is called **recalling** or remembering what was said.
 - 1. You hear much more than you can remember.
 - 2. You have to develop a technique of remembering the important things and discarding the other.

Use a variety of listening techniques to help the students master this objective. Chapter 24 in Effective Oral Communication is recommended as text material. Use TM: D2–4A to help explain the four steps of the listening process. Use LS: D2–4A to evaluate the students' ability to orally respond to requests after listening to directions.

Objective 3: Identify factors that contribute to poor listening.

Anticipated Problem: What factors can lead to poor listening?

- III. Several factors can lead to poor listening.
- A. Tuning out is when you hear someone but you are not listening to them.
 - 1. You may not listen if you are not interested.
 - 2. This can be done intentionally and unintentionally.
 - B. Interrupting the speaker while he or she is speaking, completing the speaker's sentence for him or her, poor eye contact with the speaker, or doing other things while the speaker is talking can prevent you from receiving the entire message.
 - C. Prejudice or **bias** opinions can result in poor listening.
 - 1. If you do not like what the person is saying, it is natural to sometimes not listen.
 - 2. Try to avoid jumping to conclusions.
 - D. Poor hearing conditions can affect listening ability.
 - E. Language and vocabulary problems can cause poor listening.
 - 1. You must be able to understand the language in order to listen.
 - 2. Good understanding of the vocabulary is important to get the precise meaning of the conversation.
 - 3. If you do not understand a word, do not be embarrassed to ask.
 - F. Lack of effort can result in poor listening. Listening is an active process and requires effort.
 - G. Information overload is when the presenter gives too much information at one time. Too much information can cause the mind to wander and lead to poor listening.
 - H. Incorrect assumptions can lead to poor listening.
 - 1. If the listener decides that the message is too complicated, he or she may not try to understand it.
 - 2. The listener might make the assumption that he or she has already heard the message and then tune it out.

*Many techniques can be used to help students understand factors that contribute to poor listening skills. Students need text materials to better understand the objective. Chapter 9 in *Developing Leadership and Personal Skills* and Chapter 24 in *Effective Oral Communication* are recommended. Use TM: D2–4B to discuss factors that contribute to poor listening.*

Objective 4: Identify techniques for effective listening.

Anticipated Problem: What can you do to improve your listening skills?

- IV. Improving listening skills begins with the desire to do so. There are several techniques that can improve listening skills.
- A. Prepare yourself for listening.
 - 1. Stop talking; you cannot listen if you are talking.
 - 2. Remove all distractions.
 - B. Listen with the intent to understand.
 - 1. Do not worry about how you will respond.
 - 2. Pay attention to the nonverbal signs.
 - 3. Ask questions or repeat the message.
 - C. Control your emotions. This helps to prevent confusion.
 - 1. Have patience.
 - 2. Control your temper and avoid an argument.
 - D. Practice mental flexibility.
 - 1. Think ahead of the speaker.
 - 2. Relate the message to similar experiences.
 - 3. Try to weigh the evidence.
 - E. Concentrate on the speaker by clearing all thoughts and feelings from your mind.
 - F. Understand the goal of the listening situation.
 - 1. This will help you determine how to listen.
 - 2. Are you listening for enjoyment or for evaluation?
 - G. Hear the person completely before responding.
 - H. Use acknowledgment to confirm understanding. Restating the message as you hear it allows the speaker to clarify any misunderstandings.
 - I. Take notes so that you listen more actively.
 - J. Organize the information as you hear it.
 - 1. Listen for the speaker's key points in the message.
 - 2. Recognize common patterns of organizing information
 - a. When chronological order is used, the speaker will use terms such as "first, next, then."
 - b. Where order of importance is used, the speaker will begin with the most important topic and end with the least important.
 - c. When comparison and contrast is used, the speaker will use terms such as "similar, like, different, in contrast."
 - d. When cause and effect is used, the speaker will use terms such as "because, so, therefore."

