

Learning Activity: Focusing on listening

Learning Behaviours: listening skills

Teacher: JSD

DATE: 13 /9/05

Class: 8C science

What makes a good listener?

Think, pair, share

Real listening is an active process and has three basic steps.

Hearing

The just means listening enough to catch what the speaker is saying. If you can repeat a fact then you have heard what has been said.

Understanding

The next part of listening happens when you have heard and understand it in your own way. You can phrase it in your own words.

Judging

After you understand what has been said the next step is to think about whether it makes sense. Either question it or justify it.

Hearing (1 point)	Understanding (2 points)	Judging (3 points)
No two zebras are alike.	The pattern of stripes is different for each zebra	How could the stripes be different for every zebra? But then again, fingerprints are different for every person. I think this seems believable.

Discussion Tool: *Discussion*

We used their comments from the grid to talk about the scientific concepts and we then talked about how this type of listening can improve their understanding of the topic.

Student Comments

The statement given was that light travels faster than sound.

Examples of how they showed understanding:

Light travels at a faster speed than sound

Sound is slower than light.

Light is known to be the fastest travelling thing.

Sound is slower at travelling than light.

If light and sound were both travelling the same distance, light would get there first.

Examples of how they made judgements

Light is faster than sound because a jet can break the sound barrier, but you never hear of something breaking the light barrier.

How do we know light is fastest if we haven't tested everything in the universe.

There is the saying 'as fast as the speed of light' so I think it's believable.

Teacher Journal

What is my intention? What do I want to achieve?

I wanted students to understand how important listening is. I also wanted to take them a step further to notice the difference between listening and understanding. I want this to lead them onto questioning what is being presented to them by getting them to make a judgement on what has been said. I guess I am trying to do two things, make class discussion run smoother and to encourage them to be more inquisitive.

What happened?

The students really took the approach on board. We talked first about their ideas of what makes a good student and made a list on the board. I then pulled out a statement that a good listener is someone who shows understanding. I used this to talk about the level of listening and introduced the grid above. We then had a go at using the grid. I read them out the statement 'light travels faster than sound'. I told them I was going to repeat it only twice and they had to show they heard it by writing it down, show they understood it by putting it in their own words and make a judgement on it by giving an example that proves to them that it is true or by questioning the statement. The students did this really well and took their time and really thought about their responses. We then discussed their ideas and I made a big deal out of some of the really good responses. We then tried it again with the statement 'light only travels in straight lines' and 'as light passes from air to glass it refracts'.

What feelings and senses surround the event?

The students took the task really seriously and most of their answers were quite thoughtful. We had decided to focus on listening as a group the lesson before and I was keeping a listening record at the same time so they knew I was really serious about the focus and they seemed to understand the benefit of it.

What was I thinking? What was I feeling?

I actually couldn't believe they responded so well. It was almost like they thought that they were showing they could make intelligent comments and they were pretty proud to share them with the class.

What were the important elements of the event?

I think that the class had a particular focus when I introduced the task. I also tried to talk the process up as being difficult and higher order thinking task and they took that as a challenge.

What was the outcome?

The students are being more inquisitive with their questioning now and are challenging some of the idea's I am presenting. It is keeping me on my toes.

What do I think the students got out of the event?

That their was more to listening that just hearing what was being said.

What might I change next time around?

I did another one the next lesson and now I haven't done it again for a while. I would try and do more so they can get a better handle on it.