

## LISTENING SKILLS

### Listening is Tuning In

Lecture is still the most common method of instruction. Yet many students lack the necessary listening skills for learning effectively in a lecture classroom. Listening means **choosing to focus your attention on what you are hearing**. It also means knowing what you've heard and trying to make sense of it.

### Listening is Active

Your mind takes an active role. Information is being taken in and the mind is reacting to it and sorting and storing the information.

### Hearing is Passive

The sound is hardly noticed and the mind is not necessarily acting on it (wind, music, conversation, bird, etc.

Students may view the 20 minute video - "How to Listen Effectively" in the ILAC upon request.

You can become a more active listener by using these skills:

- **Choose to listen** - Choose to tune in to what you are hearing. Tell yourself, "I am awake and alert and I am choosing to listen carefully." The mind is a marvelous machine and can do more than one thing at a time. Recognize when your mind is beginning to wander and attention begins to drift. You must take control of your mind and redirect it back to the speaker.
- **Good eye contact** - Where the eyes go, the mind follows. Keep your eyes on the speaker and your attention will stay focused.
- **Focus on the speaker** - Hear the speaker out. Anticipate what the speaker will say. Anticipate the conclusion of the thought or passage.
- **Try to figure out how the lecture is organized** - Listen for pattern words such as first, second, third, next, last. Listen for clue words such as why - result of, cause - effect, etc. Common patterns of organization are:

*Description or narration*

*Cause /effect*

*Comparison/contrast*

*Definition*

*List*

*Sequence/time*



- **Watch the body language of the speaker** - If the speaker repeats a word or phrase or taps the board, it is a signal that this is something important to the speaker and an item you should remember. Recognize important information. You can often hear a change in the speaker's voice when something is said that is important. Instructors will often speak louder,

slower or give verbal clues. If the speaker says, "Remember this," you had better make a note of it because you will probably have to reproduce it on a quiz in the future. Anything your instructor takes time to write on the board or overhead should be considered to be very important.

- **Become an active listener** - Be involved with the speaker with a nod of the head in agreement or disagreement. Don't be afraid to raise your hand and ask questions. It is often a compliment to the speaker to know you are taking an interest in what he is saying.
- **Take notes** - When you need to remember what you are hearing, take notes on it. Your mind thinks faster than anyone can talk. This is the reason your mind wanders. When you take notes, your mind has something additional to do. Taking notes helps you pay attention and keeps your mind focused.

