

Effective Communication Skills

Introduction: This activity deals with whether you a good listener. Do you listen carefully?

Materials: 8 ½ X 11 sheet of paper for each person

Time Frame: 15 minutes plus discussion time

Directions: Hand out paper to all the students. You will read the instructions given in the following paragraph. Your listeners should not see these.

Instructions to students: This exercise requires listening to and following directions. As you hear the oral instructions, perform the requested task.

1. No one may ask questions during this activity
2. You may use only the materials given to you for the exercise.
3. You must close your eyes during the activity—no peeking.
4. Fold your sheet of paper in half
5. Tear off the upper right hand corner.
6. Fold your paper in half again.
7. Tear of the lower right hand corner.
8. Fold your paper in half..
9. Tear off the upper left hand corner
10. Fold in half a final time.
11. Tear off the lower left hand corner.
12. Unfold your paper and hold it up.
13. Open your eyes, look at your product and compare it with the other student's products



Debrief:

- What happened? Does everyone's product look the same? Remember when you communicate with others, they may not receive the message you sent. Individual perceptions vary.
- If you were given the same directions, why are everyone's products different?
- What does this mean to you as a communicator?

Variations:

1. You may elect to have students try to write their own directions for this folding exercise. You would then regroup into listening teams. Have each team member read his/her directions aloud as the remaining members attempt the paper folding exercise.

2. Have the students write detailed instructions from school to their home. Can anyone else follow those directions? Determine whose directions were easiest to follow. Discuss.
 - What did or did not work with your directions?
 - What did you do to communicate more accurately in the second exercise?
 - Why are good communications needed in every facet of life?
 - What types of situations in real life could be avoided if there was always clear communication?