

ABSTRACT

TRAINING IN LISTENING AS PREPARATION FOR LEADERSHIP IN VOCATIONAL MINISTRY

by

Cliff D. Sanders

The purpose of this project was to provide vocational ministry training for ministry students in behaviors and styles of listening. These students in the study were undergraduate vocational ministry students at Mid-America Bible College in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The project was designed to provide training in listening—a subject largely absent in the education and training of vocational ministry students.

The project was designed on a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group model. The class receiving the treatment of listening training had all but one member pursuing a goal of vocational ministry. The members of the class were all of junior and senior standing. The control group consisted of students that were also of junior and senior standing at Mid-America Bible College.

The project was guided by two research questions that assessed students' behaviors and styles of listening. Research question 1 asked: what changes occur in student's behaviors of listening? Research question 2 asked: what changes occur in students style of listening?

A major finding of this project was that students in the listening class had significant change occur in their behaviors and styles of listening. Other findings from the analysis of the data include (a) listening can be learned, (b) listening needs to be taught if significant change is to occur, (c) failure to teach listening is based on incorrect

notions, (d) non-experts can teach listening, and (e) there is less change in styles of listening than behaviors of listening. Additional findings from this project came from student's end of semester summaries. These were based on observations and comments made by students throughout the semester.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Study

The Problem

“I thought my engineering training was all I would need. But I spend most of my time on people problems” (Bolton 7). Here is a common lament among people who feel that their formal training in college did not adequately prepare them for daily interaction with people in their chosen careers. Most of us have to admit that we have been trained in the technical skills of our vocation but lack training that equips us to relate to the people we spend the majority of our time with at work.

If lack of training in dealing with people is important for an engineer whose career is largely technically oriented, how much more is this true of those persons in what is traditionally known as people business? Those with careers in human resources, sales, or in some form of ministry certainly need training in dealing with people.

I had a similar experience in coming to this awareness of the need for people skills in my work in ministry. My journey to this conclusion took me through college, graduate school, parish ministry, and the course work of a doctor of ministry degree.

I attended an evangelical Bible school where I was taught to preach and teach Scripture. This emphasis on teaching students the skills of preaching and teaching was the tradition and reputation of this particular school. This Bible school mainly trained people in skills that were consistent with speaking. As a consequence I had the opportunity to learn and develop these particular ministerial skills over my four years of school.

Upon graduating from college, I had a reasonable level of competence to preach and teach the Bible in a responsible way. What I did not have, although I did not know it at the time, was training or competence in dealing with people. I discovered I was largely

unprepared for the challenge of working with people in a parish ministry outside of teaching or preaching the Bible. This discovery was part of the reason I resigned my pastoral assignment and enrolled in seminary.

I had the privilege of attending a seminary known for training people for parish ministry. I was educated in theology, pastoral counseling, philosophy, and some ministry classes. I can say with certainty that the classes I took were of the highest quality. I am thankful for the years that I had to study and develop more fully my skills in teaching and preaching the Bible. However, again, I received little practical training in learning to work with people (people skills). It is only fair at this point to say that there is only so much a college or a seminary can do to train students for the rigors of ministry. Some aspects of ministry are difficult to teach to people preparing for parish ministry, until they experience some extended exposure to ministry.

After graduating from seminary, I served in parish ministry for several years with varying degrees of success. But in the midst of my parish ministry I had a growing sense of awareness that I needed greater skill in working with people. I attended seminars on personality analysis, team building, and people skills in an effort to better understand the nature of working with people. These experiences helped alleviate some of the anxiety I had in my life and ministry as it related to my skill in working with people, but I was still not sure what I really needed to increase my competence in working with people.

It was not until I enrolled in Doctor of Ministry studies at Asbury Theological Seminary that the contours of the training I needed for working more effectively with people began to emerge precisely. I was taking my seventh class in my doctoral studies; I had faithfully worked on all my readings and papers during the course of study, and in finishing this seventh class, out of a total of nine, I was unsure of what to do for a project. I had previously decided to concentrate on Christian leadership, but I knew only that I wanted to develop a project that would contribute to my being a more effective leader of

people.

Then it happened. I was sitting at my desk at the college where I teach. I had just finished the readings for my seventh doctoral level class. An insight began to emerge as I reflected on this completed work. I was beginning to see through the haze that had obscured my vision as it related to developing competence in working with people. What had been vague was beginning to emerge with an ever-increasing clarity and precision. The general outline was beginning to take particular shape.

I began to think about a project that would increase my competence in working with people. I was determined to see if a project that investigated listening as a part of leadership training, and competency in working with people, would fill the gap in my own training.

The idea of this project was due in part to the books I had read and reflected upon in this seventh class. A class on building effective teams required me to synthesize all I had learned into some a corpus of knowledge. All of my classes, along with this one, were beginning to come together and create the realization of the importance of listening as a leadership skill.

This realization caused me to once more reflect on my formal training. I could not recall having taken a class that concentrated on listening as a leadership skill. My undergraduate degree in pastoral ministry consisted of forty-one three-hour classes. In 124 hours of undergraduate work could I recall one class that concentrated on people skills in general or on the specific skill of listening? No! In fact, I could not remember even one lecture in any of my classes that addressed the importance of listening.

Here then is a problem: there is little intentional training in listening for people preparing for vocational ministry in Church of God (Anderson, Indiana). This observation is based on my own experience and in reviewing college catalogues of my denomination. The four colleges affiliated with the Church of God list no single course

that specifically deals with training students in the skill of listening. This is also the case at our denomination's one ministry graduate school at Anderson University. All of these have degrees that prepare people to serve in vocational ministry, and I suspect that this situation may be duplicated in many other denominational schools preparing students for vocational ministry.

My experience as one who attended our denomination's Bible College confirms my assertion as to the absence of training in listening skills for vocational ministry students. Even now, ministry students in my denomination that seek training in listening skills must attend seminars outside our institutions of higher learning, and there certainly are seminars outside the schools of my denomination that focus attention on the importance of listening for people engaged in vocational ministry. John Savage, L.E.A.D. Consultants, Incorporated, offers a weeklong workshop in listening for people involved in parish ministry. He has been involved in this endeavor since 1976 and offers this training because of its absence in the curriculum of colleges and graduate schools.

Listening training resources also can be found on the Internet. I discovered several sites that offer testing, consultation, and materials that develop personal and organizational listening skills. A sampling of these sites include the Training Registry, Butler and Associates, the Kenan Group, the International Listening Association, and DoubleEagle.

One organization, The Carlson Learning Company, has designed a test that evaluates one's listening style(s). The test is used by some of the above mentioned organizations to assess and train people in listening style. Thus, one need not search long to find materials in the market place to assess and train people in listening skills.

The number of books that specifically deal with the importance, behaviors, and practices of listening is impressive. One only need to browse a local bookstore and be convinced that there are authors who believe that this is an important subject.

A question arises: why is training in listening skills for those preparing for vocational ministry mostly absent from college and graduate-school curriculum in schools of the Church of God? Why is this so when it appears that other organizations and authors suggest that listening is a crucial skill for working and leading others? What explains this absence? This absence is the crux of the problem; either no one knows the answer to these questions, no one is asking them, or there is some other explanation.

The net result then is that students preparing for vocational ministry have to spend money and attend a seminar presented by some organization other than their school to learn skills in listening. Apparently Bible colleges and seminaries have not recognized a need for a course in listening as part of the curriculum for students preparing for vocational ministry.

This situation, as it relates to vocational ministry training, is ironic when one considers the testimony of the literature about listening which suggests that listening is a critical competence for those working with and leading others. The literature also suggests that there are some specific, and assessable, behaviors and styles of listening.

Testimony of the Literature

Importance of Listening

The general contention that listening is an important behavior for leaders working with others is the combined wisdom of many authors. Ralph Nichols, a pioneer in listening research, is one of the first to make this assertion. His work is much of the beginning and basis for many of the present day authors on listening.

Other authors, also pioneers in the field of people-helping, are Gerard Egan, Robert Carkhuff, Virginia Satir, and Albert Mehrabian. These authors assert that listening is an essential and basic skill for anyone seeking to help others.

Leaders and authors THAT WRITE in the area of organizational leadership offer a good deal of insight into the importance of listening. These writers contend that

listening is an essential BEHAVIOR for leading people (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson; Bennis, Covey, and Peters).

In addition to listening's importance in organizational design and social structure, the writings of Andrews, Baird, Smilor, and Sexton suggest its crucial place. These authors, and others, suggest the importance of listening must be understood as occupying a central place in any understanding of a comprehensive and coherent theory of communication.

A study of the literature on listening also led to a review OF the works of some authors who write for a Christian audience. Authors Wright, Rush, Wakefield, to name a few, stressed the importance of listening as a behavior that is consistent with the exercise of Christian leadership. These authors also write to suggest that listening competence is necessary to maintain Christian community.

Furthermore, in the literature of business and professional journals one finds a wealth of articles demonstrating the importance of listening in. Examples of these sources include The Journal of the International Listening Association, Administrative Management, Current Health, and Interpersonal Dynamics. One can see from the previously noted sources of divergent journals on business, human resources, and health care that this contention about the importance of listening is not limited to one kind of organization. Examples of other journals and articles can be found in the works cited section of the dissertation.

Assessing Listening

Assessment of listening is an important. THE PRESENCE OF THIS THEME leads to books and journal articles that directly related to assessing and developing one's listening behavior. Of particular mention are Michael P. Nichols' book, The Lost Art of Listening and Listening, The Forgotten Skill, by Madelyn Burley-Allen, and Listening, Attitudes, Principles, and Skills, by Judi Brownell. In each of these seminal texts the

assertion is made that listening can be taught and assessed through behavioral measures.

The review of literature also revealed a study that demonstrated that listening could be assessed and then improved/developed with appropriate treatment. This study, reported in The Bulletin, December 1994, demonstrated that college student's listening behavior could be improved through a prescribed treatment. The results of this improvement was demonstrated through the use of a pre and posttest method for analysis (Means and Klein).

The literature reveals that assessment of listening behaviors dates to 1926, in the work of Paul Rankin. The development of listening tests includes The Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension test (1955), the Jones-Mohr Listening Test (1976), and the Watson-Baker test (1984) (Brownell 52).

Listening as a Set of Behaviors

Listening is primarily a series of behaviors that can be assessed. But this is where agreement by listening scholars ends as the literature is filled with definitions of listening (Brownell 44). What is apparent is that the many definitions of listening share a common denominator when one recognizes the behavioral nature.

Styles of Listening

Upon reflecting on a review of the literature it is apparent that people possess different listening styles. While there is some general agreement that people possess styles of listening there is no universal agreement as to the specific nature of these styles of listening. Since the presence of styles of listening is generally accepted, there is a great deal of discussion as to the notion of listening styles as a way of explaining the phenomena of listening having differing purposes. Are different styles of listening a phenomena of differing contexts and goals for listening? This appears to be the question posed when one is attempting to understand this issue of styles of listening. (Burley-Allen 60-64; Lumsden and Lumsden 127-137; Wolvin and Coakley 135-138).

Specifically, an individual style of listening is the preferred and usual behavior a person uses when listening. Research on listening style has revealed that it is the personal behavior of habitual responses. Styles of listening have two general foci. Some listeners focus on relational issues in their listening, while others focus on issues related to task (Watson and Baker quoted. in Wolvin and Coakley 141). In other words, a persons whose style of listening is task-oriented tends to listen for precise, efficient information about some task or action to be taken. A person's ability to hear relational messages is not as developed as this style of listening. And a person whose style of listening is relationally oriented will be motivated to hear the emotional and relational aspects of a message.

The apparent truth of this assertion is that styles of listening are personal approaches to listening that are habituated over time. A person gravitates to a style of listening over time, and it becomes the way one listens to conversations.

This assertion about the presence of styles of listening is also substantiated by the listening test developed by The Learning Company. The listening style test they developed is to assess the presence and use of different styles of listening. Carlson's interest in researching the issue of evaluating listeners styles began as a result of the work of Andrew Wolvin and Carolyn Coakley (1993), whose research demonstrated that there are five different styles or strategies of listening behavior.

The Carlson Learning Company, through research of the instrument and item selection, demonstrated that styles of listening could be assessed and improved. The nature of this improvement relates to understanding that one may become trained in using other styles of listening in appropriate circumstances. Carlson's research does not attempt to suggest that one listening style is superior to all others. It does suggest that competence in listening is an issue of context; one must use an appropriate listening style that fits the particular situation.

The Carlson Learning Company graciously gave me permission to use their instrument. I am deeply grateful for this permission, as well as their assistance and availability to answer questions I had about their instrument.

Definitions

What is listening? Is it simply hearing the sounds of another person speaking, or is it hearing sounds that travel through the air? Or is listening something more than hearing? Answering these questions is not simple. The research on listening, over the last four decades, has arrived at no single definition of listening. There is no general consensus as to a definition of listening among scholars who have studied listening (Wolvin and Coakley 57).

However, for the purposes of this study, there must be some definition of listening. One is certainly aware that listening is more than a physical reaction of one's ear to vibrations travelling through the atmosphere. Listening is more than the physical act of hearing. Listening does require one to hear what is being said, but it also requires an awareness of all the verbal and nonverbal cues another emits.

So, what is listening? One who listens is both aware of and accurately interprets the verbal and non-verbal cues or messages sent by another person (Face 87). More specifically, one is listening when one is in the process of receiving, attending to, and assigning (accurate) meaning to aural and visual stimuli (Wolvin and Coakley 69). Furthermore, listening is the arriving of shared meaning by two people (Brownell 42). Therefore, listening is accurately interpreting the meaning of verbal and nonverbal communication that issues forth in a shared meaning of these verbal and nonverbal communications.

A definition of listening necessary for this project is one that defines styles of

listening. Styles of listening have to do with the way the basic behaviors of listening are carried out in the listening events of life to achieve specific goals. A style of listening is the preferred way a person approaches listening to others (Personal Listening Profile, 6). For the purpose of this project five styles, or approaches, of listening have been identified in the Carlson Listening Profile: appreciative, empathic, comprehensive, discerning, and evaluative.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to evaluate changes in listening by students who take a semester class on listening at Mid-America Bible College. The specific changes to be evaluated are changes in students' behaviors and styles of listening as a result of taking the class.

Research Questions

In order to explore whether the purpose of this project was achieved the following research questions were formulated. These questions seek to assess changes in styles of listening and basic behaviors of listening that are the result of attending the above-mentioned class.

Research Question #1: What self-reported changes occur in students' basic listening behaviors as a result of the class?

Research Question #2: What self-reported changes occur in students' styles of listening as a result of the class?

