

The Artist as Entrepreneur

Are You Listening?

Lesson Description

This lesson should follow I Say Tomato, You See Tomato. In this lesson, students study non-verbal communication. Developing communication and negotiation skills is particularly important for the entrepreneur, and may be daunting for the young artist who wishes to build a business in the arts. This lesson provides practice in “hearing” what is being communicated through appearance, movements, and voice.

Concept

Non-verbal communication

Related Subject Area

Communications

Objectives

Students will:

Identify non-verbal forms of communication used by speakers in their groups
Identify non-verbal forms of communication used by reporters on news shows

Materials

notebook for each student (or sheets of paper for each student)
one set of Non-verbal Communication cards for each group of five students.

Non-verbal Communication Cards

- A. Presenter
- B. Physical Appearance
- C. Kinesthetics (body position and movement)
- D. Eye Movement
- E. Sound (tone of voice, inflection, volume)

Procedure

1. Discuss the benefits of effective listening: the ability to help others; social acceptance and popularity; greater knowledge of others; the ability to avoid problems; power and influence; the ability to make more reasoned and reasonable decisions.
2. Ask students to suggest guidelines for nonjudgmental listening: keeping an open mind; avoiding over-simplification of complex issues; recognizing their own biases; focusing on content not delivery; resisting evaluation until the speaker’s views are understood.

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3. Place students in groups of three and instruct them to practice listening. Assign roles of speaker, listener, and observer. The speaker should present his/her view on a topic about which he/she feels strongly. The listener then paraphrases or summarizes the speaker's point of view. The observer and the speaker give the listener feedback on the accuracy of the summary. Rotate roles until everyone has had an opportunity to practice skillful listening. Ask the students what it was like to be the listener and what it was like to be the speaker.
4. Place students into groups of five and instruct members of each group to sit in a circle. Distribute a different card to each person in the group. A is the first presenter. B, C, D, and E are the listeners. Instruct the presenter to speak on a meaningful topic (such as a problem he/she is experiencing at home, in school, or at work). The presenter should speak for no more than one minute. The listeners should record the presenter's non-verbal behavior in their notebooks or on a piece of paper. The non-verbal behavior each listener is recording should address the non-verbal behavior written on each listener's card.
5. As time permits, rotate the cards so that several or all of the students in each group has an opportunity to present.
6. Ask the following questions:
 - As a speaker, did you feel self-conscious knowing that you were being observed in so many ways? (Answers will vary, but many students may say yes.)
 - Do you think people are aware of the non-verbal messages they send to the listener? (Answers will vary.)
 - Did anyone observe an instance where the speaker's talk seemed at odds with his or her body language – kinesthetics? (Answers will vary, but students might note non-verbal communication such as a student who was smiling or seemed indifferent while discussing something unpleasant. Students might have observed the speaker looking down or avoiding eye contact while discussing something embarrassing, which would be the expected behavior. However, students might have observed the speaker looking down or avoiding eye contact while trying to convince the listener to take the speaker's side on an issue, in which case the behavior would be at odds with the verbal message.)
 - Did anyone observe a change in a speaker's voice as he/she related his story? (Answers will vary, but students should note instances where a student's voice grew in volume and increased in pitch with excitement or anger.)
 - Will you be more aware of non-verbal messages others send and non-verbal message you send as a result of this exercise? (Answers will vary.) Why? (Non-verbal messages are significant in communication. People can learn a lot by observing non-verbal messages.)

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Closure

Explain that listening is hard work. It takes concentration and patience. Effective listening is a valuable communication tool because it improves our ability to gather information, create rapport, clarify assumptions and perceptions, promote information exchange and mutual understanding, and diffuse negative emotions.

Instruct students to observe a network broadcast (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX) of the national news and report on the non-verbal communication during a particular story. Then, instruct students to observe a program where debate on a topic in the news takes place. Have students write a brief report on differences in non-verbal communication they observe when a news topic is being debated versus when the news topic is simply being reported.