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Sincerely,
Karen Haag

How To Show You're Listening Minilesson

Preparation: Choose a child that can tell you a story in front of the class and won't get frustrated at your interruptions. Tell her ahead of time that you want to tell a story to demonstrate bad listening skills and then good listening skills. Help the student think about an interesting story to tell.



ENGAGE

Tell the students that a child has an interesting story to tell.

EXPLAIN the Learning Target

I can listen effectively.

T: "By the end of today's lesson you will demonstrate that you know how to listen by using some how to show you're listening tips you will learn in this lesson. Let's see how well you do right now."

Cycle One

1. The student you selected starts to tell you a story while you model "non-listening" strategies. During the telling of the story, interrupt the student. Say things that build off his story that are about you. For ex: He says: I have a dog. You say, Oh, I have a dog. I love my dog.
2. Stop the child in the middle of the story when you think the students have the point.
3. Ask your students whether you were listening well. Reach consensus if there is any disagreement.
4. Ask the students to tell you the behaviors that show that you aren't listening. They will probably say you interrupted him. You were talking too much.
5. Ask them to help you start a list of listening behaviors to follow. They will probably say, Stop Talking!
 - Stop talking. (This tip will be revised but go with it for now.)

Cycle Two

1. Start again: ask your volunteer to tell you the same story starting from the beginning.
2. This time, follow the suggestions your class made, but use your body language to show you are not listening. For example, twirl your hair, turn around, and look at your watch or the clock.
3. Stop in the middle of the child's story again. Turn to the students and ask them if you were listening this time. When they say no, act shocked. Say something like, "But I stopped talking. I never said a thing!"
4. Ask them what ELSE a good listener has to do. Add their recommendations to the anchor chart. They will probably say things like:
 - Look at the person.
 - Use your body language to show you're listening like nod when he talks.
 - You can say things like, Oh really? Or, I can't believe that.

If students don't come up with suggestions prompt them with questions. Be sure to revisit the No Talking At All tip because a good conversationalist does talk - just not about her stories.

Cycle Three

1. Try again. The third time, model how to listen well.
2. When the storyteller finishes, ask him if he felt like you listened. The first two times, you asked the class. This time, ask the listener.
3. I usually tell a story at this point and you might have one as well: I was one of 5 children. Something happened when I was playing outside and I came in to tell my mother about it. She was standing at the kitchen peeling potatoes. After a few minutes, she put down the peeler, looked at me and said, "This is really important. I can tell by how upset you are." When she looked at me like that, I felt very listened to. Was she listening before? Yes. We all can do two things at once.
4. Make the point: listening is not about the listener. *It is about whether the speaker feels listened to.* Does the person who is speaking feel that her ideas are heard?
5. Add their good listening behavior suggestions to the chart. Keep the chart in a visible spot all year.

Students EXPLAIN

Students THINK-PAIR-SHARE and explain the most important idea of the lesson. (Listening is not about the listener. *It is about whether the speaker feels listened to.*)

EVALUATE:

Ask students to get in groups of 2 or 3 to listen to one another. Each speaker can decide whether to tell a short story or explain what she learned about the lesson today. The listener's job is to make the speaker feel listened to by following the tips on the chart. Walk among the groups with a clipboard or your notebook and take notes.

CLOSURE

Give immediate feedback to the students. Tell them what you saw that was good listening. Point out what you think they still need to work on - without naming names.

Tell the students that as you discover more tips during the year, you will add them.

Make a copy of the chart for students to add to their reader's notebooks that they can add to as well.