



Enhancing Student Support: Personal Tutor group sessions

Developing your Graduate Attributes

Communication: Listening

The purpose of this session is to introduce tutees to the concept and value of effective listening (as part of 'Communication': the University's Graduate Attributes Framework), and the impact of effective listening on their employability. The plan below outlines potential activities that may be undertaken by the tutor during the session in order to meet the objective and the outcomes; *it isn't however a fixed structure and should be adjusted according to the needs and expectations of the learners.*

This introductory session is planned to take between 45 and 60 minutes and is designed to be a group session (up to around 20 tutees). As any training in communication is an ongoing, continuous learning process, tutees will be encouraged to record and share any reflections with their peer group after the session and possibly design a skill development plan or identify personal SMART objectives for the development of listening as part of the University's Graduate Attributes framework.

SESSION OUTCOMES

By the end of the session learners/tutees will have:

1. Defined the concept of listening and reflected on different ways effective listening can enhance employability
2. Discussed the meaning of 'effective listening' based on own understanding and experience
3. Identified and discussed the wider context for listening skills development (global context, digitalised communication, employment challenges, academic study, etc) and its impact
4. Identified and discussed potential barriers to listening ('listening killers'),
5. (Optional, to be encouraged as a follow up from the session): Identified personal goals for development (SMART)

Activity description and proposed timing	Learning approaches or methods used	Resources	Outcome	Comments (e.g. learning styles)	Potential challenges	Potential benefits
<p>Welcome, introductions and purpose of session. Discussing expectations of the group.</p> <p>5 mins</p>	<p><u>Slide 2:</u> Short introduction to session, including some thought-provoking quotes on listening. Interactive element focusing on getting learners engaged in sharing expectations for the session.</p>	<p>Post-It notes for expectations. PowerPoint, projector.</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Post-It notes give the less outspoken participants a chance to feel more confident participating by writing.</p>	<p>Disengaged learners unsure of the purpose of the session ('I can listen well!' attitude)</p>	<p>Identifying expectations shifts focus of the session onto the learner and involves them on a more personal level. Sharing individual expectation offers a flexible approach to facilitation and participants' involvement in making the session relevant and useful.</p>
<p>Tutor explaining aims of the training session</p> <p>3 mins</p>	<p><u>Slide 3</u> Outcomes should be flexible and open to adaptation and negotiation, according to the level, needs and expectation of the learners.</p>	<p>PowerPoint slides, projector</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>A structured approach to clear outcomes preferred by many learners, however open and flexible to allow for a relevant session</p>	<p>Some outcomes might have to be adjusted according to the level of the group (to pitch at the right level). Outcomes may seem too 'academic' so it is up to the tutor</p>	

					to adapt these and/or present them in an engaging way.	
<p>What is listening? Definition and links with employability</p> <p>7- 10 minutes</p>	<p><u>Slide 4 and 5:</u></p> <p>Learners in small groups or pairs come up with their own definition of listening and share with the rest of the group. Tutor follows up with some academic definitions on PowerPoint, leading to short discussion on some interesting similarities and differences among definitions.</p> <p>Activity followed up by small group discussion: <i>'Why effective listening is an important skill for a university learner AND a graduate?'</i></p> <p>Students can collate their answers on Post-It notes or write them in the inner circle (see next activity)</p>	Handout, post it notes	1	Informal, peer discussion		<p>The activity actively involves learners into defining what effective listening is and comparing it with definitions provided from sources (potential boost of confidence). Personalised descriptions and definitions and reflecting on listening as a Graduate Attribute, can make the session practical and relevant, facilitating future transfer to employment.</p>
<p>Participants 'building' the wider context</p>	<p><u>Slide 6 and 7:</u> Wider context</p> <p>Team-based activity to visually represent</p>	PowerPoint for instructions.	3	Kinaesthetic, visual and auditory	Initial hostility or disengagement (some	

<p>for listening</p> <p>7 mins</p>	<p>listening skills in a wider context.</p> <p>Students can draw a model with two circles : an inner one to represent their definition of listening and relevance for employability, the outer one can be the representation of the wider context: the challenges of effective listening in the 21st century (the ideas could include global and intercultural challenges, digitalising of communication, people being too busy to listen, distractions, text speak, trust, bias, etc)</p> <p>The activity may also function as a team ice-breaker. Short open discussion as a follow up: reflections on how context may impact on the listening skill.</p>	<p>Big-gish sheet of paper (A3 preferably) to draw the two circles</p>		<p>approach in a small team project context.</p>	<p>participants may expect a tutor's PowerPoint presentation at this stage). Discussion may stray off and become too vague; facilitator must keep it on track.</p>	
<p>Evaluating of the relevance of effective listening from previous experience</p> <p>10 mins</p>	<p><u>Slide 8 and 9</u></p> <p>Small (focus) group discussion. Learner-centred. For less advanced or engaged students, some guiding questions can be provided (see PowerPoint)</p> <p><u>Slide 10:</u> a short role play (optional!)</p> <p>Students get into groups of 3: one is the speaker, second the listener and third is the observer: see example handout (can be adapted) at http://new.learnhigher.ac.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/look_and_listen.pdf (licensed under Creative Commons</p>	<p>Handout to record key conclusions and reflections</p> <p>Handouts with instructions</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Recalling specific situations: thinking, feeling in Kolb's cycle. Utilisation of reflection and experimentation</p>	<p>Unwillingness to speak of previous experience, lack of trust towards other students and/or the tutor.</p> <p>With the role play, instructions have to be very clear and handout given out and explained prior to starting</p>	<p>Creating a climate of sharing and trust. Speaking of situations one has been through and practising through a short role play brings a more real-life dimension into the subject matter of the session.</p>

<p>Identifying potential barriers to listening ('listening killers')</p> <p>10 – 15 mins</p>	<p><u>Slide 11 and 12:</u> A light-hearted and interactive presentation on listening 'killers' and barriers to listening (references to: ego, projections, anticipations, laundry lists, 'isms', performing OR mind reader, rehearser, filterer, dreamer, identifier, comparer, etc). Students should be encouraged to come up with definitions or descriptions for each 'type' (if time allows)</p>					
<p>Close/Feedback from session and final presentation on listening</p>	<p>Learners are encouraged to look back at their initial expectations (on the Post-It notes) and reflect on what they learned through the session, how they may apply this learning as a current student and a future graduate, and what else they would like to learn or/and know.</p> <p>This may be accompanied by a learning journal (online, Pebble-Pad – My EdGE - Communication) in which learners will be able to evaluate more fully and in a more personal and qualitative way the learning experience and skill development experienced and how well they think the session helped them meet the outcomes and the expectations. This can also be used to monitor further progress towards specific development goals set in the session.</p> <p>More 'experienced' learners, particularly PG, should be encouraged to produce a set of individual SMART development goals in listening skill and decide on the best way to follow up</p>				<p>Some learners, particularly UG, might find self-reflection daunting or uncomfortable. Tutor should encourage reflective thinking and refer to importance of reflection in academic study and professional practice</p>	

	<p>IF time allows, the session may be closed with a positive video: Julian Treasure, <i>5 ways to listen better</i>, speaking at TED conference, Edinburgh, Scotland.</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSohjYQI2A</p> <p>Follow up: There's a series of inspiring talks from TED.com on the value of listening (from various perspectives, contexts, etc): encourage students to watch these http://blog.ted.com/2012/11/26/8-talks-on-the-importance-of-listening-and-how-to-do-a-much-better-job-of-it/</p>					