Method

In order to implement this project, and accomplish the purpose of this project, the method of a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group was employed. This

method of research required the study of a self-selected treatment group (in the future referred to as the listening class) and selecting a control group that approximated the academic standing of the students in the listening class.

A further aspect of the project method in evaluating changes in student's styles behaviors and styles of listening was achieved by use of pre- and post-testing these two aspects of listening. Both aspects of listening have their own respective test. The Personal Listening Profile test by Carlson Learning Inc. assesses the presence of five different listening styles. The HURIER listening test assesses six listening behaviors. A class treatment followed the pre-testing of both instruments. The post-tests measured any changes in styles of listening and behaviors of listening, following the class experience.

The use of a control group was based on the nonequivalent group design for this research. This class was used to control, or account for, the rival hypothesis that suggested that positive, significant changes in the test scores of the listening class were attributed to simple maturation. The lack of any change in the control group (see chapter four) means that this control group did control for this rival hypothesis.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of my study is that there will be some changes in students' styles of listening and behaviors of listening after taking this single class. Data was compiled from each of the six behaviors of the HURIER test and the five styles of the Carlson test to determine if there is a 95 percent probability that positive changes can be asserted to have occurred due to the students' experience of the listening class.

Description of the Project

This project required a treatment group and a control group for the fall semester

of 1999. The general outline of the class was a fifteen-week, undergraduate course that investigated behaviors and styles of listening. Students met two times a week for a period of one hour and fifteen minutes in a classroom setting.

The specific outline of the class is more fully explained in chapter 3, but the following is an overview. Week one consisted of orienting the students to the goals and requirements of the class. Students took the pre-tests for styles and behaviors of listening by the second class session. In weeks two and three the students learned of the importance of listening, the published research on listening, the place of listening from a Biblical standpoint, and the place of listening in the overall study of communication. These two weeks served to help increase students' levels of motivation to learn to listen. The curriculum of week four introduced the students to the barriers of listening. In weeks five through fifteen, students learned about and personally applied behaviors of listening and styles of listening. Week sixteen (one class session) consisted of administering the pre-tests as post-tests.

The curriculum for this class is principally based on the discoveries in the literature review in this dissertation; the test of the Carlson Learning Company; and two texts, Listening: Attitudes, Principles, and Skills, by Judi Brownell and Listening, 5th Edition, by Andrew Wolvin and Carolyn Coakley. There was also a host of articles and other resources that contributed to the final form of the curriculum. Students purchased two listening style profiles from the Carlson Learning Company and used the HURIER test in the text by Judi Brownell. The Listening Style Profile Test had some material that was employed in the curriculum of the class.

The population for the treatment group and control group consisted of

undergraduate students at Mid-America Bible College. Both classes were held for a single semester, the fall of 1999.

Mid-America Bible College is a 4-year, undergraduate college. The school has regional accreditation, (North Central Accrediting Association) as well as having accreditation from The American Association of Bible Colleges (AABC).

The school began in 1953 in Houston, Texas as a Bible institute to train people entering or presently involved in parish ministry. The school moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in 1985 and now includes several other majors beyond the three for parish ministry. The school enrolls 50 percent of its full-time, traditional students from young people affiliated with the Church of God (Anderson, IN).

The college added a degree completion major for adults in the past four years. Adult students, with a minimum of 60 general education college hours, can complete a degree in business ethics in eighteen months. These students meet once a week for four hours over the eighteen-month span. These students represent almost 200 of the full-time student population.

Mid-America Bible College also offers a degree by extension in pastoral ministry. This degree is fully accredited and is taken by students who are at least 25 years old and have completed 60 hours of general education requirements. Students take their classes via correspondence and have no residency requirement for their degree.

By the fall of 1999 the total student enrollment was approximately 650 students. Approximately 600 students comprise full time students by taking at least fifteen hours a semester.

The change in the school's location, and adding other majors appears to have

contributed to a decreased percentage of students training for parish ministry. Present figures reveal an approximate enrollment of 120 students in parish ministry majors.

The listening class consisted of juniors and seniors at Mid-America Bible College who, all but one, had declared some vocational ministry goal. There were four different majors represented in this class: pastoral ministry majors, specialized ministry majors, behavioral science majors, and a business administration major.

A separate class of students attending Mid-America Bible College was used as a control group for this project. The class was chosen because it approximated the class size and clientele of the listening class, even though there were no members of the control group who was pursuing a ministry major. The clientele of the control group did function to control for the rival hypothesis that any changes in the listening class occurred because of simple maturation. The members of the control group received the pre-tests and post-tests but did not receive the class treatment,

Variables

the independent variable of this project was the curriculum. This curriculum consisted of the classroom instruction and homework assignments about behaviors and styles of listening over the fifteen-week semester.

The dependent variable in this project was changes in the student's pre-test and post-test scores of the Carlson and HURIER tests.

An intervening variable in this study was the academic ability of students. Students may have demonstrated changes in scores on the tests due to different levels in reading and comprehension capacity. These differences may be profound due to the practice of open enrollment at Mid-America Bible College (no minimum sat scores

required for students to enroll). There was no way to address this concern within the confines of this project. And the particularly confounding variable here is whether or not the lack of academic ability is the real cause of the change, or lack of change, in students' post-test scores.

Another intervening variable of this study was the learning style(s) of students. It is not known if students' post-test scores more accurately reflect the use of a learning style preferred by the student more than the actual level of learning that has occurred. In other words, if different learning styles were used students might score differently on the post-tests because the teacher used a learning style that was helpful or distracting to the student.

Delimitations

Some delimitations of this project are unique to a project that is conducted in a semester classroom setting. The students had only one semester to change in several areas of listening which was only ten weeks to learn and acquire other styles of listening and behaviors of listening. There were also limitations as to the kind of lab experiences for students in a classroom setting. The class was conducted in a classroom only equipped for general education classes at Mid-America Bible College. This meant that the classroom consisted of basic materials (desks, blackboard, and an overhead projector).

Another delimitation to this class has to do with the instructor. The instructor for this class is himself learning about behaviors and styles of listening. He received no training in undergraduate or graduate education in this area of study, not unlike the discoveries made in the literature review. This lack of training posed challenges in

teaching what the instructor was still in the process of learning. It is assumed that one who is more informed in this area would teach students more effectively and thereby show greater results from the class.

A final delimitation of this project has to do with the essential nature of a project dealing with listening. Baker and Fitch-Hauser discovered 315 variables associated with listening when they reviewed the literature on listening (qtd. in Brownell 45). So, this study will delimit its assessment of the variables of styles of listening and general behaviors of listening using the Carlson and HURIER tests.

Biblical and Theological Foundation

The bible is clear in its assertion as to the importance of hearing. James 1:19 states: “this you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear (NASB).” While this text does not specifically use the term “listen” it does use the word “hear.” And while it is true that one can hear and not listen, it is certainly a fact that one cannot listen without hearing, in some dimension (verbal, non-verbal or both).

Of particular importance here is the assertion made by James about hearing (listening). He says, “you know, my beloved brethren.” Is this something that the believers to whom James is writing should know because they are Christians? He calls them “beloved brethren.” Or is this something known as a course of common human knowledge, something that the brotherhood of man would know? A conclusive answer is not possible due to the nature of this project, but i can assert something in a general way.

James states, with some assurance, that his readers know of the importance of hearing/listening. This knowledge of the importance of hearing, by his Jewish readers, may be the result of his knowing that his audience is familiar wit some of the wisdom

literature of the old testament in general, and the specific work of Proverbs on this subject.

The book of James, from what has been suggested earlier, certainly appears to address Jewish readers. This assertion as to the Jewish audience is found in the first verse of the first chapter: "to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad." It clearly has an audience that is Jewish and one that is familiar with Jewish, if not Old Testament, forms of literature.

The writings of James, although a New Testament letter, appear to have the style characteristics of Jewish writings in the old testament, specifically the wisdom literature of the Old Testament (Bromiley 2, 961). It appears that this book may be a New Testament example of old testament wisdom literature.

What can be said about this specific passage in James is that the writer may be drawing on his reader's knowledge of old testament wisdom literature when he makes the statement that his readers know: it is important to hear (listen). Certainly this drawing on Old Testament knowledge of the wisdom literature is a possibility when one recognizes that the New Testament is not in its final form by this time, and the bible of the early church is still the Old Testament.

The contention that hearing/listening, in which James calls new testament believers to abide, is consistent with the wisdom of the old testament in general and the wisdom literature of proverbs in particular. In several places writers of the proverbs call for hearing (listening). An example of this is found in proverbs 1:5, which says that a wise man will hear and all the while will increase in learning. Proverbs 1:8 says that one who hears one's father's instruction will be a blessing.

Furthermore, wisdom is personified as a woman crying out for someone to listen in chapter one of proverbs. The chapter exhorts people to listen to her, if they do there will be blessing (vs. 33). If they do not listen there will be trouble.

Other passages in Proverbs that speak to the importance of hearing/listening are: 2:2; 4:1,10,20; 5:1,7,13; 7:24; 8:6,32; 12:15; 15:31-32. Some passages in proverbs speak of wisdom calling out to those who will hear (listen to) her voice (8:1ff; 9:3ff). These passages indicate that hearing/listening is a significant theme throughout the book of proverbs and is a requirement for wise living.

Beyond this observation about the importance of listening in the wisdom literature of the proverbs and the knowledge of this by Christians in the new testament time, other evidence supports the contention that these readers of James know the importance of hearing/listening. This would certainly be based in the knowledge the readers have of the ministry of Jesus Christ. The author designates himself as a “bond-servant of God and of the lord Jesus Christ” in 1:1. The readers must have known of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ to be greeted by one who identified himself as a bondservant of this Jesus. And any person reading the New Testament is confronted with the stated value Jesus placed on the importance of listening.

Jesus’ teaching and ministry emphasized the importance of hearing/listening. On many occasions Jesus exhorted people to hear, if they had ears to hear (Matthew. 11:15, 13:9; mark 4:9,23; Luke 8:8, 14:35). There may be some irony in Jesus’ statement, along with some serious theological issues of what it means to hear, but one is sure to understand the need to hear what Jesus said. The importance of hearing and listening impacts one’s eternal destiny and relationship with god through Jesus Christ. No one

could miss the importance of these statements about hearing, or listening, once having heard or read Jesus' teaching.

Being quick to hear (listen) others is also the result of a proper understanding of the Christian life. An accurate biblical/theological understanding of the Christian life is found in understanding the Christian life as a life lived in community. The nature of this communal life, found in the New Testament, is expressed in the metaphor of a body and its members (Romans 12:4ff, I Corinthians 12:12ff, Ephesians 1:23, 4:16, Colossians 3:15). The metaphor of the physical body is Paul's most frequently used imagery of the church.

This metaphor illustrates the interdependence that is to characterize the life of those who participate in the spiritual body (the church). As a physical body functions in harmony with each part and depends on each one for proper functioning, so members of the Body of Christ depend on each other for proper functioning and harmony. This interdependence of a body and its members best illustrates the nature of Christian living.

One of the unique aspects of functioning in the church as a body is that it has both divine and human qualities. This assertion about the dual nature of the body of Christ came out in a class with Dr. George Hunter (July 1996). Hunter stated that if one desires to fully understand this dual nature of the church one intends to lead, one must understand the dual nature of the Body of Christ. To do this, one must begin with understanding the body of Christ in the incarnation: the mystery of the physical aspect of Christ coexisting with his divine nature in a real body.

The incarnation was something that the early church had to struggle with in order to come to a conclusion about the nature of the body of the incarnated Christ. Was Christ

merely physical, the position of the Ebeonites, or did he only seem to have a physical existence, the position of the Docetics (McGrath 281-282)? Was his physical body some synthesis of these two extreme positions?

The church wrestled with this controversy over the nature of the body of Christ, the incarnation, until the fourth century. By that time the church had come to the widespread acceptance that the body of Christ was fully human and fully divine (McGrath 281-291). The challenge for the early church was to somehow bring these two realities of the Body of Christ together in some understandable fashion. In other words, it was the challenge of the members of the church to respect and honor both dimensions of the Body of Christ, not to overemphasize one to the exclusion of the other.

It is no less important to understand the nature of the Body of Christ that is in the world today. One must have a balanced understanding of the Body of Christ, the church, as one attempts to provide leadership for it. If one maintains this balanced view of the dual nature of the church, one cannot assume that every issue in the church is spiritual in nature. Neither can one assume that every need in the church is of a physical nature, remedied by social science. One who intends to provide leadership in the church must recognize and lead the church as having both physical and divine dimensions.

Listening to the head of the church (Jesus Christ) is one way to live within the reality of the spiritual nature of the church. This requires recognition of the spiritual life of the church and sensitivity to listen to the head of the church through the written word and the leading of the spirit.

Leaders in a church must recognize and honor the physical aspect of this body. This is where many leaders fail. They are quick to listen to the head of the church but fail

to listen to the members of the church. Some leaders refuse to accept members of the body as inspired because they want to listen to the spiritual head of the church to the exclusion of the physical members of the body. This appears to be a failure to recognize the dual nature of the body of Christ.

Therefore, listening to the other members of the body (church) is equally important for effective leadership. There must be a serious attempt to hear/listen to those members who comprise the Body of Christ. Or one simply has a spiritual body with a giant head (Christ) and no real members. Leaders that recognize this dual nature of the body of Christ (the church) are committed to a particular kind of living that recognizes both aspects of the church without excluding either one; they are committed to listen to both the head and the members of the body.

The specific nature of this kind of living, understanding the dual nature of the church, also recognizes the call for all Christians to live lives worthy of the calling to Christian living (Ephesians 4:1). Paul exhorts all believers to live lives equal to (axios: “equal to”) the calling that all Christians have received.

The nature of this worthy lifestyle must be consistent with the nature of Christians living in community, the Body of Christ. The call to live this worthy life is caused (structure of causation: “therefore”) by the preceding discussion of the work of God in Christ. Specifically, it is the work of Christ (concern of Ephesians 2 and 3) in bringing together the Jew and Gentile into “one new man” (Ephesians 2:15). This new “man” is created by the work of Christ because he did something that no one else could do: broke down the barrier that divided Jews from gentiles (Ephesians 2:13- 16), and formed the two into one new man (body). A new community from these two groups was created by

the work of Christ as he broke down the barriers of race that divided the two.

The new communal life, that brings together Jew and gentile, is based upon Christ's work of reconciliation through his blood (Ephesians 2:13). But this reconciliation requires the participants to live a lifestyle/response worthy ('equal to') of the newly created man (body). The work of Christ cannot automatically create this community without the participation of those who comprise the community. So God's word calls for a lifestyle of community, as people brought together by the work of Christ. Living in community becomes one way we can live equal to the new creation, and live worthy (Ephesians 4:1).