Several teaching techniques can be used to help students understand this objective. Text materials will help students better understand effective listening skills. Chapter 9 in *Developing Leadership and Personal Skills* and Chapter 24 in *Effective Oral Communication* are recommended. Use TM: D2–4C to discuss ways to improve listening skills.

Review/Summary. Focus the review and summary of the lesson around the student learning objectives. Call on students to explain the content associated with each objective. Use their responses as the basis for determining any areas that need to be covered again. Questions at the end of each chapter in the recommended textbooks may also be used in the review process. Use the lab activities in reviewing and reinforcing student learning.

Application. Application can involve one or more of the following student activities using the attached lab sheets:

Oral Responses—LS: D2–4A

Oral Directions—LS: D2–4B

Evaluation. Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is attached.

Answers to Sample Test:

Part One: Matching

1=f, 2=e, 3=g, 4=h, 5=b, 6=a, 7=c, 8=d

Part Two: Completion

1. Listening
2. 70, 50
3. receiving, attending, understanding, recalling
4. ears, brain

Part Three: Short Answer

Answers will vary but should include four of the following ways to improve listening skills:

1. Prepare yourself to listen.
2. Listen with the intent to understand.
3. Control your emotions.
4. Practice mental flexibility.
5. Concentrate on the speaker.
6. Understand the goal of the listening situation.

7. Hear the person completely before responding.
8. Use acknowledgment to confirm understanding.
9. Take notes.
10. Organize the information as you hear it.

Test

Lesson D2–4: Developing Listening Techniques

Part One: Matching

Instructions. Match the term with the correct response. Write the letter of the term by the definition.

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| a. attending | d. understanding | g. information overload |
| b. hearing | e. interpreting | h. bias |
| c. recalling | f. listening | |

- _____ 1. An active process requiring receiving, attending, understanding, and recalling.
- _____ 2. Putting the information into a form you can understand.
- _____ 3. Too much information at one time.
- _____ 4. Preconceived or prejudice opinion.
- _____ 5. Physical process of detecting sound.
- _____ 6. The desire or interest to listen.
- _____ 7. Remembering.
- _____ 8. Your interpretation of the message.

Part Two: Completion

Instructions. Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. _____ is just one part of communication, but it is the basis for successful communication.
2. In general, the listener hears only _____ percent of the message and remembers _____ percent or less.
3. The four phases of listening are _____, _____, _____, and _____.
4. Hearing is receiving sound waves through your _____ and transmitting them to your _____.

Part Three: Short Answer

List four ways to improve your listening skills.

FOUR STEPS OF LISTENING

1. Receiving
2. Attending
3. Understanding
4. Recalling

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO POOR LISTENING

- 1. Tuning out**
- 2. Interpreting the speaker**
- 3. Completing the speaker's sentence**
- 4. Not having eye contact**
- 5. Doing other things while trying to listen**
- 6. Having bias opinions**
- 7. Poor hearing conditions**
- 8. Poor vocabulary understanding**
- 9. Lack of effort**
- 10. Too much information**
- 11. Incorrect assumptions**

TEN WAYS TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS

1. **Prepare yourself to listen.**
2. **Listen with the intent to understand.**
3. **Control your emotions.**
4. **Practice mental flexibility.**
5. **Concentrate on the speaker.**
6. **Understand the goal of the listening situation.**
7. **Hear the person completely before responding.**
8. **Use acknowledgment to confirm understanding.**
9. **Take notes.**
10. **Organize the information as you hear it.**

Lab Sheet

Oral Responses

Purpose:

1. To learn proper techniques used in interpreting oral responses.
2. To demonstrate techniques in interpreting oral responses.

