

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES: REFLECTIVE LISTENING

1. ABC: This activity demonstrates distracted listening
  - a. Organize students into pairs. Let them designate who is A and who is B.
  - b. Write a conversation prompt on the board. The topic should be something the speaker will care about. For example, "What do you most admire in people and why? What do you most abhor in people in why? Where did those attitudes or values come from?" Another option is, "What people have influenced you the most and how might your life be different without them?"
  - c. While A is contemplating what to say on the topic above, give B an instruction sheet that reads as follows:

ABC

DO NOT ALLOW YOUR PARTNER TO READ THIS SHEET

As your partner is talking, keep track of the total number of words he or she uses that begin with "a," "b," and "c." Do not include the articles "a" and "an" or the conjunction "and." Do not tell your partner what you are doing. You can take part in the conversation, but be sure to keep an accurate score while your partner is talking.
  - d. Give partners 5 minutes for the exercise before discussing as a class.
  
2. NL: This activity demonstrates not listening
  - a. Keeping the same pairs as above, write a second prompt on the board. This time B will be the speaker on the given topic.
  - b. While B is contemplating what to say on the topic, give A an instruction sheet that reads as follows:

NL

DO NOT ALLOW YOUR PARTNER TO READ THIS SHEET

The "NL" in the title stands for "Not Listening." While your partner is talking, your task is to not listen. You may attempt to not listen in any way you like, as long as you stay in your seat. You may occasionally say something, but it need not relate to what your partner has been saying. Although your partner may realize you are not being attentive, do not tell him or her that you are not deliberately not listening.
  - c. Give partners 5 minutes for the exercise before discussing as a class.
  
3. Reflective Listening: This activity demonstrates the value of reflective listening when it is the hardest – that is, when people disagree.
  - a. Conversation topics for the exercise may be provided at the start of the exercise, or may be provided in the previous class period to allow students to prepare.
  - b. List at least three issues on the board that are likely to spark disagreement.

- Examples: Social media companies SHOULD (NOT) be responsible for censoring content
  - There ARE (NOT) religious/moral grounds by which services can reasonably be denied to people based on their identity.
  - Gun laws SHOULD (NOT) be loosened.
  - Abortion laws SHOULD (NOT) be stricter.
- c. Organize students into trios. Let them designate who is A, B, and C.
  - d. Round 1: A picks the topic. B picks the position (pro/con). A will therefore take the opposite position. C is the rule keeper.
  - e. Round 2: B picks the topic. C picks the position. A is the rule keeper.
  - f. Round 3: C picks the topic. A picks the position. B is the rule keeper.
  - g. If the group is not divisible by 3, have two pairs and let them work as a group of 4 in Round 3.
  - h. Remind them of the elements of reflective listening (affirming contact, paraphrasing the expressed, clarifying the implicit, reflecting core feelings, silence, eye contact).
  - i. Explain the rules of the exercise as follows: If A begins the conversation, before B responds, B must paraphrase what A said first. After B speaks, A must paraphrase what B said before responding. And so on. At any point that A or B speaks without first paraphrasing, C must pause the conversation and get them back on track.
  - j. Suggest “bonus points” for going beyond paraphrasing and adding clarification of the implicit and reflection of core feelings.
  - k. Allow 8-10 minutes for each round before discussing as a class.