Therefore, Paul calls the new community to live in specific ways. He calls for this life of community to be lived in humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and diligence (Ephesians 4:1-3). These qualities are the necessary responses to God's grace by those who live in the new Christian community. This list is part of the ethos of living in community. These qualities of humility, forbearance, and so forth are ways that we live a worthy lifestyle in the community of the Body of Christ. But what does it mean to live out these qualities? How does one recognize this kind of living in specific ways?

Taking time to listen to others in the Body of Christ is one concrete way that we exhibit these qualities of our call to worthy living. When we listen to others in the community, we live as fellow members of the Body of Christ and make a statement that others are as important in this body as we are. Listening becomes an important to sustain the community that Christ has created as we take other members seriously and listening to them.

Another specific way to live a worthy life in the Body of Christ, according to

Ephesians 4:2) is to live humbly. The basic meaning of humility (*tapeinos*) is to not be high-minded (Kittle 1-26). When humility is a character quality of one's life, there is an understanding that one is important but no more important than any other member of the community. To think of oneself as more important than others would be high-minded. Humility suggests that one have an accurate evaluation of oneself.

Listening to others can be a concrete expression of humility. If a person's evaluation of another's worth and contribution to the new community equals the value and worth of their contribution listening is likely to occur. Conversely, if a person has an exalted view of oneself (high-minded) and a low view of others, that person will likely refuse to take the time to listen to others. Talking, giving others the benefit of one's "advanced knowledge," will be the result of this lack of humility. Listening to others, however, expresses humility and the giving of grace to another.

One can go through the list of qualities that Paul insists are necessary for living a life worthy of the calling of Christ in the new community and see their connection to the practice of listening. If one is gentle in one's dealings with others, one will take the time to listen and understand. If one is patient with others, one will listen to others instead of always wanting to talk. Therefore, listening becomes one of the ways that one can apply this list of qualities given by Paul to the members of this new community.

Listening is one way for all believers, leaders included, to live a worthy life as they live out this kind of life in community in the body of Christ. This makes listening to others a critical habit for anyone seeking to live in the body of Christ, and it seems especially important for those who carry some leadership role in the community and who must recognize the dual nature of this new community God has created.

Another reason to consider the importance of listening from a biblical perspective is the example of the apostle Paul. In reading the works (letters) of Paul one begins to get a sense of his practice of listening. This assertion may not appear to be immediately obvious, but becomes clear as one reflects on his writings. He reveals his habit of listening in his writings as he anticipates the objections or inferences his audience may pose. This literary form of listening anticipates his readers problem(s) with the concepts he is attempting to communicate (Romans 2:1;3:9; 4:2, 9; 6:1, 15; 7:7; 11:1; II Corinthians 3:1; Galatians 3:21). He then offers an explanation to these proposed objections he believes his reader will inevitably have.

These literary occurrences of Paul's listening are understood as the logical inference of Paul's reasoning, but they also appear to be the reasoning of a mind that anticipates the objections of one's readers. This anticipation of his audience's objections is a form of listening that he has developed to keep his readers (friend or foe) engaged, and to keep the readers from thinking what is being written is irrelevant or too narrow.

The threat of irrelevance, which Paul seems to be addressing in his listening, is born from his sense that the reader may not believe that the author is listening, nor understanding, the real issues that writing this material causes for the reader. Here Paul models, in the bible, a commitment to listen to others as he attempts to serve and minister to them.

The biblical evidence given provides some understanding and indication of the place listening occupies in one's spiritual life. The importance of listening is shown as based in a several biblical and theological truths. A commitment to listen is part of understanding the bible's wisdom in dealing with people. A commitment to listen is part

of what it means to live faithfully and humbly in the new community created by Jesus Christ. And finally, listening is based in an understanding of how Paul (a Christian leader) attempts to communicate and persuade both friend and foe.

Overview of What Follows

In chapter 2, I review some of the literature available on the subject of listening. This review of literature reveals the importance of listening as one of the necessary behaviors people need in order to work with and influence others. The literature also reveals that there are barriers that contribute to people's failure in listening effectively. The barriers given are by no means an exhaustive list but only suggest those barriers that I found recurring in the literature I reviewed. The literature also suggests that listening can be taught and that there are specific behaviors and ways that one can increase one's listening behaviors and effectiveness.

In chapter 3, I explain the design of my study. The design of my project incorporates two research questions, a class for listening instruction, and a control group to control for maturation. The project assesses changes in college students' behaviors and styles of listening.

In chapter 4, I furnish the results of the project. Data from students' pre and post-tests were analyzed to discover what changes occurred in students behaviors and styles of listening, and what level of probability could be ascribed to any changes.

In chapter 5, I report and reflect on the major findings of the project. I give, what is my understanding of some of the practical applications in training people for vocational ministry that seem to flow out of these findings. I also give some reflections on what the project did for the students and me.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The Context

We live in a time of a proliferation of communication devices. Cellular phones, fax machines, beepers, and email are now common means of communication. It is not unusual to see teenagers using cell phones, checking their beepers, and giving their email addresses to friends at the local mall. These many forms of sophisticated communication are available to almost everyone in the American culture, as well as other cultures and places in the world.

However, in spite of this technology that makes frequent communication a daily experience, there remains a great need for people to listen to and hear one another. The need to listen ranges from situations that have minimal consequences if one does not listen effectively to circumstances where failure to listen effectively are life threatening. Not listening to a commercial on television has little consequence. But imagine the havoc created by a doctor who does not listen carefully when a patient tells of allergies to certain medications, or the life-threatening situation created by a commercial airline pilot when she or he does not listen to landing instructions from the control tower.

As accessible as communication devices are, giving us the potential to listen more often, the awareness lingers that we may not be any better at listening to each other than were our forefathers. Relational problems between spouses and work associates abound due, in large part, to people not knowing how to listen or not wanting to take the time to do so. This occurs at a time when we have every conceivable means of communication to speak and listen to each other any time of the day. Taking into account these circumstances, the need to emphasize the importance of listening seems obvious.

The specific nature of this literature review is delimited to the consideration of the phenomenon of listening. Listening is only part of the bigger category of communication, but it appears that listening is an aspect of communication receiving increasing attention as to its importance in leadership roles. Therefore, for the purpose of this project, I consulted the literature that investigated the phenomenon and importance of listening as a key leadership habit.

A review of the literature revealed that listening is a necessary behavior for anyone involved in leading and influencing others. I consulted the writings of leaders in management training, social psychology, and business. Gerard Egan, Carl Rogers, Stephen Covey, Madelyn Burley-Allen, Kenneth Blanchard, Warren Bennis, and others contend that listening is one of the most important skills a leader can possess. However, this important skill is absent for the most part in the formal training of those who lead others.

the next area of the literature reviewed revealed some of the common barriers that impede the listening process. Here one is confronted with the complexity and challenge of overcoming some of the barriers that most people encounter in learning to listen.

An area that emerged from an investigation of the literature was the assertion that there are some requisite skills for learning to listen. It was suggested in the literature that one can be taught these requisite skills in such a way that listening will be more likely to occur in a person's communication. Some evidence indicated that listening could be taught. This assertion was substantiated by a study conducted with college students and authors who have written on the subject.

The final area of the literature review was the bible. What does the bible say about

the importance of listening? Here I give the outline of this material, having offered the substantial findings in my biblical and theological basis for my project in chapter 1.

In reviewing the literature on listening the following aspects were discovered with some regularity: the importance of listening; barriers to listening; how to improve listening; discussing the teachability of listening; biblical and theological aspects of the literature. These are not all the aspects of listening but the salient ones that recur in the literature reviewed.

The Importance of Listening

As stated earlier, listening is an essential aspect of the phenomenon of communication, which is critical for leadership in any organization. The literature on leadership reveals articles and books that suggest the central role effective communication plays in working with and leading others (see works cited). One would find it difficult to locate any book on leadership that does not dedicate a significant section to discussing the important role of communication. This contention seems self-evident when considering that working and leading other people involves effective communication. Leaders must be able to communicate the values and goals of an organization before any group of people can successfully pursue common goals. It is critical to recognize and develop communication skills for those leading others or pursuing goals in any human enterprise (Mundale 37).

Any comprehensive understanding of communication cannot simply be concerned with how people talk. As important as it is for one to be able to communicate ideas clearly, there is another aspect of communication one discovers in the literature. Communication also involves the critical habit of listening (Donahue 28). In fact,

effective communication must include the willingness to listen (Smilor and Sexton 43). Awareness of the importance of listening in the communication process is critical to a complete appreciation and understanding of communication (Caudill and Donaldson 22). Any accurate view of communication must include both the importance and role of listening.

Listening as a part of the overall habit of communication is as important as the ability to express ideas adequately. Leaders must be able to express themselves effectively, but they must also listen to others. This is the real give-and-take of any communication process. Listening provides the channel through which there is communication, insuring that co-workers are being heard and that their ideas are valued and respected (Smilor and Sexton 32). How could one lead an organization where its people's concerns and ideas are shown no respect by not listening to them? The answer is that one cannot effectively lead the people of an organization when showing this kind of disrespect. Leaders who understand this people dimension of listening to organizational success will lead organizations that thrive (Smilor and Sexton 79).

Research about the place of listening has a long history. As early as 1926, Paul Rankin conducted research on the place of listening in adult lives. His research revealed that adults spend half of their time each day in various forms of listening (Steil, Barker, Watson 3). This investment in listening spans all the responsibilities and relationships of life and work.

By 1986, the percentage of time spent by the average adult in listening remained close to half of the time in every day. The specific data indicated that the percentage of a day that an average adult spent in listening was now 45 percent (Caudill and Donaldson

22). In almost sixty years of time separating the two studies, the percentage of the average adult's day invested in listening saw little substantial change.

Other studies attest to the importance of communication in general and the place that listening occupies in effective leadership. The study done by The Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, inc. Revealed that communication, which includes informing, listening, oral communication, and written communication was the second most important skill across the stages of organizational life for the leaders who responded to the survey. This result emerged from the analysis of 338 responses to the entrepreneurial leadership questionnaire. This questionnaire was a qualitative survey with an open response format that allowed for the potential of reflecting the subjects' full thoughts on the subject matter (Smilor and Sexton 25-26). While this study does not identify listening as a single item, it does corroborate the assertion that listening is part of any understanding of communication effectiveness for leaders.

More specifically, a growing body of evidence suggests that listening is specific behavior to leadership and competence in the marketplace. Two studies reported the supreme importance of listening as a leadership behavior. A 1978 study by Brigham Young University (Harold T. Smith) had 457 members of the academy of certified administrative managers rate twenty competencies critical to their jobs. Responses were rated "super critical" or "highly critical." The number one rated response in the supercritical category of these managers was active listening. A 1979 study (Jerald Carstens; University of Wisconsin) surveyed 45 companies with more than 1,000 employees to determine the most important communication skills. Carstens found listening consistently topping the list as the most important communication skill for

leaders in most fields of work with people (Mundale 37).

A study conducted by Loyola University sought to be more specific in its investigation of effective leadership habits. This study sought to discover the single most important attribute of managers that influence others. Based on thousands of responses the answer emerged; the single most important attribute of an effective manager is the habit of listening (Burley-Allen 8). This conclusion about the importance of listening to others is the same that others have made (Covey 237). In fact, many CEOs affirm these findings. They conclude that one's competence in listening is the most important trait a manager of people can possess (Mundale 37).

A study conducted at Cornell University also sought to determine if there was any correlation between people's listening and their place in top-level management positions. The research, led by Judi Brownell, suggests a direct correlation between people who are effective listeners and those who hold of top-level positions in the corporation (qtd. in Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 345).

The importance of listening for managers is compounded as other studies reveal that those who are managed believe the most important behavior of their manager is his/her ability to listen. More specifically the finding of this research is that people who are supervised consider the most valuable trait that a supervisor can possess, in attempting to lead them, is the ability to listen (Andrews and Baird 44). Therefore, ability to listen effectively to others is one of the interpersonal skills that increase a supervisor's ability to lead and influence others.

These studies reveal the importance of listening as a necessary component in understanding a more complete view of communication among people. They also reveal

the importance of listening in leading and working with others.

The need for leaders to understand the role of listening in practicing effective communication and listening is also necessary due to changes in the world. One of the changes in our world has to do with the way organization views a leader. With the present level of complexity of the world, organizations have accepted the end of the great man idea. The great man idea is the idea that all an organization needs is some incredible leader to save the company and lead the masses (Bennis and Biederman 1). But great technological and political complexity make the possibility of any one person having all the skills and knowledge necessary to lead an organization a practical impossibility.

With the present level of complexity, leadership of an organization requires a collaborative approach. This is due in large part to the fact that there are fewer arenas in which individual action suffices (Bennis and Biederman 1). There are fewer areas that a person can have all the knowledge and expertise needed for effective leadership in an organization. In fact, wise leaders who recognize this dramatic change in our world are beginning to believe that leadership is not something done to people, but is something done with people (Steinbron 118). Leadership is a collaborative experience.

One way to be a collaborative leader is to listen; leaders listen in order to be capable of collaborating with others. While this is true, it certainly is a change in the ethos of most American views of the hero leader (Bennis and Biederman 1). Americans continue to cling to the idea that an organization needs an individual hero (leader) who can leap tall buildings and stop speeding bullets. The belief remains that this great hero can fix everything that needs to be corrected, although the reality is that great leaders are those who create a group which accomplishes great things (Bennis and Biederman 2).

How can this specific kind of collaboration take place? It seems obvious that one way is for leaders to learn the importance of listening to others in the organization. Collaboration is not simply sharing job responsibilities; it involves others in the planning and designing of goals and plans for the organization. By listening to others one would discover a consistent way to collaborate with others and discover what they have to contribute. The truth here is that the need for collaboration is essential for doing any significant work.

A final observation, from a study of the literature, regarding the importance of listening has to do with the way that organizations now operate. Years ago, it might be that one had a couple of options when deciding where to purchase goods and services, but now options abound. The entrepreneurial spirit has proliferated into hundreds of places from which to purchase the same goods and services.

This increased number of options has created some new behavior in the way that businesses operate. One manifestation of this has to do with the way that business, now more than ever, place greater importance on customer service and on knowing customer needs. This is largely the result of businesses knowing they cannot expect people to just show up and purchase items or services, especially given all the options they enjoy. This determination to know and meet the needs of the customer surely is a form of listening to the customer. Evidence suggests that a company that stays close to its customers, listening and meeting their needs, is a company that will succeed by maintaining one's customer base (Peters and Waterman 156).

Staying close to the customer, as previously explained, is a form of listening that makes for excellence and some measure of success. One cannot ignore the reality that

companies which do not stay close to their customers and not listen to their needs will not only fail to achieve excellence, but will most likely fail. There is an intense commitment to listening by the companies which are committed to excellence and success (Peters and Waterman 122).

