

Training Activity for Effective Listening and Classroom Communication

Posted on September 19, 2018

The training method we have selected as a topic of focus in this assignment is about the negative attitude of listeners that makes them pretend they are listening to the speaker. This attitude is a part of our common communications in schools and has discouraging effects on the teachers when they deliver their lectures. To solve this issue in interpersonal communication, we have organized a couple of activities that aim to improve communication among students and inform them about methods they can use to achieve this goal.

There will be two activities, each of which will take 15 to 20 minutes. The time defined for each activity will be 5 minutes for the first phase of the activity, 5 minutes for guidance and 5 minutes for the second phase of the activity. The results will be assessed by the students themselves so they will not take any extra time.

The activities will have three phases: the first phase will have a person delivering his understanding of a concept based on his best knowledge, the second phase will be the guideline and intervention in which the group provides methods for listeners and speakers to improve communication, and the third phase will repeat the activity after the guidance and compare the results before and after the guidelines.

This activity will improve students' attitude toward communication, and they will understand the negative effects of casual behaviour while listening to the speaker. With the help of this activity, the students can change their attitude in the lectures, and they can learn well by implementing the key points given in the activity on their own. It will also benefit the teachers by providing them with effective methods of speech delivery and how they can make sure students understand the lecture and take an interest in the class activities.

Introduction And Rationale:

The lack of listening skills often results in bigger miscommunication problems. The miscommunication between teachers and students, parents and children and team workers leads to bigger consequences, which sometimes become a cause of even bigger irreversible losses. Listening is more than just hearing from the speaker. For a person to become a good listener, he should be able to interpret and understand the true meaning behind the speech. If a listener does not understand the speech, it may be due to a lack of elaboration in speech and a jumbled up mess of words with no linkage or adherence to previous sentences (Fig.1). However, for poor listening, the blame is usually on the listener who because of his attitude does not grasp the idea of the speech.

Poor listening styles in interpersonal communications are the result of listeners' attitude, focus on the point, interest in the topic, understanding of the medium, and perspective towards the speaker. Poor listening styles include spacing out, selective listening, word listening, self-centred listening, and pretending to listen.

Pretending to listen to the speaker means the listener has no interest in the speech and is just pretending that he is paying attention to the speaker when actually he is not. Such kind of attitude mostly is easily identified as the listener does not respond to the speech rather just nods or uses the word "hmm", "ahan" and "yeah". Pretending to listen discourages the speaker as well as affects the listener, as he does not grasp the full meaning of the speech due to his casual attitude.

This concept was chosen in this assignment due to its importance and adverse effects on communication. If a person pretends to listen to the speaker, he can never totally understand the speaker's idea and may not be able to recreate the content of the speech exactly. He may remember some main points but not how the speaker talked in favour or against or just in an informative way about the topic. The need to understand the concept and work for its betterment in a classroom environment is essential as the students do not communicate effectively with teachers, and students may not get the idea of the subject discussed in the class or the explanation that the teacher provides. We believe that after this training session, the students will be able to understand how to communicate effectively and participate actively in communication.

Interactive Exercise:

Objectives

The training session on the improvement of poor listening styles and specifically pretending to listen has the following two objectives:

1. Understanding of students about the importance of active listening and provision of methods on how they can effectively take part in communication
2. Training the speakers on how they can reshape their speech to force the listener to listen to them actively.
3. OVERVIEW

The exercise will have two main activities. The first one will focus on the listeners and will provide them with training on how they can be effective listeners and avoid pretending that they are listening. The training session will provide them with knowledge about good speaking and listening skills and will help students grasp the ideas from communication and remember the points discussed in the speech effectively. It will improve the speaking power of the speaker and the way he delivers his explanation. The team in this exercise will provide them with key points that they should remember before delivering the speech, which will make their speech more elaborate, easy to interpret and

remembered by the listeners.

Time Needed

The time needed for both activities will be 15 minutes. Both activities will need a 5-minute briefing, five minutes for the activity and 5 minutes for analysis of the results.

Materials Needed

The activity will need the participation of 20 students and the teacher in both activities, therefore, whole class participation is required. The extra help will be provided by the group members, who will provide questionnaires and other relevant materials depending on the activity.

Process/Exercise Steps

The first exercise will focus on the listener, the use of effective communication and listening skills that ensure the listener gets the whole idea of the speech (Fig.2). The training process of the first exercise will proceed as follows:

1. A random person will be selected from the class and given a paper that discusses an argument about a current affair topic.
2. He will be asked to deliver this concept to the class and provide arguments based on his own knowledge.
3. The topic we have selected for the exercise is “gay rights”. The speaker will be asked to provide his consensus on the topic and provide argumentation on his point of view.
4. The rest of the class will be asked to note down the main points of the speech and then recreate it on their papers.
5. After the analysis of the results, the group members will provide guidance to the listeners, and the whole activity will be repeated. The main points of the guidance are as follows:
6. Listen to the central ideas of the speaker and try to adhere to them.
7. Listen to the whole point the speaker is providing and then note down its structure, not a summary. The structure means actual points that the speaker makes.
8. Forget your personal opinions and beliefs about the topic while listening to the speaker and save them for the end of the discussion. Thinking about your personal point of view will blind you to any input from the speaker, and you will not grasp the idea of the speaker.
9. Look for real examples as they are best in developing an understanding of a concept.
10. Show a positive attitude to the speaker so that he stays motivated and does not feel ignored in his speech.
11. Actively respond to the speaker’s arguments in favour or against and provide your point of view if it conflicts with that of the speaker.

12. Ask the speaker questions about the points you are unclear on and demand more elaboration if needed.
13. Ask yourself questions, determine your own position on the topic, and compare and contrast it with the speaker.
14. The guidelines given to the listeners contain active listening methods by which they can improve their listening and understanding of the concept.
15. Students will analyze the results based on the comparison of the papers submitted before and after the training session.

