

Active Listening



CASEL SEL COMPETENCY

RS Relationship Skills

Gathering: Pantomime

Ask students to think of something they like to do. Tell them you will act out something you enjoy doing without using any words. Ask students to raise their hand quietly when they think they know what it is. Pantomime the activity you enjoy doing. Call on students to guess what the activity is until you get a correct response. Have that student come up and pantomime an activity she likes to do. Continue for a while, stopping at your discretion or when interest wanes. If a student who answers correctly does not want to pantomime, you could have her choose another student to take her place.

Agenda Check

Was what we just did communication? Briefly discuss responses. **In the last lesson, we learned that communication consists of sending information and receiving it. Today we are going to practice two important listening skills. Good listening is not like resting; we have to work actively at doing a good job. Sometimes we call this kind of listening Active Listening. One thing that active listeners do well is paraphrase, or say back, what the speaker said. Have you ever seen famous people being interviewed on TV? Today some of you are going to be interviewed and then we will practice paraphrasing the things we learned during the interviews (Paraphrasing Interviews). Another thing that active listeners do is to ask clarifying questions. Clarifying questions help the speaker say more about what she is talking about so that we can understand her better. We will also practice this (Clarifying Questions). At the end, we will review what we did (Summary) and then do a closing (Closing).**

Activity: Paraphrasing Interviews

1. Choose a volunteer to come to the front of the class to be interviewed.
2. Ask the audience to use all their good listening skills because after the interview you are going to see how much they can remember and ask them to paraphrase it back.
3. Welcome the student onto the show. Using the “microphone,” ask questions and then point the “microphone” toward your “guest.” Some possible questions are:
 - What kind of things do you like to do?
 - Tell me about your family.

Workshop Agenda

- Gathering: Pantomime
- Agenda Check
- Activity: Paraphrasing Interviews
- Activity: Clarifying Questions
- Summary
- Closing: Something New

Materials

- Workshop agenda, written on chart paper and posted
- Good Listening Chart from Lesson 7
- Prop to use as a microphone

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to demonstrate paraphrasing skills.
- Students will be able to ask clarifying questions to increase understanding.

Connections to Standards

Behavioral Studies

- Understands that practice helps us improve and also how often and hard we try to learn

Working with Others

- Demonstrates respect for others in the group
 - Engages in Active Listening
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- Do you have pets?
 - What's your favorite ____ (color, food, book, movie, etc.)?
 - If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
 - What kind of work do you think you might like to do when you're older?
4. Once you have asked a general question and the student has responded, try to ask clarifying questions. For example, if you asked about pets and the student replied, "I have a dog," you could ask, "What's your dog's name?", "What kind of dog is it?", "Have you had him a long time?" etc.
 5. Have the student stay in front of the audience and ask students to raise their hand if they can paraphrase one thing they learned about the interviewee. Have students share their paraphrase directly with the student. Rather than saying, "She has a dog named Rover," have the student look at the interviewee and say, "You have a dog named Rover." If a student remembers something inaccurately, the interviewee usually corrects it instinctively, saying something like, "His name is Rascal." This is a good opportunity to point out one of the benefits of paraphrasing.
 6. You or the interviewee can call on students. Continue until they have recalled everything or can't remember any more information. At the end of the interview, thank the student for appearing. (Applause is nice.)
 7. Repeat with another volunteer, if time permits.

Activity: Clarifying Questions

1. Tell students that for the next interview, you are going to have the audience think of, and ask, clarifying questions.
2. Begin the interview as with the previous ones, but once the interviewee has responded with something that could be elaborated upon, ask members of the audience to raise their hand if they can think of a good question related to what the speaker just said. Remind them that clarifying questions do not change the subject; they just ask the speaker for more information about what has already been said. With each category or subject you introduce, have the other students ask all the clarifying questions. When the questions have stopped, or interest has waned, open up a new subject with a different question.
3. If time is available and interest is still high, you could do one more interview.

Summary

Today we have practiced two very important active listening skills. What does it mean to paraphrase? What is good about paraphrasing? (People feel listened to when the person they are talking to repeats what they have said and they have a chance to correct any misunderstandings.) **How did it feel to be interviewed?**

How did it feel when students asked clarifying questions? When someone asks us for more information about something we have just talked about, it can feel like people are really interested in us and that feels good. Where do you think you can practice these active listening skills?

Closing: Something New

How many of you learned something new about someone in our class? What's something you learned? Have a few students share, popcorn style.

Extensions and Infusion Ideas

Continued Interviews

Continue with student interviews until all students have been interviewed.

Adult Interviews

Invite an adult such as the principal, or other community leader that your students would know or be interested in, to come to your class for an interview. Help the students brainstorm questions ahead of time. Plan and rehearse the interview process. Then brainstorm and practice what kind of clarifying questions might be appropriate as follow-ups to likely responses to major interview questions.

Active Listening Role-Plays

Have students brainstorm a list of common conflicts. Choose one of the conflicts from the list and have volunteer students role-play the scenario. Stop the role-play; discuss what is happening in the conflict and how the characters are feeling. Ask students: **Are they being good listeners? What could they do differently?**

After a short discussion, have the role-players continue, using the audience's suggestions to help resolve the conflict. Point out and encourage paraphrasing. Have the players complete the role-play, continuing to incorporate the suggestions from the class. The goal is to show how good listening can make a difference when solving problems. Encourage students to talk from their own perspective. Suggest that they begin their sentences with the word *I*.

Ask: **How did the conflict change once the actors started listening to each other? What did they do to be better listeners? Did you hear any clarifying questions? What difference did it make when the characters paraphrased or started with the word *I*?**

Teachable Moments

There are many opportunities in the school day when we can help students practice better listening skills. When conflicts occur, encourage the participants to paraphrase what the other person has said or is feeling. When a student has asked an inappropriate, off-topic question, gently point out that the question was not a clarifying question.

When conflicts occur, encourage the participants to paraphrase what the other person has said or is feeling.

Describe what it feels like for you to be interrupted with an off-topic question, and help the student identify a more appropriate time for her question to be asked.

Connecting to Literature

How Jackrabbit Got His Very Long Ears, by Heather Irbinskas
(Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing, 1994) Gr. K-3

Summary: The Great Spirit makes creatures to live in the desert and then assigns Jackrabbit to acquaint the creatures with their new homes. Because he doesn't listen carefully, Jackrabbit gives incorrect information to Tortoise, Bobcat, and Roadrunner, harming their self-esteem. The Great Spirit kindly affirms the other creatures and gives Jackrabbit ears that will help him in the future.

1. Why didn't Jackrabbit listen well to the Great Spirit?
2. What wrong messages did Jackrabbit give the other animals, and what should he have told each?
3. What happened as a result of Jackrabbit's wrong messages?
4. Can you think of some things that might happen if someone gives you a message and you do not hear it correctly.

The Big Bad Rumor, by Jonathan Meres
(New York: Orchard Books, 2000) Gr. K-3

Summary: The goose says a big bad wolf is coming and the message gets garbled throughout. At the end there is a sad little wolf – and his dad.

1. Why do you think the animals had such a hard time listening?
 2. What happens when we don't listen? Give an example if you can.
 3. How could the animals have made sure they heard the message correctly before passing it on?
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