A practical contradiction exists, however, to the previously mentioned interest, research, and importance of listening training for people involved in working and influencing people. There appears to be little training in listening skills offered colleges or seminaries. This assertion is substantiated by my knowledge of the colleges and one seminary of my denomination and by the writings of Steven Covey (238).

The nature of this contradiction, beyond the absence of any single class teaching listening, is that the four colleges of my denomination offer majors in vocational ministry. These colleges educate people to serve in churches and work to influence people without intentionally training them the important skill of listening. An administrator of one of our institutions identified the contradiction of our training ministry students when he said that 'we certainly seem to be investing our effort in teaching people to talk, more than we teach them to listen.'

Barriers to Listening

Personal Biases

As important as the review of literature suggests listening is, it is equally a complex and highly personal process. I became aware of this aspect of listening when reviewing the literature on the subject of listening and observing people's reaction to President Clinton when he admitted that he had engaged in an inappropriate relationship with an intern. People who appeared to be supporters of his policies heard in his

statement contrition, humility, and a sense of sorrow. Contrast to this the response of people who appeared to oppose his policies. These people stated that they heard no contrition, no humility, and no sense of genuine sorrow. Two different groups of people heard the same speech, yet, they come away with two different ideas as to its meaning. Could one not recognize the complex and highly personal process involved in listening? Here is an example of the complex nature of communication in general and of listening in particular.

The previous example suggests that people do not hear things identically because personal interpretations serve as filters (barriers) to what one hears. A common barrier that affects one's listening is the presence of bias. People possess powerful biases and perspectives that prejudice them toward others, for good or ill (Wakefield 28-29). These biases may come from any number of sources; some come from ignorance, while some arise from one's own life experience as one generalizes about others or life situations from one's specific experience. We all face the reality of our biases and their possible effects on our listening as these biases cause premature judgements and create perceptual filters, which make hearing a challenge (Wolvin and Coakley 53).

Accepting the presence of the barrier of biases in one's listening is the place where one must begin if there is to be hope of making gains in listening competence (Plachy 94). We must begin with ourselves if we are to identify and ameliorate the force of barriers to our listening.

Emotional Reactivity

A second barrier to effective listening is emotional reactivity in our responses to others. Some people regard strong, unregulated emotional responses within themselves as

normal. Having these strong emotions present in life and relationships inhibit the ability to comprehend any level of listening, as emotions flood ability to think or hear (Goleman 143-144). Living this highly emotionally charged way of life has become habitual. A person accustomed to this way of life has no other base of experience by which to evaluate the legitimacy of this kind of life. This ignorance of one's internal processes can exert powerful effects in blocking the ability to listen (Burley-Allen 82).

If a person is emotionally reactive, his/her view of a conversation may be that it threatens his/her well being. Because of a lack of personal differentiation, he/she takes everything too seriously or too personally. This anxiety over what they see as a personal threat causes them to emotionally react to others instead of listening (Steinke 18). This reaction to what people deem a personally threatening situation generally prevents people from listening, because a person who feels threatened is less able to perceive the motives, values, and emotions of another (Brownell 278). Therefore, it is important for one to listen to oneself if one has any hope of being able to listen to others (Rogers and Farson 553).

The Presence of Nonverbal Communication

Failure to recognize the presence of nonverbal communication poses a significant barrier to effective listening. Some people do not listen well because they assume that all communication is in words. If one would reflect on this assertion, one would recognize, with Gerard Egan, that communication is not uniquely verbal (Change Agent Skills 175). Research suggests that 65 percent of a person's communication is non-verbal (Johnson 104), and this communication takes the various forms of kinesics (movement), appearance, proxemics (proximity), and other non-verbal cues (Wolvin and Coakley 174-

187). The reality is that any communication between persons has a profound non-verbal level.

In the communication process, non-verbal communication cues are sent as parallel messages with the verbal content (Egan, Face 83). Therefore, it is a poor habit to listen only to words (Barbara 43) in fact, people rarely put their emotions into words; they express their emotions thorough tone of voice and gestures (Goleman 96). It is critical to recognize that when a person talks, all of that person talks (Satir 60). So, it becomes a significant challenge to recognize the verbal and nonverbal communication sent as a parallel message.

Some people may not listen well because they are not equipped to recognize non-verbal communication. Poor listening may not be a conscious decision people make; it may, instead, be due to a lack of awareness or training in recognizing non-verbal communication. Nevertheless, not recognizing the presence of nonverbal messages is a significant barrier to effective listening. Failure to recognize nonverbal messages sent by others causes a breakdown in the communication process.

Gender Differences

Studies have found no real differences in the ability of the sexes to listen. What has arisen from these studies is the understanding that men and women have different attention styles. The issues that capture the attention of each gender are different. Women tend to be more empathetic and sensitive while men tend to be more unyielding and analytical. These differences cause female and male listeners to select very different segments of any stimulus and respond in very different ways (Weaver 72-73). Women hear one kind of data better than men, and vice versa. Neither genders are inherently

better listeners; each listens to different kind of data (Weaver 70-71).

What Can be Done to Improve One's Listening?

General Steps in Dealing with Listening Barriers

The barriers of personal biases, emotional reactivity, failure to identify nonverbal communication, and gender differences prohibit listening. However, one cannot simply identify barriers that inhibit listening. One can be better served when made aware of these barriers and given some instruction to ameliorate their presence. Therefore, one must discover strategies that help lessen the effect of barriers to listening. This step resembles, in some fashion, the concept of "force field analysis." In "force field analysis" one is concerned with identifying and weakening the restraining forces that keep a new behavior from occurring. In other words, the challenge is learning ways to lessen the effect of certain behaviors that restrain or inhibit a desired effect (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 463-467). Once this is accomplished it is legitimate to seek ways to bring about the desired change since the forces resisting change have been reduced. There must be this attempt to lessen the barriers to listening as well as the addition of new driving forces that support the new behavior (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 463-467). This next phase found in the literature review.

Specific Steps in Dealing with Listening Barriers

Three things emerge from the literature review on listening that are required for increased effectiveness in listening after identifying the barriers to listening. First, one must come to the point of desiring the behaviors necessary for effectiveness in listening. This is more specifically the issue of motivation. Second, there must be an acquiring of basic behaviors of listening as prescribed in the literature. These new behaviors serve to

increase the likelihood that listening competence is increased. Third, one must recognize the presence of styles of listening as part of increasing listening competency. The following is an explication of these three areas.

Motivation is a complex issue because there are both intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions to human motivation. These distinctions are made in a general way and do not suggest that all motivation can be placed in two simplistic categories. In fact, Sigmund Freud suggested that unconscious motives cause people to act in ways they do not understand (Kagan 359). The topic of human motivation is a complex topic and must be understood in some fashion if one is to begin changing one's behavior(s) in a specific area.

With regard to motivation, it is generally accepted that people are motivated to change when some action, response, or consequence is interpreted as unsatisfying. However, change in behavior that is motivated is not a simple matter. There must be incentive, knowledge of how to satisfy the motive, expectation of success, and the absence of other conflicting motives (Kagan 363).

However, it is not hard to imagine that most of us know the problems that the inability to listen creates in life. These problems we have experienced through a lack of listening range from small problems that simply annoy, to life-changing problems: the break up of a family because one of the members feels that the other members of the family do not listen to him/her. In whatever case, most people have enough personal experience and incentive to work hard at removing the barriers to listening.

For one to have the energy and motivation to listen, one must have some security in life. For instance, if a person's situation in life threatens to adversely affect his or her

family, the ability to maintain any other motive in life beyond this immediate threat is unlikely. If, on the other hand, no other profound motives conflict with one's energy and attention, it is more likely that one will have the ability to attend other issues in life.

Therefore, one may not have the motivation to listen because there are pressing concerns that compete for one's motivation and attention.

If one expects to have a reasonable hope of succeeding in learning to listen, there must be appropriate motivation to remove the barriers that inhibit listening and add new behaviors that create the likelihood of listening. This is self-evident and an action of a healthy personality to remove what hinders a person from reaching a desired goal, and there is evidence to suggest that a healthy person can learn listening skills (Wright 153). Another reason for adequate motivation is because there is a close connection between motivation to listen and listening effectiveness. If one is motivated to listen, listening effectiveness will increase (Brownell 54).

Finally, motivation must unite with appropriate knowledge that will help a person satisfy a motive. It is incorrect to assert that a person can make changes in life based solely on having proper motivation. Most changes in life require a person to be motivated to change, but there must also be some skills and habits that move a person to the desired performance.

Recognizing and Adding the Behaviors of Listening

In the body of literature reviewed on listening, it does not appear that merely being motivated to listen or removing barriers that inhibit listening will clear the way for one to listen. Improving one's listening is more complex than simply removing barriers; it consists in knowing and applying some of the behaviors of listening: attending,

practicing feedback, etc. (Rhodes, Watson, Baker, 64). People can be taught to listen, or at least to listen in different ways, through the addition of listening behaviors/skills (Burley-Allen 3).

Self-Monitoring. Effective listening requires one to possess a high degree of self-awareness. This suggests that those who desire to listen must become better at self-monitoring; the most effective listeners are sensitive to their own needs and behaviors (Brownell 16-17). The challenge is for one to move from low self-monitoring, where one is unaware of one's values and behaviors and their affect on others, to high self-monitoring, where one is aware of one's behaviors and values. This becomes a critical place to begin in teaching people to listen, simply helping them become more aware of their behavior and its effect on others.

Empathy. Another theme that is consistently mentioned in the literature of listening behaviors is empathy. Empathy is considered by many as much a behavior as it is an attitude and is understood as self-emptying of one's attention on personal issues and focusing on another's needs and problems (M. Nichols 125). Empathy occurs when one is willing to suspend meeting one's own needs while investing energy and time in relating to another.

This self-emptying exemplifies eagerness and determination to understand things from the speaker's viewpoint. When practicing the behavior of empathy, one is listening in a way that hears what is said from the speaker's frame of reference (Banville 54). In expressing empathy, one attempts to assume the internal frame of reference of another as the hearer empties himself or herself of personal concerns (Truax and Carkhuff 285).

Can one learn this behavior? Is this something only certain gifted people are

capable of doing? Certainly one can learn to act in this way with others if there is sufficient desire and need to listen. It is well within the ability of any person to act and live this way.

Attending. As important as empathy is to the listening process, there is another behavior that must be present when a person is attempting to listen. This behavior is attending. Attending is the behavior of relating to another person with one's full attention. This is necessary if one is to discover what another person is saying.

Attending is behaving in such a way as to communicate interest and concern in what is being said. This involves posture, eye contact, and body motion (Bolton 33). Attending is, as Egan suggests, the whole person showing interest and concern to another, as well as being aware of both verbal and non-verbal exchanges (Skilled Helper 74). Attending communicates interest in the one heard by the physical presence and emotional sensitivity of the one hearing.

This habit of attending can be summarized in the acrostic "soler", given by Gerard Egan. Each letter of the acrostic represents an action that can assist in communicating the desire to attend to what another is saying. "S" represents the habit of squarely facing the one speaking. This posture suggests interest and attention. "O" is open posture. One needs to be careful to not cross arms and legs in a way that may communicate defensiveness. "L" is the habit of leaning toward the person speaking. "E" represents the habit of maintaining eye contact. "R" suggests remaining as relaxed as one can be (Skilled Helper 76-77). These attending habits communicate to another the willingness and desire to listen to what has been said. If a person is confident that you are attending to his/her speech and communication, then the conditions for hearing and listening to

each other are more likely to occur. Not to mention the fact that the one doing these things will more likely hear what is said.

Attending is a behavior everyone can readily identify. Attending is easily recognized when someone gives his or her undivided attention to another. Attending behaviors are actions that communicate interest in what we are saying (Carkhuff 55). Gerard Egan suggests that people know when a person is interested in them they attend with their ears, eyes, and sense of touch (You and Me 228). The behavior of attending is more obvious to people when they reflect on times when they have spoken with others who fidgeted with their watch and gave every possible nonverbal behavior that they were uncomfortable being with them. When attending to another person, that person who is receiving attention is not only helped to tell their concerns, but those doing the attending do a better job of listening.

Another aspect of attending has to do with suspending one's judgement. Suspending one's judgement is partially understood as the behavior of allowing people to say what they want without assessing if they should or should not feel or think as they do (Carkhuff 75). This suspension of judgement attempts to keep one from judging what people say and taking the time to understand what others are feeling or experiencing.

Suspending judgement is not easy for people trained in some vocations, which is why listening is so hard for people trained for some form of ministry. People educated for ministries are instructed to have answers for ethical and moral dilemmas. They are also committed to maintaining a certain code of ethics which they consider faithful to God and His will. So, to simply listen to people tell of their feelings and behaviors which might be inconsistent with the code of ethics a person holds is foreign to most people's

training for ministry.

One other suggestion about attending appears in the literature reviewed. At some level, anyone who desires to practice attending needs simply to be silent (Forkey 24ff). As simple as this habit sounds it continues to be a confounding habit for many. Silence is hard to come by, especially in people who are trained to talk and teach.

Feedback. Another theme from the literature on listening effectiveness is the behavior of feedback. Feedback is relaying back to the sender the effects that an utterance or action has produced for the hearer. This behavior enables the speaker and hearer to arrive at mutual agreement on what has been said. When feedback is practiced it tends to stabilize the circuits of communication. This stabilization takes the form of the sender and hearer agreeing on what has been communicated (Barbara and Thomas 39-40). Therefore, feedback is the attempt to stabilize communication to the extent that one can receive usable information (Egan, The Skilled Helper 181), which sender and hearer have agreed upon.

This form of stabilization, which is provided by feedback, enables the hearer to be certain that what was heard is what was said. Feedback is necessary because reality is ambiguous (Katz 4), and there is a need for clarification because events in life are not easily understood. For example, a person slams a door because he/she did not realize how freely the door was attached. One person may interpret this behavior as a hostile act, while it was simply an error in judgment. If one seeks feedback, one discovers reality. The same can also be true of words and actions that need clarification.

Feedback, requested by the receiver, gives the sender the opportunity to clarify or correct what the receiver has heard. Feedback helps to ensure that both sender and

receiver have come to a shared meaning in their communication (Wakefield 62-65). This shared meaning, which results in confirmation of what has been said (stabilizing the communication circuit), is achieved in a three-step procedure. First, the message is sent. Second, the listener reports what he/she has heard. Third, the speaker confirms the level of accuracy (Wakefield 65-67).

