

Role playing and developing conversation

AIM

To help students develop conversation styles and techniques, based on effective use of questioning styles and to appreciate the impact of body language

METHOD

1. Give all students a number 1,2 or 3. If necessary this could be done by giving out coloured cards and substituting numbers for colours.
2. Ask 3s to go out side and talk to the facilitator who explains the role of the observer – and gives out the prompt sheet to explain the recording process
3. Meanwhile the tutor asks the 1s and 2s to sit in pairs and to draw up a chair for the returning number 3s. Explains to the remaining 1s and 2s that they are going to have a few minutes to chat to each other and find out as much as they can about each other. Explain they are going to be asked to introduce their partner to the group (but in reality there isn't time to do this). Explain they have to ignore number 3 and concentrate on talking to their partner.
4. Number 3s return to the room and sit with 1s and 2s who engage in conversation
5. Number 3s record examples of non verbal behaviour and open and closed question styles
6. After an appropriate length of time make sure both participants have had an opportunity to talk and to ask questions - then stop the discussions
7. Explain they are not going to be asked to introduce their partners. Ask what they thought no 3s were doing the introduce no 3 and find out what they found out
9. Process this discussion with group feedback etc

MATERIALS

No 3 Look and Listen handout

CONSTRAINTS

It helps to have an ante-room or corridor where the number 3 students can be taken for explanations/instructions, or be in a room large enough for instructions to be given without the other students hearing.

It is really helpful to have another person available who can take the number 3s (or 'blue' card students) outside and explain what is required of them as observers, whilst the tutor is explaining the instructions to number 1 and 2s.

Giving out coloured cards helps manage some students who relate better to being 'red' 'yellow' or 'blue' rather than 1,2,3.

Some students can be frustrated by not actually introducing each other as they have been told they will be expected to do. If time permits and the tutor thinks it is necessary then the introductions can be done, but that isn't the purpose of the exercise.

International students with limited English need the rules explaining slowly and carefully, to understand the aims and objectives.

As with any workshop it is good practice to check in advance if there are any students with special needs that may need to be accommodated.

No 3: Look and listen

Your role is that of observer. Someone who looks and listens to the conversation as it unfolds. Don't contribute to it, but make notes on what you see and hear.

Pay particular attention to:-

Body Language and its impact on the relationship e.g.

Gestures / Body position / Eye contact / Facial expression e.g. smiling, frowning

Positive actions and behaviours	Negative actions and behaviours

Use of open and closed questions and how the style of questions influences the way the conversation develops

An open question is one which encourages the respondent to expand on what they are saying – often a question which includes 'how' 'describe' 'explain' 'tell me about' 'what' etc

A closed question is one that elicits a 'yes' or 'no' response and which closes a conversation down

Examples of open questions	Examples of closed questions