Materials:

Lab sheet
Writing utensil
Paper

Procedure:

1. Read over the telephone request in section A and B below.
 2. On a separate piece of paper, list what you need to do, and outline your response to the request.
 3. Be prepared to make an oral response to the class.
- A. You take orders for a feed and seed store that closes at 5:30 PM. A customer from a town about 20 miles away calls at 5:00 PM, saying, “I would like 200 pounds of Top Grow alfalfa seed, one mineral block, two nylon cattle halters, and 20 quarts of Noble 10W-40 motor oil. How much would that be all together? I’ll be right over to pick everything up.”
- Top Grow alfalfa seed costs \$0.38 per pound. Mineral blocks cost \$17.00 each. Standard nylon cattle halters cost \$9.95 each. A case (24 quarts per case) of Noble 10W-40 motor oil costs \$18.96.
- The customer will likely arrive just as the store is closing and the employees in the warehouse do not like to work late.
- B. You work in a retail florist shop. A customer calls, saying, “I would like to purchase a birthday floral arrangement for my aunt who lives in Calgary, Alberta. She’ll be 31 tomorrow. Can the flowers be sent by telephone or wire delivery? I don’t have a specific arrangement in mind, but I do not want to spend over \$30.00. Oh yes, I want to send a card with the flowers.”
- Your telephone delivery offers three special-occasion floral arrangements in this price range: the Memory Maker (a bouquet of daisies and roses), the Celebrator (an arrangement of iris, mums, and tulips), and the Over-the-Hill (a bouquet of lilies and roses).
- To send flowers you will need the aunt’s name, an exact address and telephone number, and either an established credit account with the florist or a charge card number.

Lab Sheet Key

Oral Responses

- A. An appropriate response should include the following:
- Closing time and an alternative pick-up time.
 - A restatement of the order.
 - Price quotes.
 - Information about whether the customer will charge or pay cash for the order.
- B. An appropriate response should include the following:
- Price quotes for flower arrangements in customer's price range.
 - Names and all information written legibly and correctly.
 - Complete delivery instructions.
 - Enclosure card message, if appropriate.
 - Verification of customer's charge account or charge card information.
 - Complete name and address of the recipient.
 - A restatement of the order.

Lab Sheet

Oral Directions

Purpose:

1. To learn how to properly take oral directions.
2. To demonstrate taking oral directions properly.

Materials:

Lab sheet
Writing utensil
Paper

Procedure:

1. Listen to the directions as your teacher reads them to the class.
2. Make a list of what you must do and how to do it.

Lab Sheet Key

Oral Directions

Read the following section to the class. Students will listen and make a list of what the instructions state to do.

I want you to go to the Wiles residence and finish the landscaping job. We're all done except for laying the brick walk. The bricks are at the site. The owners said they wanted the bricks laid in the basket-weave pattern. Recheck the forms for proper grade of slope and the footing for proper depth. They may have been tampered with since we left them a couple of days ago. Use the tilers' method for laying the brick. Remember, the mixture is 1 part cement to 2 parts sand. Prepare enough mixture to fill the forms to within 1½ inches (4 cm.) of the top. You may have to make a screeding board; cut it so it is ¼ inch (.65 cm.) narrower than the basket-weave pattern. Sweep more mixture into the cracks between the bricks. Get a large piece of plywood, and lay it on top of the bricks. Tamp the bricks with a sledge or post until they're flush with the top of the forms. Fill in the cracks with more mixture, and water the finished walk lightly. Tell the owners that we'll be back in a couple of days to clean the surface of the walk, and tell them to stay off the walk until then. Pick up all your tools, and clean up any scrap material. Put the material in the truck, and we'll dispose of it properly at the dump. Record your time in the log book, and report back to the office when you're finished.

The students should include the following information in their list of instructions:

1. Check forms for proper grade of slope.
2. Check footing for proper depth.
3. Prepare mixture of 1 part cement and 2 parts sand, and fill the forms to within 1½ inches (4 cm.) of the top.
4. If necessary, make a screeding board ¼ inch (.65 cm.) narrower than the basket-weave pattern.
5. Lay brick in place in the basket-weave pattern
6. Sweep the mixture of sand and concrete into the cracks between the bricks.
7. Put a large piece of plywood on top of the bricks.
8. Tamp the surface until the bricks are flush with the top of the forms.
9. Fill cracks again where settling has occurred.
10. Water lightly the entire surface of the finished work.
11. Instruct owners to stay off walk.
12. Clean up site.
13. Record time before returning to office.