Practicing feedback is essential for anyone desiring to listen. This is due in part to the nature of listening. It is not possible to know if one has listened to another person solely based upon one's opinion. Until confirmation is received from the person to whom one has been listening that they believe that they have been listened to, there is no way of knowing if one has really listened. The sender of a message is always at the mercy of the receiver's interpretation of what they hear (Clampitt 42), and is one of the reasons of the difficulty of listening. Nor, can people assert that they are good listeners without feedback from the person(s) to whom they have allegedly listened. The level of listening that people exercise is unknowable until they hear from the ones they are attempting to listen to and have it verified that they have indeed listened. So it is possible through feedback to confirm or disallow what has been said so that hearer and speaker agree on what was said, and whether or not listening has taken place.

One must ultimately learn to practice the behavior of feedback because it bridges any gaps that may exist in speaking and hearing (Savage 22). There is skill in discovering what has actually been said or communicated in body language, tone, etcetera (Savage 26). This is due to the complexity that exists in any communication and listening experience. Tone of voice and body language together exerts profound effects on what people hear from someone. To be effective in listening requires commitment to

catch all the signals a person sends and to provide feedback for clarification.

Recognizing the Presence of Listening Styles

Finally, a review of the literature suggests that there are several listening approaches or styles ("Personal Listening Profile" 6, Lumsden and Lumsden 127-137). These sources assert that styles of listening are ways that people listen, usually employing a major listening habit (empathy, feedback, attending, etc.) in their application of style. In other words, style is a synonym for what has previously been understood as the basic action or behavior of listening. The style of listening usually relies upon one of the previously discussed actions.

Styles of listening are certainly a matter of interest in the field of listening research. Studies suggest that listening style is a significant factor in understanding styles of listening in general and understanding one's own listening style in particular (Aaronson and Scarborough).

The literature suggests that it is helpful to know the listening style one naturally employ and to understand that the styles relate to different listening goals (Wolvin and Coakley 152-154). Possessing the knowledge of listening styles assists people in using their particular listening style more consciously and understanding why they listen the way they do. This knowledge of one's style of listening may also cause one to be open to the possibility of developing other styles of listening, assuming that all the styles are understood as legitimate in differing contexts (Lumsden and Lumsden 127-137).

Differing styles of listening may be the result of people having different gifts, perspectives, and abilities. And people are not equipped or inclined to listen in the same style or use the same skills. Some of these differences appear to be the result of

differences in people and their experiences. Few would deny that personalities and experiences contribute to the differences in people's styles of listening.

Differences in styles of listening and personality are certainly not difficult to imagine or understand. People have a listening style which relies upon the previously mentioned listening habits, biases, personality, and experiences. Each person, however, usually has one of these styles of listening which is weighted in one of the habits of listening. Or, style of listening is one's habitual pattern of response developed over time (Brownell 266; Wolvin and Coakley 141).

The presence of differing styles of listening is based upon another phenomena of listening. The presence of differing styles of listening is related to the fact that there are several purposes of listening. Not every listening situation calls for the same style and people are not helped if one style of listening is used in every situation. To assume that people are capable of using only one style of listening is to make a fundamental error.

In fact, it can be established that listening has at least five different purposes: discrimination, comprehension, therapeutic, critical, and appreciative. These various purposes require that the listener be able to use different styles of listening and employ behavior consistent with the different listening purposes. Understanding the presence of listening styles gives people a reason to include the five purposes (or reasons) in a repertoire of listening for appropriate purposes (Wolvin and Coakley 152-154). This forms some of the basis for suggesting that there are differing styles of listening.

Does this mean that the previously mentioned behaviors and style issues are the only habits needed for effective listening? No, but the previous literature review suggests that these are some of the recurring themes that one must begin to apply to life for

effective listening skills. One must learn to use these style issues and habits in varying levels and combinations. One may discover a need for more feedback than empathy, and vice versa, in any given situation. The degree and amount of each of these is based on the situation as it relates to listening. One cannot indiscriminately apply these behaviors of listening in a rote or arbitrary manner. Some listening contexts may call for all of the previous behaviors and style issues mentioned, one of the habits, or some combination of these and other habits for listening to occur.

Can Behaviors and Styles of Listening be Taught?

If one accepts the notion that it is possible to reduce the effect barriers exert to inhibit listening and if one can adopt behaviors that makes listening more likely, it seems reasonable to suggest that listening is something people can learn. Specifically, behaviors and styles of listening can be taught. Is there evidence to support this suggestion?

Research

To suggest that listening proficiency can be learned is a conclusion from every study in which listening instruction has been given (Taylor). The value of listening and its teachability is well documented. The real question for a business communication instructor is “do i have time to include it in the course?” (Means and Klein 13).

Moreover, the study by Means and Klein (1994) demonstrates that ability in listening can be improved. In fact they demonstrated that ability in listening is improved in a short interval of training within the collegiate context. The format of this study consisted of a pre-test that scored the student’s listening skills. This was followed by a treatment that consisted of informing students of ten listening errors. Students also kept a

twenty-one day journal in which they logged their needs and accomplishments in listening training. The final step was to give the students the same pre-test as a post-test. The result revealed individual listening ability improved an average of 21 percent.

The assertion that teaching listening effectiveness is the probable outcome of attempts to teach listening (which would include issues of behavior and style) is also supported by research within the corporate world (DiSalvo and Larsen 18). The findings of Gilchrist and Van Hoeven support the contention that listening effectiveness is both important and possible. The research by Andrew Wolvin and Carolyn Coakley also suggests that the behaviors of listening can be developed in a systematic program (151). Thus, these studies demonstrate that listening can indeed be taught and improved through instruction.

Authors

The assertion that listening is a behavior that can be taught is also the position taken by author Carl Rogers. Rogers believes that if one practices five guidelines for active listening, increases in listening skill occur. "Listen for the content of the message, listen for the feelings of the speaker, respond to the feelings of the speaker, note the speaker's cues, both verbal and nonverbal, and reflect back what you think you are hearing" (qtd. In Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 344-345). Active listening is a skill that can be learned; it is a behavior within the reach of anyone willing to apply the discipline needed to overcome the need to be heard and learn to listen to others (Beaubien 7).

A host of other authors agree with Rogers' contention that listening can be learned. This is the explicit belief of each of these authors. One also recognizes this

belief when seeing the title of each one's book: The Lost Art of Listening, Michael P. Nichols; Human Listening, Carl H. Weaver; The Art of Listening, Dominick A. Barbara; How to Listen-How to be Heard, Thomas G. Banville; Listening, a Christian's Guide to Loving Relationships; Norman Wakefield; Listening, the Forgotten Skill, Madelyn Burley-Allen. These authors believe that listening can be practiced and learned, albeit at differing levels and expertise. In fact, they contend that in reading their book one will be equipped to listen at a more effective level.

Organizations

Several organizations on the Internet propose (and some have statistical evidence to support their belief) listening can be learned. At least four organizations on the internet offer tools, training, and consulting in the teaching of listening skills and behavior: the training registry, butler and associates, the Kenan group, and Doubleeagle. Each of these organizations offers tools and materials to purchase which train people to listen more effectively. The tool of choice from these organizations appears to be the listening style inventory by the Carlson Learning Company (Minneapolis, MN.).

Another organization, innovative business technologies of Smyrna, Tennessee, offers consulting services to colleges and businesses. One of the goals of this organization is to train people to listen more effectively. In speaking with the president of the company I discovered that the Personal Listening Profile (Carlson) is the tool used in their training sessions on listening.

An organization that provides video training on several subjects for business application is Learning Seed of Lake Zurich, Illinois. One of the subjects listed has to do with learning listening skills. They list three videos The Art of Listening, Gender and

Communication, and Getting along with your Parents, which address a specific application in teaching listening skills. No evidence was provided as to the reliability of these products.

Another organization committed to providing research and seminars to highlight the importance of listening is the international listening association, Overland Park, Kansas. The organization was formed in 1979 to promote the study, development, and teaching of effective listening in all settings. They publish a quarterly journal of articles investigating various aspects of listening and listening research, as well as sponsor a yearly meeting to discuss listening research and trends. The existence of this organization and its various activities is based on the premise that listening can and should be taught.

The material on listening training by John Savage, CEO of L.E.A.D. consultants of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, supports the assertion that listening can be learned. Dr. Savage's training is available through a weeklong session of learning to increase listening skill. Savage concluded that one reason people leave churches is because they have not been listened to in an appropriate way. The result is inactivity and, ultimately, departure. His work is not simply to increase one's effectiveness in listening but to use this skill in the ministry of working with inactive people in the church.

Absent from my search in the literature about listening was finding research that specifically dealt with people in ministry. I found no studies that attempted to research the teaching people engaged in ministry training about listening skills. The studies I discovered were conducted in the corporate world.

One final observation, as it relates to this contention that listening can be taught, requires some attention. If the notion that people have a dominant listening style, or

possess basic listening behavior, is accepted, then teaching greater effectiveness in listening is a “given.” In other words, people already have behaviors and a style of listening, and they only need to learn how to be more effective in using behaviors and styles of listening. In fact, some of the literature suggests that listening effectiveness can be taught through simple practice and feedback (Rhodes, Watson, and Baker 64).

Biblical and Theological Review

The literature consulted with the concerns of listening are both from the bible and from sources that draw upon the bible for their conclusions. This material provides a biblical and theological basis for listening by leaders who desire to lead within the church, understanding the unique nature of the church.

The bible offers some explicit statements that relate to the practice of listening. Most prominent is the passage in James 1:19: “this you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak” (NASV). The passage states that this is knowledge already known. Do these “brethren” know this to be true as a basic principle of life, or is this something that Christian brethren know because of the teaching of the bible?

To answer the previous question one must consult the bible in as thorough a fashion as possible. This requires investigation into the wisdom literature of the bible, especially the book of proverbs. What do these books say about this principle?

Jesus had much to say about people’s hearing and listening. Hearing correctly, according to Jesus, resulted in one’s eternal destiny. Is there any more important reason to develop greater hearing or listening skills?

The apostle Paul’s understanding of the nature of the church, and the behaviors

that help sustain its life, is critical for anyone who would lead in the church. Part of this required behavior must include the behavior of listening.

CHAPTER 3

Project Design

A review of the literature reveals the importance of listening as a leadership behavior and the many different aspects of listening. With no single definition of listening one must be determined to study some particular aspect(s) of listening so as to conduct a manageable study of this extensive subject. With some knowledge of the extensive range of the subject of listening this project investigated and assessed two aspects related to listening. The listening aspects investigated were behaviors of listening, and styles of listening. However, I was surprised when unable to find formal undergraduate training in these two areas of listening; in spite of the admitted importance of listening.

Design

The project was designed on the model of a quasi-experimental, nonequivalent control group. The nonequivalent control group design made it necessary to have two groups of students in two different classes that approximated the academic standing of each. Both groups received the pre- and post-tests (Listening profile and HURIER) while only one group received the experience of classroom instruction. The students for each of these classes were not selected randomly, they self-selected into their respective class by registering for the specific class the fall semester of 1999.

The control group was a class of students having similar undergraduate standing with the members of the listening class (juniors and seniors). I knew the constituency of the listening class by the end of the spring semester 1999 through registration records. Therefore, I knew that I had to have a control group that had students of similar rank.

So, a class with students of junior and senior standing was selected for the fall semester of 1999 for the control group. This gave the listening class a control group that was as similar as possible given the classes offered in the fall of 1999. This class received the pre- and post-test by the professor of their class. This control group had no class treatment in listening.

The control group had twelve students complete the HURIER pre- and posttest. Fourteen students in the control group completed the Personal Listening Styles pre and posttests. Differences in number of students who completed HURIER and Personal Listening styles tests reflect the fact that students in the control group were instructed that they were not required to complete these tests as part of the requirements for the class they were taking. The number of the students taking the respective listening tests also reflects that the instructor gave the posttests only to the students who had taken the pretests.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to analyze self-reported changes in students pretest and posttest scores in listening behaviors and styles. The purpose of this analysis is to identify changes and determine if the changes reported by students rises to the statistical standard of significant change.

A second purpose of this project was to determine whether listening behaviors and styles could be taught to vocational ministry students in a single semester class. Determining whether this occurred was based on data compiled and analyzed from the listening tests and compared to the data reported by the control group.

Population

In any semester, about 500 full-time undergraduate students attend Mid-America Bible College. Of this number 50 percent are members of the school's sponsoring denomination, the church of god of Anderson, Indiana. The student body consists of 239 male students and 244 female students, and a Caucasian population of 85.2 percent. Amy Ethridge, Assistant Registrar at Mid-America Bible College, supplied these data to me.

Within this student population, there are several degree programs a student may pursue: Associate of Arts, Business Administration, Music Education, Teacher Education, English Education, Behavioral Science, Worship Ministries, Specialized Ministry, and Pastoral Ministry. The last three degrees previously listed are specifically designed as degrees that prepare one to enter full-time parish ministry

The students who took the listening class took it as an elective. The class was specifically listed in the course description as a class in the specialized ministry department and counted toward the graduation requirements for ministry majors. All students took the class as a class that contributed to their graduation requirements at Mid-America Bible College.

The composition of the listening class consisted of thirteen students of junior and senior classification at Mid-America Bible College in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in the fall semester of 1999. The members of this class were degree seeking students and represented four different majors: Behavioral Science two, Business Administration one, Pastoral Ministry six, and Specialized Ministry two. All but one of the students, in the listening class stated that they had the goal of vocational ministry in the parish setting. The one student that declared a vocational goal other than a career in parish ministry is

majoring in Behavioral Science and hopes to practice counseling from a Christian perspective. Therefore, the members of this class appear to have significant interest in learning to develop skills in working with people. They all expressed interest in improving in ability to work with and influence people, both in parish ministry settings and in a behavioral science setting.

The control group for this project was a class studying research methods and statistics. Students in this class were taking the class as a required course for several majors at Mid-America Bible College, none of which were part of the Specialized or Pastoral Ministry majors.

The control group consisted of twenty-one students of junior and senior students. The control group was chosen to match, as closely as possible the constituency of the listening class in terms of class standing. Out of this class of twenty-one students, twelve completed the HURIER pre-test and fourteen completed the listening styles pre-test. The number of students taking the HURIER and listening styles tests appears to be due to the fact that students were informed by their instructor that involvement in this experiment was entirely voluntary. Another factor was that the pre-tests were given by the second class session and there were several students absent. Therefore, it was determined that the post-test would be given only to the students who had completed the pre-test given the design of this project.

Additionally, the students in the control group, with the exception of two, are not pursuing a declared vocational ministry career. Also, this class does not count toward the graduation requirements for any major in vocational ministry offered at Mid-America Bible College so its constituency is largely other than vocational ministry students. The

students in this class, as far as I know, are preparing for fields that are not generally designated as needing people skills.

