



Title: Reflective Listening

Grade: 8

Career Development Model:

Self-Awareness • Career Planning & Management

Nebraska Career Readiness Standards:

- Contributes to employer & community success
- Manages personal career development

Objective:

- Students will use reflective listening techniques to improve their communication skills.

Materials and Supplies Needed:

- "Tips for Reflective Listening" handout (copies needed)
- "Observer Notes" handout (copies needed)

Class Instructions:

Part 1

1. Ask students to share a time when they had a disagreement with someone because they misunderstood what the other person was saying or the other person misunderstood what they were saying.
2. Explain to students that in communication, it is important that the sender's message is communicated clearly and that the receiver interprets the message as the sender intended.
3. Ask students if they think their disagreement could have been avoided if the speaker believed the listener heard and understood what he or she was saying. One way to accomplish this is through summarizing or "reflecting" what someone said to you.
4. Explain to students that this is called reflective listening. The receiver/ listener will interpret the message through the speaker's words, how the speaker says the words (tone of voice), and body language. The listener will use this information to interpret the speaker's feelings and then paraphrase and restate the message that was

received back to the speaker.

5. Pass out the “Tips for Reflective Listening” handout and discuss the following tips for reflective listening with the students:
 - a. Listen more than talk.
 - b. Try to understand the feelings within what the other person is saying.
 - c. Say how you think the other person feels and try to verify your accuracy (i.e. It sounds like this is really frustrating for you. Is that right?) Don't tell them how they feel or should feel.
 - d. Try to understand where the other person is coming from (put yourself in their shoes.)
 - e. Avoid suggesting solutions.
 - f. Let the other person know that you are listening by maintaining eye contact and nod your head periodically as they speak to encourage them to keep speaking.
 - g. Be sincere by showing the other person that you care about what they are saying and feeling and you want to understand them. This communicates to the other person that you are not trying to judge them; you are just trying to understand them.

Part 2

1. Two teachers should role play the following dialogue to demonstrate reflective listening: (Listener: remember to keep good eye contact with the speaker and periodically nod your head when the speaker is speaking to let him/her know that you are listening and to encourage them to keep speaking).

Speaker: I studied all weekend for the math test. I didn't even go to Jan's party because I knew that getting a good grade on the test was more important than having fun at her party. I felt very prepared when I sat down to take the test, but then I struggled through the entire thing. I got my grade back and I received a “D”, this stinks.

Listener: So you studied all weekend and even skipped Jan's party so you could study and you were disappointed when you received a “D” after all of your preparation.

Speaker: Yes, I just can't believe it. I don't know what I did wrong. I might fail the class now! This is awful; I must be stupid or something.

Listener: It sounds like you are really worried and you are feeling maybe a little defeated, is that right?

Speaker: Yes, I am worried that I will not pass the class and I can't believe that after all that hard work I couldn't even get a “C”. My parents are going to be so mad! I

don't think the teacher followed the study guide that she gave us!

Listener: You sound like you might be angry and frustrated.

Speaker: Of course I am! This is just horrible.

2. Break students up into small groups of three. Tell students that they are going to be doing a role play; each person will have the chance to act as the speaker, the listener and an observer. The speaker should think of a time that they felt frustrated, betrayed, disappointed or stressed and be prepared to discuss that situation with the listener. The speaker should follow the tips for reflective listening on the "Tips for Reflective Listening" handout. The goal is for the listener to understand the message that the speaker is sending and to understand the speaker's feelings within the message. The listener should also convey that he/ she cares about how the speaker feels and what he/she has to say. The observer should rate how well the listener used reflective listening, using the "Observer Notes" handout. Each role play should be 1-2 minutes.
3. After students complete the role play, facilitate a discussion about their experience. Be sure to discuss the following:
 - a. Have you ever listened to anyone in this way before?
 - b. How did it feel to be listened to in this way?
 - c. How did it feel to listen to someone else in this way?
 - d. What was the hardest part about using reflective listening?
 - e. Can you think of any specific careers where reflective listening would be important?
 - f. Can you think of any careers where reflective listening would be useful? Are there any careers where reflective listening isn't needed? (Students should come to the conclusion that reflective listening can be useful in all careers and all interpersonal relationships. It helps improve their interpretation of other's messages; therefore they may avoid disagreements that stem from misunderstandings and conflicts.)

Credits/Sources:

Making my
FUTURE
WORK

“Making my Future Work: A College and Career Readiness Program”, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

<https://www.csuohio.edu/cehs/mmfw/making-my-future-work-0>

OBSERVER NOTES

Rate the listener on the following (you may list specific examples below the category if you would like):

1: Very Poor 2: Poor 3: Barely Acceptable 4: Good 5: Very Good

Eye Contact: 1 2 3 4 5

Appropriate head nods: 1 2 3 4 5

Paraphrasing the sender's message: 1 2 3 4 5

Identifying the correct feeling of the sender: 1 2 3 4 5

Conveying to the sender that he/she cares
and wants to understand how the sender feels
and what the sender is saying: 1 2 3 4 5

TIPS FOR REFLECTIVE LISTENING:

- Listen more than talk.
- Try to understand the feelings within what the other person is saying.
- Say how you think the other person feels and try to verify your accuracy (i.e., It sounds like this is really frustrating for you. Is that right?) Don't tell them how they feel or should feel.
- Try to understand where the other person is coming from (put yourself in their shoes.)
- Avoid suggesting solutions.
- Let the other person know that you are listening by maintaining eye contact and nod your head periodically as they speak to encourage them to keep speaking.
- Be sincere by showing the other person that you care about what they are saying and feeling and you want to understand them. This communicates to the other person that you are not trying to judge them; you are just trying to understand them.