

DIFFERENT TYPES OF LISTENING

OHT 3.1 identifies some different types of listening and explanatory notes follow.

INFORMATIVE LISTENING

Where your aim is to concentrate on the message being given. This may be the content of a lesson, directions, instructions, etc. Ask the team whether they use any strategies to help them focus or retain information in this context. Are there any ideas here for helping pupils with auditory learning difficulties?

The pre-session task is a useful awareness raising exercise that should:

- illustrate that informative listening is HARD WORK
- confirm that it is difficult to retain information we have listened to
- reveal some of the obstructions to effective listening
- remind colleagues how hard it must be for pupils to keep up their concentration levels all day long.

Ask colleagues which parts they found it easiest to remember and why. Feedback from this introductory activity could lead on to a sharing of experiences and a discussion about preferred learning styles. As a team, discuss the extent to which visual or kinaesthetic learners' needs are recognized and addressed in classrooms.

APPRECIATIVE LISTENING

Where the listener gains pleasure/satisfaction from listening to a certain type of music for example. Appreciative sources might also include particular charismatic speakers or entertainers. These are personal preferences and may have been shaped through our experiences and expectations.

CRITICAL LISTENING

Where the listener may be trying to weigh up whether the speaker is credible, whether the message being given is logical and whether they are being duped or manipulated by the speaker. This is the type of listening that we may adopt when faced with an offer or sales pitch that requires a decision from us.

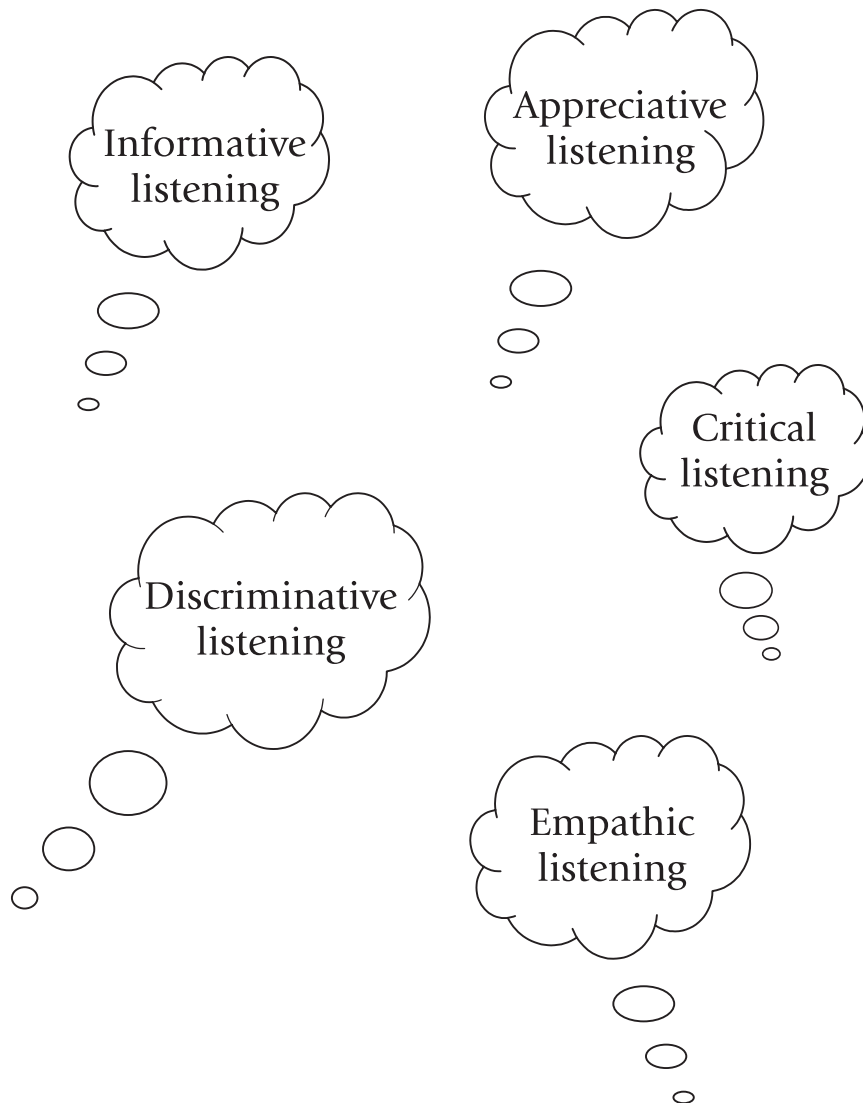
DISCRIMINATIVE LISTENING

Where the listener is able to identify and distinguish inferences or emotions through the speaker's change in voice tone, their use of pause, etc. Some people are extremely sensitive in this way, while others are less able to pick up these subtle cues. Where the listener may recognize and pinpoint a specific engine fault, a familiar laugh from a crowded theatre or their own child's cry in a noisy playground. This ability may be affected by hearing impairment.

EMPATHIC LISTENING

Where the listener tends to listen rather than talk. Their non-verbal behaviour indicates that the listener is attending to what is being said. The emphasis is on understanding the speaker's feelings and being supportive and patient. The remaining exercise and paired activities are designed to demonstrate the advantages of empathic listening and to highlight a range of obstructions that may prevent us from being effective listeners.

TYPES OF LISTENING



▶ **ACTIVITY 3.1: SHARING EXPERIENCES**

Ask participants to think of a time when they felt that someone really listened to them in this (empathic) way. How did it make them feel? Discuss in pairs. The main reward for the speaker is that it often reaffirms their sense of self-worth. It can help to raise self-esteem. This has direct implications for our work with pupils. Now ask them to think of a time when they felt that a person was not listening to them when they had something important or significant to say. How did that make them feel? Ask for feedback.