Curriculum

The curriculum for this project was the specific objectives of the class sessions based on the findings of the literature review. I created a single semester curriculum for an undergraduate class on listening at Mid-America Bible College for the fall of 1999. The class addressed several aspects of listening as a behavior used in working with others. The curriculum covered the importance of listening, a theological basis for listening, barriers to listening, and listening behaviors and styles.

As far as I could determine, in the history of the school, the subject of listening had never been taught as a semester class. There are classes that teach listening as a very small part of the curriculum of a class, such as pastoral counseling and general counseling classes.

The class met for fifteen weeks, twice a week, for one hour and fifteen minutes, for a total of thirty class sessions. The class curriculum specifically covered some of the issues necessary to understand some of the basic behaviors of listening and styles of listening. These two aspects of listening were chosen to be the goal of this project based on these recurring themes in the literature. I discovered that behaviors and styles of listening were consistent themes in many of the works I consulted.

The curriculum of the class was written by the researcher himself and based on the results of the literature review used in this project. The curriculum also reflects the findings and plan of the textbook by Judi Brownell as it relates to listening behavior. Her text, Listening: Attitudes, Principles, and Skills, was used as a course guide with regard

to the content of the basic behaviors of listening. Her text included the HURIER listening test that was used as a pretest and posttest to assess changes in students' listening behavior.

The curriculum that addressed the presence of listening styles was also the result of some of the findings of the literature review. The study of listening styles, as part of the class curriculum, was designed on the basis of the work of Wolvin and Coakley's book, Listening, (5th edition), some of the content on listening styles present in the listening profile instrument, and Florence Wolff's book, Perceptive Listening.

Outline of the curriculum

The curriculum objectives are offered here in the form of a general outline, and consist of thirty class sessions over the course of the semester. Class session lesson plans are in appendix A.

Throughout the semester students completed reading assignments, writing assignments based on readings, application exercises outside the classroom. In class, student participated in classroom discussion also based on reading and writing assignments. The semester grades showed each student, with the exception of one, succeeded in achieving above-average grades for their work (a's and b's).

Students in the listening class kept a semester-long journal in which they made entries relating both to their discoveries and to challenges in understanding listening. The journal entry assignment was the basis for a final project where students generated a list of salient insights they identified as important for their listening effectiveness. This list was turned in at the time of the final exam.

Weeks one through three consisted of six class sessions. In these sessions, the

students took the pretests, gained an understanding of the importance of listening, recognized the place that listening occupies in working and relating with others, and become aware of listening as a part of a holistic understanding of communication. A brief review of the history of listening research and study of listening from a biblical viewpoint was part of these three weeks. The outcomes of these three weeks were to assess the student's listening styles and behaviors the first week of class. Another outcome of these sessions was that the students increased in their motivation to learn to listen as they were exposed to studies that revealed the importance of listening in one's working and influencing others. A final outcome of these three weeks was to help students identify some biblical basis for listening. This was a significant part of increasing students' motivation to listen since all but one of the students in the class had goals of vocational ministry.

In week four students were exposed to the barriers common to effective listening. Students gained understanding of these common barriers as well as strategies to help ameliorate these barriers.

Weeks one through four comprised almost one fourth of the class. In these weeks, of the class instruction, the goal of the curriculum was to introduce the importance and place of listening. Students were given the opportunity to reflect on the important place listening occupies in relating to others in any context.

In this initial phase of the class the goal was to increase student's understanding and motivation to listen. This goal required identifying the important place listening occupies in the bible. This consideration of listening in the bible is important when considering the population of the class, and the declared majors of the students of this

class.

Weeks five through fifteen of the class concentrated on some of the barriers to effective listening, basic behaviors of listening, and the styles of listening. This section of class consisted of twenty-two class sessions. These sessions were for the duration of one hour and fifteen minutes. In these sessions students were exposed to these three categories as they relate to listening, as well as applying the material learned about each. The students were able to understand and apply the teaching on styles and behaviors of listening in their personal lives.

Week sixteen consisted of one class session. This session was the final exam and all data for this project was collected by this session. The outcomes of the two tests identify changes in student's scores from the pretest scores.

The students who took the class were assessed throughout the semester as to their grasp of the behaviors and styles of listening. Students kept a journal throughout the semester to record self-reflective evaluations of their listening behavior, styles, and competence. As a final assignment, students listed the salient truths they learned about listening.

Tests used

One method, in the form of two tests, was used to implement this Project. The two tests were tests, which evaluate changes in styles and behaviors of listening. The instruments used in this project are the Personal Listening Profile and the HURIER listening test. The Carlson Learning Company (Minneapolis, MN) researched the Personal Listening Profile, and the HURIER test was researched and designed by professor Judi Brownell; Cornell University.

Listening Styles Profile Test

The Carlson Learning Company, in an attempt to measure styles of listening, developed the Personal Listening Profile instrument to replace an earlier one, which was developed and published for use in 1982. The study for the new instrument designed by Carlson was based on the work of Andrew Wolvin and Carolyn Coakley (1993), and was published in the Journal of the International Listening Association. The work by Wolvin and Coakley suggests a taxonomy that provides a five-level framework for listening (Wolvin and Coakley 135). This taxonomy became the framework for the five styles of listening used in the Carlson test: appreciative, comprehensive, discerning, empathic, and evaluative

The Carlson tool is the result of research to determine the need for business and social applications in the 1990's. The published information on this test indicates that the test has a reliability factor from .68 to .86 in identifying five different listening styles. This reliability factor is the result of both alpha and beta tests which combined the statistical analysis of 234 respondents.

The Carlson learning company has been very helpful in this project. They gave permission to use and reference the data from the company's own testing of the listening profile instrument. Part of this permission agreement is that I will give them a published report on my findings, particularly related to the use of their assessment instrument.

The HURIER Test

The first test instrument used in the pre-test and post-test analysis of the class and the control group was the HURIER test developed by Judi Brownell. She is a professor of management and communication, as well as the Richard J. and Monene P. Bradley

director of graduate studies at Cornell University. The listening test she created and designed was originally tested with 250 business managers. The results and analysis from the pilot test was then used on a sample of 927 managers. The model she developed was in response to employees' perceptions of ineffective managerial listening behavior (Brownell 22).

A factor analysis revealed significantly high loading on all six dimensions of the HURIER design. Thus, the HURIER model for assessing behaviors of listening was created for instructional application in teaching six dimensions of listening behavior (hearing, understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating, and responding).

I have been in personal communication with professor Brownell. She expressed interest in this project, particularly as it attempts to assess any increased scores in listening styles and behaviors. She stated that she believed that this is a worthwhile project and one that can help persons working in careers that require competence in the use of people skills. She also stated that she thought this was necessary training for persons for parish ministry. She graciously gave me permission to make two hundred copies of her HURIER test for use in this project and expressed interest in the outcomes of this project.

The second test used to evaluate changes in students' styles of listening was the Listening Profile Test by the Carlson Learning Company. This test, developed by Carlson, was the result of an increasing awareness that a new test was needed. Data as to the reasons for the development of this instrument and its reliability may be found in Appendix B. Due to the nature of the listening tests used in this project, student scores reflect only the student's insights.

Both the HURIER and Listening Styles Profile tests allow for no other evaluation other than that, which the students give. Their self-reported scores are the basis for the analysis. In order to assess students' experience in the class, based on the tests used, the following research questions guided the interpretation of the data:

Research question #1: what self-reported change occurred in student's basic listening behavior as a result of the class?

Research question #2: what self-reported change in student's listening style occurred as a result of the class?

My interest with question 1 is based on accumulating the information of basic listening behaviors from student's self-reports on a pre- and post-test. Would there be any significant changes in student's perception of their behaviors of listening based on the class? This information was assessed and used to draw conclusions as to students' self understanding of their experience in the class and self-understanding specifically related to basic listening behavior.

The interest I have with question 2 has to do with whether students of this class experience any significant changes in perception of their styles of listening. If there is any change in student's styles of listening can it be positively attributed to the class experience?

Variables

The independent variable of this project is the curriculum of the classroom instruction. The dependent variable is change in students' behaviors and styles of listening, which are the result of the class instruction.

A confounding variable of this project is the motivation of the students taking the class. The specific motivation for taking this class is unknown. The possibilities range from a desire to learn about listening to the desire to take any class that will count toward one's graduation.

Another confounding variable is the open enrollment practice of Mid-America Bible College. This practice allows students to enroll in college classes without any minimum required score on one's act or sat scores. It is possible to have students in the class who are both immanently qualified to do college work and those who are unable to do much more than the minimum requirement for college work.

Data Collection and Analysis

In terms of procedure, the data was collected in a way to protect the anonymity of the student. Students provided the instructor with a four-digit number on their test booklets that they used the entire semester. These numbers were used to record both pre-test and post-test results. This procedure of coding ensured anonymity for the student and any possibility of bias on the part of the instructor since he graded the pre- or post-tests, and recorded the results.

The specific data for this project was collected from the each student's pre- and post-test scores in the listening class and control group. On the basis of these pre- and post-test scores the mean difference for each measure of the two tests was calculated. In the case of the HURIER test there were six measure so analyzed, and in the case of the personal listening styles test there were five measures analyzed. The analysis of the mean differences was submitted to the standard deviation calculation for each of these

eleven measures. This procedure allowed for analysis of the findings, and whether there was any significant change that occurred at the .05 level.

These data were further evaluated by use of the paired-t test method. This statistical analysis addressed whether changes in students' scores can be attributed, with 95 percent probability that the changes occurred on the basis of the class treatment. A t-test was used to strengthen the findings, based on the data used in the paired t-test.

Delimitations

A delimitation of this study was the process used to recruit participants. The listening class was open to any student at Mid-America Bible College enrolled for the fall semester of 1999. There was no criteria used to qualify students for this class beyond an interest of students. However, the class was offered as an elective that could be used toward graduation in any of our vocational ministry students or a general elective for any other student. The class had a significant number of vocational ministry students by major, even though there were students with other majors pursuing vocational ministry as a career goal. Student's interest in this class ranged from a genuine desire to learn about listening, to taking a class because it was at a convenient time.

A delimitation of this study is the limitation a fifteen-week single semester class may exert on student's behaviors and styles of listening. A fifteen-week class that attempted to teach students how to incorporate new behaviors and styles of listening is a formidable task. It is conceivable that a class of greater length might make greater changes in students test scores.

A delimitation of this study was the data itself. Data for this project was limited to the self-evaluation of students in terms of written summaries and test scores. The tests

taken by students were limited to the students' evaluation of themselves.

Another delimitation was the context of tests and students' summaries. Both were administered in a classroom environment and not real-life situations observed by an third party.

Yet, another delimitation of this project was the limitation of discovering any continuing effect of this class on students' styles of listening. It simply was not within the scope of this project to assess any continual effects on students' behaviors and styles of listening.

Chapters 4 & 5

A more thorough rendering of the results of this project are found in chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents my reflections on this project, including some unexpected discoveries, a discussion on some issues to consider in future studies, and a summary conclusion.

CHAPTER 4

The Findings

Chapter 3 gave the basic description and role of the class and control group for this project. The findings of this project now follow.

The student's participating in the listening class, with the exception of one, had less than three absences for the entire semester. So, the students taking the listening class showed a high degree of interest and involvement throughout the semester. There was no attempt to discover the attendance habits of the students in the control group.

Students in the listening class kept a personal listening journal throughout the semester. They were instructed to keep a list of personal insights and discoveries about their learning and application of listening behaviors and styles. Reviewing these lists revealed recurring behaviors and principles the students deemed necessary for effective listening. Most lists mentioned the importance of attending, the practice of feedback, recognizing the importance of listening styles, and interpreting nonverbal behavior. Although these lists were not subjected to statistical analysis they do reflect students common understanding of important issues related to listening. More specific reporting of their findings occur later in this chapter.

Analysis of The Project

Therefore, the findings of this project are based in two sources. The first source of findings of this project is a statistical understanding of the student's listening scores from listening tests given to the listening class and the control group. A second source of findings of this project is journal reports of the students who took the listening class.

Both sources serve to answer two research questions that were used to guide this

project. Research question one asks: what changes do students report about their basic listening behavior (RQ1)? Tables 1 and 3 reveal data that answers research question number one (RQ1). This chapter proceeds to report data that answers the second research question: what changes do students report about their listening styles (RQ2)? This question is answered in tables 2 and 4.

The scores from student's self reported listening tests, which assessed behaviors of listening and styles of listening, were computed on the basis of the mean difference, standard deviation, and the p-value of $<.05$. A paired t-test and t-test were employed to analyze the test scores, specific to this project.

The paired t-test computations are in tables 1 and 2. These data reveal the level of probability of any significant change as a result of the class treatment. In other words, can the changes in student's measures of listening be attributed to the experience of the class with a 95 percent level of probability? And the t-test reveals, in Tables 3 and 4, whether the change in mean difference scores is in and of itself significant.

Data of this project are reflected in four tables. In each of these tables the same format is followed. The first column lists the behavior being assessed in the listening class and the control group. The second column reveals the mean differences (M) in the pre-test and post-test scores from the class, where noted. This same data is reported in the second column of the tables reporting the control group's data. The third column is a computation of the standard deviation (SD) of these mean differences. If the computation of the pvalue of any behavior meets the statistical standard less than .05 an asterisk (*) is placed by the mean difference score.

Paired-t Test Data from the HURIER Test in TABLE 1

TABLE 1
Changes in Listening Behaviors

Behavior	Test Group (n=13)		Control Group (n=12)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Hearing	2.85*	3.848	-.42	1.24
Understanding	2.69*	3.591	-.08	1.98
Remembering	.92	4.19	-1.75	1.96
Interpreting	3.38*	3.99	.58	3.09
Evaluating	2.38*	3.28	.33	3.26
Responding	2.54*	4.12	.08	2.23

* $P < .05$

Data in table one reflect the changes in the students' listening behaviors in the listening class and the control group. Data in this table answers research question number one (RQ1): what changes do students report in their listening behaviors?

Table one reveals stark differences in the scores of the mean difference in the Listening Class and the Control Group. First, changes in the listening class' mean difference scores, in every behavior are all in positive values. Whereas changes in the control group's mean difference scores reveal positive values in only three behaviors. Second, there are no negative value changes in the scores of the listening class, while there are three behaviors of the control group's test scores that change in negative value.

Table one also reveals that even though the behavior of remembering, in the listening class, did not show significant change it should be noted that the measure of remembering did change in a positive direction. And although the change in

remembering, in the listening class, does not reach the standard of $<.05$ it is nonetheless a positive change.

The positive change of the behavior of remembering in the listening class must be seen in comparison to that of the control group. It should be noted that while the behavior of remembering is the least positive gain in the listening class, the control group had its highest negative change in this very behavior.

