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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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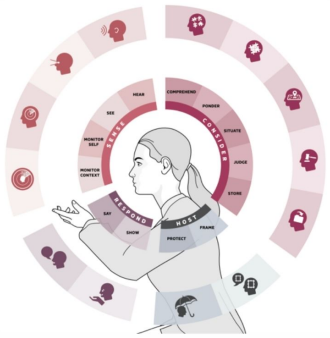
Mindful Ears:

Teaching Active Listing Strategies in an Oral Communications Course at New Mexico State University

4 Steps to Active Listening:

1.) Host
2.) Sense
3.) Consider
4.) Respond



"To comprehend what each speaker is saying, listeners must focus on the central message without implying a second meaning."

INTRODUCTION

- Active listening is a fundamental communication skill. Sadly, the ability to listen effectively remains a critical growth area outlined by the Association for Public Land Grant Universities (APLU, 2024).
- Engaging students in active listening strategies can help improve oral communication skills in multiple settings; however, active listening does not necessarily mean listening to grievances (Rogers, 1979), which can sometimes feel exhausting.
- **Guided by Rost and Wilson's (2013) four steps** to improve active listening—1) engaging a host, 2) activating senses, 3) identifying what listeners consider, and 4) noting response to key messages.
- Listening is a fundamental role in every job. It is particularly key for future communicators to practice listening skills so they may be better prepared for workforce needs (APLU, 2024).

ABSTRACT

How it Works

- Used in an "Oral Communication and Effective Leadership" course (***n* = 144**) at New Mexico State University.
- We engaged this activity in a small and large group setting.
  - **Phase 1** - Students broke into pairs to meet someone new. Individuals introduced themselves to their partners by elaborating on five personal questions. Students could then capture as much as they could remember from the conversation and answer the five questions about their partner on a piece of paper
  - **Phase 2** -Students applied the Rost and Wilson (2013) four-step active listening framework to popular culture music references. Students then identified the matching lyrics in each clip.

RESULTS

- Students enjoyed bridges connections between listening skills and popular songs.
- With information ranging from personal connections to predicted connections, this allowed students to connect in a personal way, but also connect in a pop culture realm.
- We identified that this teaching activity created challenges for students with hearing impairments, so we will modify future lessons to include captions and QR codes to songs where they can listen on their personal devices.
- We also recommend pairing this activity with a self-assessment so students can reflect on their personal listening habits.