The second activity focuses on the speaker and will train him to improve his speech. The steps for the second activity are as follows:

1. The teacher or any speaker will be asked to deliver a short speech of 2 to 3 minutes on any topic with an argumentation of his views.
2. The students will note down the whole idea of the speech and the arguments the speaker provides for the topic.
3. The results of students following up with the speaker's idea will be assessed based on the accuracy of the arguments collected by students. This will be done by the team members.
4. After the analysis, the whole class, and especially the speaker, will be guided on how he can improve his speech so that the listeners get the whole idea and are encouraged to participate more effectively in the communication. The guidelines given to the speaker and the class are as follows:
5. Evaluate your listeners and understand their interests, knowledge, and biases towards the topic.
6. Proceed with your speech in a gradual manner, and do not bombard the listener with your ideas. Open a topic with a question, provide your answer, and then provide your argument on the topic.
7. Use examples from history or the present time to solidify your point. Care should be taken while choosing examples. If the example is too detailed, the listeners will start grabbing the points of the example and forget the argumentation of the actual discussion. If it is too concise, the listeners may not connect it to the argument and take the negative response from the example.
8. Change your tone throughout the speech and show emphasis on the issue by repeating your points if you think they are difficult for listeners to absorb.
9. Interact with the listeners. Notify the people who seem uninterested in the discussion and ask them if they hold a different opinion.
10. It should be ensured that the whole argumentation supports your thesis. The speaker should never wander off from the main point and go deep into other things rather than discussing the main issue.
11. Conclude your speech by summarizing the topic and analysing the issue based on your argumentation. Ask the listeners if they understood the concept, if they are unclear on any point, or if they have a different point of view about the issue.
12. The activity will be repeated after the training session, and the results of both before and after

will be compared with those of the students.

13. TRAINER NOTES

14. Make sure that all students participate in the activities.
15. Ask each participant whether they are clear about the activity setup or have any problems understanding the training.
16. Make sure to acknowledge the whole training scheme to the teacher and proceed only after his/her approval.
17. The team leader should have this journal as a reference and should have a proper idea of the process before the practical application of the training session.

IPC Debriefing:

The need for [effective listening](#) in interpersonal communication has been described in the paper, and the activities focus on the methods that speakers and listeners will use to improve communication. Based on the topic of our discussion and our activities to provide a solution to the problem, we have formulated five questions that will be asked to the listeners after the completion of the activity. These questions are listed below:

1. What did you discover in this activity? Was your behaviour right before this activity, or are you willing to change your communication methods after this activity?
2. In your opinion, what became the actual cause of improvement of results? Why were the first results not so satisfying? What did you learn from guidelines about interpersonal communication that improved your collective results?
3. Did these activities benefit you in any way? Did this intervention motivate you to change your attitude toward communication in the future?
4. What points have you learned from the activities? How will you apply them in your classroom and daily life communication?
5. Were the guidelines clear? Did you face any difficulty in the activity? Were the team members helpful in resolving problems?

Conclusions

Researching interpersonal communication and people's attitudes in communication gave us knowledge that positive attitudes in communication are the key to a successful process of information exchange. No speaker can convey his message to the listeners if they have a casual attitude, no interest in the topic or are too blinded by their own position on the issue.

We have learned that not only are the listeners required to participate, but the initiator force in the communication is actually the speaker. If the speaker does not interact with the listeners, their chances of paying attention to details in speech will diminish. Also, nobody wants to listen to a person

who takes no input from the audience and just keeps on bashing them with his ideas. The whole idea of communication is to convey your message to others and convince them of your point of view. If this basic purpose of communication fails, there exists no reason why two people spend their time communicating and leaving without any results.

The activity also provided insight into another miscommunication factor in which the listener only focuses on some points of the speech and ignores the rest. This attitude was observed in the activities of the majority of the students, and team members observed that most of the students did not realize they were making mistakes and that it was affecting their absorption of ideas from the speech.

While working on the project, we ourselves faced miscommunication issues, and we first had to change our attitudes towards the team leader in order to effectively communicate within the group. Each of us worked in collaboration to construct this activity. We divided our tasks of research, planning, and realization of the activities and communicated with the team leader on each decision.

This activity can be used to improve communication in any type of work environment. It can provide us guidelines on how we can effectively convey our message to the listener, ensure that his interest in communication remains intact, and he does not have to pretend that he is listening while actually he wants to escape from the situation or only wait for his turn to talk.

Works Cited

4 Principles Of Effective Listening. Marcchesley.com. N. p., 2014. Web. 28 Mar. 2018.
<http://www.marcchesley.com/4-principles-of-effective-listening/#sthash.qsPEgeXw.dpbs>

Brownell, Judi. Listening: Attitudes, principles, and skills. Routledge, 2015.

McMahon, Tim, Tim McMahon, and View profile. "Lean Quote: Effective Listening." Aleanjourney.com. N. p., 2010. Web. 28 Mar. 2018.
<http://www.aleanjourney.com/2010/10/lean-quote-effective-listening.html>

Owolewa, O. Olusegun, and Olu Oyewole. "EFFECTS OF LISTENING STRATEGIES'INSTRUCTION ON STUDENTS'ATTITUDE TO LISTENING." European Journal of Education Studies (2017).

Yen, Yu-Chun Grace, et al. "Listen to Others, Listen to Yourself: Combining Feedback Review and Reflection to Improve Iterative Design." Proceedings of the 2017 ACM SIGCHI Conference on Creativity and Cognition. ACM, 2017.

Appendices

Fig.1 "Effective Listening, Bad and Good Listening"

Fig. 2 “4 Principles of effective learning”