Furthermore, Table 1 reveals that all of the behaviors in the listening class, with the exception of remembering, change at the $.05$ level of probability. The statistical changes in these five measures allow the researcher to assert with a 95 % percent probability that the treatment in the class is the reason for the change in the student's behaviors of listening.

Data in table 1 also reveals that none of the changes of the mean difference scores in the control group meet the level of probability ($p < .05$). Therefore, none of the changes in the control group are significant, none of the changes in student's behaviors in the control group can be asserted to anything other than chance. This assertion is supported by the final computation of the pvalue of each measure.

The control group's scores reveal that changes in this group can be ascribed only to chance. This is substantiated by the computation of the test scores using the paired-t test, as well as the negative value of half of the changes in the control group's scores.

Furthermore, the control group's scores reveal a stark contrast when compared to the scores in the listening class. The control groups function was to control for the rival hypothesis that changes in students' listening scores could be attributed to maturation. The data in table 1 suggests that the changes in the listening class scores cannot be

attributed to simple maturity or chance. This is based on the fact that no significant change occurred in any of the measures of the control group, which only had maturation as a possible explanation for significant change. Therefore, the changes in the scores of the students in the listening class must be attributed to some other cause than simple maturity; the treatment.

Paired-t Data From the Listening Styles Test in Table 2

Table 2 reveals changes in student's self-perceived understanding of their styles of listening. These data are the results of the listening style test given to the listening class and the control group. This table reveals the data that provides part of the answer to the second research question of this project (RQ2): "what changes do students report about their listening styles?"

TABLE 2
Changes in Listening Styles

Behavior	Test Group (n=13)		Control Group (n=14)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Appreciative	-0.77	4.66	-0.057	5.34
Comprehensive	0.62	4.80	-0.057	5.53
Discerning	2.90*	4.80	-1.00	5.70
Empathic	2.40*	4.10	-1.29	3.70
Evaluative	0.23	6.90	-0.36	5.22

*p<.05

The first finding from table two is that every listening style in the control group moved into negative values when analyzing the mean deviation. This is dramatically different from what is reported in the mean deviation scores from the test group

(Listening class), where only one measure was reported in a negative value. 100 percent of the measures of the styles of listening are in negative values in the control group, whereas twenty percent of the measures in the listening class are in negative values.

Not surprisingly no listening style in the control group (Table 2) attains the level of significant change, where a probability ($<.05$) of change can be asserted to any specific cause. The negative changes can only be understood as changes based on chance at this point in the project.

These data suggest that the negative value of the mean difference in the scores of the control group show no change in the control group that rises to the level of significant change. And with this being the case the probability is that chance or some unknown cause has produced these changes in the control group. In other words, these changes cannot be identified with any specific cause.

In direct contrast with the control group are the significant changes in two measures of the styles of listening test that can be attributed to the class treatment. The control group then is serving the purpose of suggesting that change in the test scores of the listening class cannot be attributed to simple maturity. The changes are supported as occurring because of the specific treatment the listening class received.

Table 2 reveals that the members of the listening class had some significant change in two measures of the listening style test: discerning and empathic styles. The statistical analysis reveals that there is a 95 percent probability that the treatment of the class is the explanation for the changes in these two measures of listening style.

Changes in the three other styles of listening of the students in the listening class did not meet the standard of probability where an explanation beyond chance can be

given. Changes in three styles of listening, greater than the .05 level, reduce the level of probability that the treatment affected these measures. One can suggest that the changes in listening styles that are not at the same level of probability as discerning and empathic are not excluded to have occurred on the basis of the treatment. The only thing that can be suggested is that there is a lower level of certainty as to the effect of the treatment, based on statistical analysis.

The previous analysis suggests that there is a significant level of probability that the class treatment caused changes in the discerning and empathic styles of listening. However, the assertion that there can be no certainty in identifying the cause of the changes in the other three styles of listening in the listening class may be a bit less compelling. After consulting this table one is struck by the fact that all the mean differences in the control group are in negative values. The fact that there is less change in the listening class is in direct contrast with the negative values of each measure of the control group. This finding suggests that there was something occurring in the listening class that was not occurring in the control group.

Data from students' self-reported pre and posttest scores of listening behaviors and style, from the listening class and the control group were analyzed by an additional test. The following tables are the result of the scores of the listening class and the control evaluated by a t-test. This test seeks to discover if the changes reported in the student's test scores indicate whether significant change occurred.

t-Test Data from the HURIER Test in TABLE 3

The following is data from a t-test on the results of the student's pre- and posttest scores in the listening class and the control group. Data in tables 3 and 4 follow the basic

format of tables 1 and 2 with the exception that they report the mean score and standard deviation for both pre and posttests, separated by a forward slash (/). The pvalue in these tables reflect the assertion that significant change occurred in the mean difference. Those behaviors are identified by an asterisk (*) beside the number of the mean.

TABLE 3

Changes in Listening Behaviors

Behavior	Test Group (n=13)		Control Group (n=12)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Hearing	20.6/23.4*	2.9/3.4	22.9/22.5	4.4/3.8
Understanding	19.0/21.6*	2.6/2.5	21.9/21.8	3.8/4.7
Remembering	21.0/21.9	3.6/3.7	24.1/22.4	3.9/4.9
Interpreting	21.4/24.8*	3.0/2.9	23.3/22.7	4.4/3.8
Evaluating	21.3/23.6	3.8/3.5	23.8/24.1	4.8/4.1
Responding	18.6/21.6*	3.3/3.1	21.6/21.7	3.7/2.3

*P<.05

Data in table 3 reveals that changes in four of six behaviors of listening show significant change. Significance, based on the t-test, suggests that the student's reported changes are significant at the <.05 level.

The results of the t-tests in table 3 are slightly different from the results of the paired-t test results in table 1, where five of the six behaviors showed significant change that could be attributed to the class instruction. However, these data reveal that the failure of the behavior of evaluating to reach <.05 level was only by eight thousandths (.058). So, the results of Table 3 are within eight thousandths of being identical to the data in table 1.

t-Test Data from the Listening Styles Test in Table 4

TABLE 4
Changes in Listening Styles

Test Group (n=13)			Control Group (n=14)	
Behavior	M	SD	M	SD
Appreciative	40.0/39.3	3.06/5.4	39.1/38.4	4.7/7.3
Comprehensive	36.3/36.9	4.6/4.9	36.3/35.4	7.0/7.2
Discerning	34.6/37.6	6.5/3.6	33.7/32.9	6.6/6.5
Empathic	34.6/37.0	5.9/5.1	38.0/36.6	3.9/4.1
Evaluative	33.4/33.6	6.9/3.7	33.6/33.0	7.5/6.2

*p<.05

Data from Table 4 reveals that there were no significant changes in the mean difference scores in the listening class. Whereas data in Table 2 (paired-t test) revealed significant change occurred in two of the five styles of listening in the listening class (discerning and empathic), based on the classroom instruction, there is no significant change in those styles when evaluated by a t-test. In fact there is no significant change in any of the listening styles in the listening class based on t-test analysis.

Data from Table 4 also reveals that there is no significant change in any of the styles of listening, in the mean differences of the control group. This is consistent with the data in Table 2.

One finds a difference in the results in Tables 2 and 4 in the listening class. The difference is that the in the listening class' mean score there is change in two of the five listening styles on the basis the instruction. But the changes caused by the instruction do not rise to the level of significant change when analyzed by the t-test.

Student's Findings

Now I move to include some of the findings of this project that is the result of student summaries, class discussions, and general observations as part of evaluating the listening class. This is necessary, due to the nature of the nature of the research which seeks to discover changes in student' listening skill.

From the beginning of the class students made comments about the effect that the listening class was having on their daily interactions with others. These comments continued throughout the course of the semester. At the end of the class, students wrote in their semester summaries that the most significant effect of the class was that they believed they were doing a better job of listening in daily life. In fact, several students reported that others commented on the changes they had seen in the students' lives and listening behaviors over the past weeks of the semester. Students were reporting that this class had a positive effect on the student's view of their own listening and the view that their friends and family members had of their listening effectiveness.

Students also commented early in the course of the semester that they were beginning to understand that listening to others communicates value of that individual. A person who is being listened to has a sense that they are important enough to have others listen to them. Students made this discovery as they reflected in class how they felt when they knew another person was listening to them. Understanding the value that listening to others communicates was one of the significant discoveries of the class members. Students commented throughout the semester that understanding the value listening likely communicates to others was shaping their relationships and interactions.

Students reported that learning about the behaviors of attending was having a substantial effect on their listening behaviors. Attending behaviors had to do with body posture that communicates interest, eye contact, etc. Several students stated that they had only become aware of some of these attending behaviors since taking this class.

These behaviors of attending were listed in an acrostic: SOLER. This acrostic gave students a way to remember the behaviors of attending: straight looking at the one listened to, open posture, leaning body forward, eye contact, and relaxed as possible. Being able to remember the behaviors of attending enabled the students to have these behaviors readily available to exercise in their relationships.

According to students, one of the significant effects of the listening class was a clearer understanding of the place and value of nonverbal communication. It was at times comical to observe students in class as they engaged in activities in which they began to interpret nonverbal clues among the class members. This experimentation with interpreting nonverbal communication even included the instructor at times. Students questioned the instructor as to what he really meant by a particular statement, interpreting his nonverbal communication. Many times this interaction was humorous and fun.

At other times, the interpretation of nonverbal communication was quite serious. At one point in the semester, the instructor changed the lesson plan of an entire class based on his interpretation of the nonverbal behavior of one student. The instructor noticed that there was one student who was visibly troubled when he came to class. He appeared distracted and did not make eye contact with the instructor or any of the other students. This was unusual for this student who was generally attentive to others in the class. With this nonverbal information the instructor had each student convey a weather

condition that represented how each one was experiencing life. The responses were intensely personal and honest.

The instructor did not inform the students about his complete change of his lesson plan until the end of the class session. When he did several students commented that they had observed the same nonverbal communication from other students and wondered if the instructor would pick up on these signals. The students said that this class session was a critical moment in their learning to listen more effectively to nonverbal communication. Several students commented that they would not consider very seriously what the instructor had taught about the importance of nonverbal communication if he had disregarded this clear example of the nonverbal communication. This was a significant teaching moment. Had the instructor not communicated about what he did and had the students had not responded as honestly and openly as they had this important teaching moment would not have been known by either students or instructor.

One student appeared to receive a great deal of help in the area of nonverbal communication. She commented to the entire class how she had learned, and was learning, that her nonverbal communication gave others the message that she was too anxious and nervous to listen to them. She said that she was beginning to link her nonverbal communication with some of the conflicts and challenges she had faced in her relationships. She said she thought that this class was really helping her to monitor her own behavior more closely so she could communicate to others her deep desire to listen.

This leads me to another important effect that students reported. The students reported that they had a new appreciation for the behavior of self-monitoring (the reflective behavior of being aware of the effect one's behaviors has on others). Students

discovered that people live on some gradation between low self-monitoring and high self-monitoring,

Students referred to the behavior of self-monitoring throughout the semester; most noted that they knew that they had not been high self-monitors in the past, but they recognized the importance of it now. The class members arrived at an informal consensus that anyone going into parish ministry must understand the importance of self-monitoring in dealing with others. If one is not aware of how their actions and responses affect others there is little possibility of success in working with others.

The important place that feedback occupies in effective listening was a recurring theme identified by the students. This importance of feedback is based on the notion that people must have a shared meaning of any event or idea if there is to be any two-way communication. Some students reported that they became aware of the internal talk inside their minds that caused them to misjudge or read people's actions. Feedback was the behavior that helped them learn how to confirm or discount what they thought they heard or saw. This confirms the notion that another person's action is actually only known by the person acting, and only through feedback can some agreement as to what has been communicated be agreed upon. Others may observe a person's action but have no real idea of the reason(s) or intent of the action until feedback confirms or discounts what is thought to be the case. Only the employment of feedback gives one the information to accurately interpret action of others.

Practicing feedback in the classroom was reported generally as a positive experience for most of the students. They commented that they added new words to their

vocabularies; that is they learned new ways to communicate to replace old ways that did not help them arrive at a shared meaning with those to whom they listened.

Several students commented, throughout the course of the semester and in their end-of-semester summaries, that they realized that listening takes effort. They indicated in discussions and in written work that they knew that they could not increase in listening effectiveness without specific effort. This has caused students to know that they must continue to apply the lessons learned in the class.

Some students also reported that the class had caused them to be less judgmental. Many students indicated that they had real problems listening to people who they were biased against. They indicated in class discussion that they became aware of this tendency and were working on this. One young man noted that this was a real problem for him and that he felt that the class was helping him make progress in listening to others with a less-judgmental attitude.

Most of the students commented that by the end of the class, they discovered that they entered this class with a view of their own listening that was largely based on ignorance. Students said that they had a new level of knowledge and understanding that helped them see that they knew little about listening at the beginning of the class. Their understanding of listening had increased over the course of the semester.

These data affirm the assertion made in the literature review that listening can be taught. The particular assertion that students can be taught to increase one's listening effectiveness in a single semester is substantiated in this limited study. This is further supported, anecdotally, by comments made by the students of the listening class.

Students, without knowing the findings of their test scores, commented that they believed

that they had been affected by the experience of the class. Students said that they knew that they had learned to listen more effectively and in a greater range of contexts. They reported that they knew that they had changed in their listening behaviors in their personal relationships. These observations by the students are corroborated by the statistical analysis of this project.

Chapter 5

Observations and Conclusions

The Reasons for This Project

People in leadership positions that specifically involve working with people, have to learn to listen! This is apparent to me as I reflect on the material in the literature review of this project. I was impressed with the testimony of the literature that suggested the importance and role that listening occupies in people who work in leading and influencing others. This suggests that listening is a necessary behavior for anyone in leadership.

This necessity of listening is so apparent that it may be one reason that there appears to be little listening training from the undergraduate and graduate schools in my denomination. The reason for this apparent absence of training in listening may be that it is believed that everyone learns to listen as a result of simply maturing. And if this is a common understanding of how people learn to listen, the administration of the schools in my denomination might ask: Why get concerned about something that will happen naturally, or over time?

Herein lies the precise reason for this project. I saw little evidence in my life or the lives of my colleagues in vocational ministry that suggested the idea that people naturally learned to listen more effectively over time. The literature on listening suggested that listening is an intentional set of behaviors, and did not support the suggestion that increased listening competence occurs as a result of simple maturation. Listening requires specific effort.

Furthermore, I saw little evidence that anyone preparing for vocational ministry in my denomination could expect to be confronted with any other idea than the idea that

people learn to listen over time. I saw no intentional attempts to teach listening in any of the schools affiliated with my denomination that train people for vocational ministry.

The absence of a single class on listening seemed a contradiction to me upon further reflection. How could one not notice the place and importance of listening in the Bible? The book of Proverbs has much to say about hearing and listening, as seen in Chapter 1. The ministry of Jesus shows the importance of listening. Jesus does not exhort people to simply hear with their ears but to hear in a way that brings perception and understanding (Matthew 11:15, 13:9; Mark 4:9); the kind of hearing that requires one to listen. And James suggests that the need to hear is something we know when he writes in chapter 1 and verse 19 of his letter, “this you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear.” If there is a theme of the importance of listening in the Bible, why has it not reached the curriculum writers of our colleges that train people for ministry?

Therefore, with the absence of intentional training in listening for undergraduate students who are preparing for vocational ministry in my denomination, I choose to design and implement this project. I have already described the way in which I discovered the omission of listening training in my own history in Chapter 1. Coming to understand the absence of listening training for students preparing for vocational ministry became a powerful motivation for this project. I wanted to offer training in listening; I wanted to offer undergraduate students a level of skill in working with people I had not received. I desired to discover if listening could be learned by being taught in a classroom setting.

Effects and Interpretations of This Project

The results of the data of this study support the design of this study. A treatment group, known as the listening class and a control group were used for this study. The control groups main purpose was to account for the rival hypothesis of maturation as an explanation for changes in student's listening test scores.

The data from this project reveal that the changes in the listening class cannot be explained by simple maturation. The changes in the listening class occur because of the treatment of the class. Therefore, the scores in the control group showing no change in the styles of listening or behaviors of listening reveal that the same dynamic present in the listening class is not present in the control group.

The results of the project show that there is some other explanation for the changes in students' scores in the listening class than simple maturity or chance. The statistics suggest that there is a 95 percent probability that some of these changes in the listening class are found in the treatment given the class members. The differences in the scores in table 1 compared to table 2 show some significant change in the scores of the listening tests among the members of the listening class.

More dramatic differences occur between the scores in the listening style test of the listening class and the scores of the control group. These differences require an explanation beyond chance or simple maturity and the treatment given to the listening class that the control group did not receive is the explanation for the changes in students' listening scores.

This project does not provide an explanation for every possible reason for the changes in the students' scores. But this project does successfully show that the class

treatment had a high probability ($p < .05$) of significance in effecting changes in the students' scores in the listening class.

This project demonstrated that undergraduate ministry students who took a class on listening learned to incorporate behaviors and styles of listening in their lives. Learning was demonstrated by significant increases in their test scores assessing behaviors and styles of listening.

The class, designed for the duration of a single, fifteen-week semester, assessed changes in students test scores in behaviors and styles of listening. Significant change in scores, from pre-test and post-test results, were limited to the listening class.

The most obvious interpretation from the listening class is that the scores in seven of eleven listening measures showed change in positive gains. These positive gains are the mean difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the student's behaviors and styles of listening. In these positive gains, in seven measures, there is the ability to affirm a 95 percent probability that the class treatment caused the recorded changes in the students scores. This suggests that the class had a demonstrable effect by producing positive gains in the student's test scores in the listening class. This assertion as to the effect of the class instruction is based on the statistical analysis in chapter four and observations I make later in this chapter. But it is clear that behaviors and styles of listening were learned by the students taking the listening class.

These changes in the scores of the students in the listening class are in direct contrast to the scores of the students in the control group. Students in the control group showed no change that can be attributed to anything other than chance. The majority the of changes in the measures of the mean difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of

the control group are statistically in negative values. Post-test scores in the control group are lower than scores at the pre-test. The students' scores indicate that they did not maintain the same scores of behaviors and styles of listening they had at the pretest.

These negative changes in the control group may be explained by understanding the factor of motivation. The control group appears to have had little motivation or means to increase in listening competency. They had little reason to be motivated about taking tests that had no direct bearing on their course work or grade. This is in direct contrast to the listening class. Students in the listening class had motivation to take the class for any number of reasons. They also had the motivation to do well in the class and have that reflected in their grade.

The consideration of motivation is a major concern in listening training. The literature asserts that a key to increasing student's listening abilities is to increase student's motivation. It is stated that anyone can learn to listen more effectively if one is simply motivated to do so (Brownell 54). I doubt if the members of the control group had much, if any, motivation to be serious about their behaviors and styles of listening. And I am relatively sure, because of statements made by the members of the listening class, that they had significant levels of motivation in taking the class and the assessment tests. So, the combination of the class sessions and student motivation in the class members is one way to account for the significant difference in the scores of the students in the listening class.

However, the results of t-test analysis show another side to this project. Tables 1 and 2 suggest that there is a high probability that the changes in student's scores can be attributed to the treatment received in the listening class. The scores in these tables are

the result of a paired-t test, while tables 3 and 4 are the result of a t-test. Tables 3 and 4 suggest that significant change occurred in four of the six behaviors of listening. The t-test also shows that changes in listening style, among the members of the listening class, were not statistically significant ($<.05$).

The t-test suggests that there was significant change in some of the behaviors of listening but no significant change in any of the student's styles of listening. Reflection upon these data results in the assertion that there is significantly less change in styles of listening when compared to behaviors of listening. A possible explanation will be offered later in this chapter.

The figures from chapter 4 suggest that the assertion made in the literature review (Burley-Allen; Brownell; Wolvin and Coakley; Rogers, and Wright) that listening is a behavior that can be taught, is substantiated by this limited study. The particular assertion that students can be taught behaviors that increase listening effectiveness in a single semester is also substantiated in this limited study.

The figures from chapter 4 reveal that some listening styles did change (empathic and discerning) as a result of the class treatment. But the changes in these listening styles, and in three of the other listening styles, did not rise to the statistical level of significant change.

Aside from these observations and interpretations of the listening class and control group, I now offer some specific observations and interpretations of this project. These observations and interpretations are based on and interpretations of the data from Chapter 4 and from the experience of teaching the listening class.

Observation 1: Listening Can be Learned.

The results of this project indicate that students in the listening class had some of their behaviors and styles of listening show significant change after a single semester treatment in a listening class. The changes in the listening classes measures are not uniformly similar in degree but do show significant change where noted: change in five of six behaviors of listening and two of five styles of listening. This change in the listening class's scores reveals that there is a 95 percent certainty that the treatment received in the class was the cause for the student's positive score changes (see Tables 1 and 2 in chapter 4).

Therefore, it can be asserted that styles and behaviors of listening, as identified in the HURIER and Carlson tests, can be taught and learned on the basis of classroom instruction. This suggests that some learning of the styles and behaviors of listening can show change in a semester class setting. Although data from tables 3 and 4 suggest that significant changes occurred in four of six behaviors of listening, there was no significant change in listening styles.

Observation 2: Listening Needs to be Taught.

It is clear from the data in Chapter 4 that student's behaviors and styles of listening did not change in any significant, positive dimension in the control group (see Tables 2 and 4) over the course of the semester. However, there was significant, positive changes in the behaviors of listening of the listening class (see Tables 1 and 3), because of the class treatment.

Data from these four tables indicate that positive, significant change in behaviors and styles listening only occurred in the students scores of the listening class. And these

significant changes in the scores of the listening class are based on the specific treatment of the class experience.

The students' scores in the control group reveal that there was no significant change in their scores over the course of the semester (Tables 1 and 2). Specifically, the change in the student's scores of the control group could only be attributed to chance or simple maturation. Additionally, Tables 3 and 4 show no significant change in the mean difference scores.

Changes in the listening class are in direct contrast to the mean difference in the control group. In the listening class, there is change attributed to the treatment in seven of eleven behaviors. Of eleven possible behaviors of the listening tests in the control group, eight show negative value change. Furthermore, submitting the control group's scores from both tests to the paired t-test indicates that no change in the other three measures of the control group can be ascribed to anything other than chance. No change in the control group rose to the standard of 95 percent probability that change occurred for some specific reason.

Therefore, the observation that listening behaviors and styles need to be taught is not a simple assertion based on the finding that behaviors and styles of listening can be learned (Observation # 1). Rather, this observation is based on the specific finding from the control group's scores that listening must be taught if there is any significant change in listening scores. This project has shown, through the scores of the listening class and control group, that listening does not occur at any positive gain, or significant level without a specific treatment. The theory that listening competence occurs by simple maturation is not consistent with the findings of this project.

Observation 3: Failure to Teach Listening is Based on Incorrect Notions

This project began with identifying a problem: the general absence of instruction about listening. The particular nature of this problem is that there is no single, semester class that deals with the important behavior of listening in schools that train people for vocational ministry in the denomination of the Church of God of Anderson, Indiana. This absence of specific instruction about listening in ministry training schools of the Church of God must be based on some notions about listening. Some of these notions I offer after teaching a class on listening and after evaluating the data of the listening class and the control group.

Certain notions or rationales that may influence decisions to keep listening courses out of most colleges' curriculums may include the following reasons. First, the notion that listening is so natural that everyone either knows how to listen or will eventually learn the behaviors of effective listening certainly appears to be a reasonable idea, at first glance. Therefore, one may conclude that there is no need to provide training in behaviors and styles of listening, that people will simply learn to "work out" these areas of their listening in daily life and relationships. There is no need to instruct people in what they will eventually learn in life.

Or, one might suggest another reason for this absence of instruction and training. The faculty and administrators of colleges may have no expertise in teaching students to be more effective in their behaviors and use of styles of listening. This is a reasonable consideration if faculty members have been educated in schools similar to the schools affiliated with my denomination who offer no specific training in listening. These faculty

members have completed undergraduate and graduate degrees without any significant study and training in listening effectiveness in behaviors and styles of listening.

Another incorrect notion that contributes to the absence of listening classes in colleges that train students for vocational ministry is the notion that increases in behaviors and styles of listening will naturally occur. The incorrect nature of this notion can be seen in the changes in the student's scores in the listening class and the control group. In the control group the change that occurs is largely negative in its statistical measure. Beyond this there is no significant change in the test scores of the members of the control group, suggesting that any change in the control group is attributed to chance. Increases in behaviors and styles of listening, found in the listening class and not in the control group therefore must be influenced by the treatment of the class. Educators and administrators of colleges who recognize this finding may now attempt to increase students' effectiveness in listening behaviors and styles through a class or seminar that is intentional. In doing so they reject the false notion that listening effectiveness is a result of simple maturation.

Observation 4: Non-Experts Can Increase Students' Listening Scores

Bringing about increased effectiveness in students' behaviors and styles of listening, reflected in students' test scores does not require an instructor with expert training. This observation is based on the design and results of this project. The instructor of this project is not an expert in listening. In fact, He only had his first class that introduced him to the specific behavior of listening, as recent as June 1998. The class was a Doctor of Ministry Class entitled, Successful Team Building. This was his first exposure to any focused attention on listening in his undergraduate and graduate

work. So, the instructor of this project was recently exposed to this topic and began to work on the design of this project. He continues to learn about listening to this day, believing that he has only begun to understand listening and its many facets and applications.

This project reveals that students showed gains in their behaviors and styles of listening when taught by a novice in the field of listening (a limitation of the study to be discussed later). So, since gains in students' scores evidenced in this study did not require an expert in the field to provide the instruction, any false notion that such a course requires an expert or instructor with an educational background in the topic may perhaps be dismissed.

Observation 5: There is Less Change in Styles Than Behaviors of Listening

From a comparison of the analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores in the listening class, less statistical change was noted in the styles of listening than in the behaviors of listening. It is noted that in Table 2 there is a high level of probability that the class treatment affected the reported changes. While Table 4 indicates that even though the change in listening styles was affected by the class treatment, the changes in the listening class do not rise to the level of significant change. It appears that there may be several reasons for this finding.

Styles of listening are habituated ways one learns to listen in differing contexts ("Personal Listening Profile" 8), these habituated ways of listening may not only be behavioral patterns but may also be related to personality tendencies. Either way behavioral patterns and personality tendencies are more difficult to change than simple behaviors of listening.

Another factor that may explain the lack of change in styles of listening is the assertion that styles of listening are really different strategies one uses to listen in different contexts. More specifically styles of listening reflect different purposes in listening (Wolvin and Coakley 152).

The Personal Listening Style test, given to assess styles of listening, did not offer any differing contexts beyond the taking of a written test, even though the styles are to be the different ways one can listen in differing contexts. The students were instructed to answer questions that indicated what they were most like when listening. Since there were no differing contexts for the students in the listening class to consider when taking the test they indicated their habituated response to each question. The interesting thing is that there was any change at all in the listening styles due to the fact there was no change in the context of taking the test. It was given in a single context: the classroom.

One reason that may account for less change in styles than the behaviors of listening of listening may have to do with the research that suggests most people require two or three seminars to improve listening effectiveness (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 345). This may be a limitation related to the nature of styles of listening as habituated responses to listening situations. Since the changes in listening behaviors are more of an addition to the basic elements of any listening, styles of listening then become a more specific application of the basic behaviors of listening. This relationship between behaviors and styles of listening is similar to an understanding of jazz. A musician learns note structure and value in a class in music theory and identifies these components in any musical score. However, the musician then takes this general knowledge of music

and applies it to the chord structure and rhythm of jazz. Jazz is a more specific application of what one knows about music.

In a similar way, styles of listening (jazz) are more complex. Styles are the ways that a person applies their basic behaviors of listening in a given context. Certainly, the point of this project was to give students a wider range of styles of listening available to them but this change in style is more personal and complex than simply learning the basics (theory) of listening.

This class produced definite effects beyond those reported in the statistical section of Chapter 4. What follows is an organization of these effects as they relate to the students and instructor of the class along with some interpretation of these observations. Some of these student evaluations are observations based on classroom discussion, while others are the result of an end-of-semester summary each student turned in at time of the final exam.

Observation 6: Listening Requires, and Communicates Value

Students reported that they knew when one listens to another person, that person experiences a sense of value. Equally true for them is the statement that others experienced a lack of communicated value when not listened to or ignored. This appears to be based on the observation of the students in the class that listening to others is based in having a particular view of persons. If one views others as valuable, one will take the time to listen. And the converse is equally true, if one views others as having little or no value, there will be no listening to those people. Therefore, listening is based in a view that ascribes value to people.

It is equally true that one's listening communicates value to another person. What is understood is that listening is based in the value one places on others. And one's listening to others communicates value to them. The behaviors of attending and awareness of nonverbal communication are behaviors of people seeking to communicate value to others.

The issue of value is exactly where one's biblical perspective of human beings is of great value. If one accepts the notion that all people are created in the image of God, the issue of value is settled. All people have value from this perspective and deserve to be listened to as an expression of accepting the value of others.

Observation 7: Listening Requires a Series of Behaviors

Listening cannot be isolated to a single behavior. This seems apparent in a review of the results of the students' listening tests. Comments from students revolved around the assertion that they knew that they had increased in some behaviors. But they knew that they had other behaviors that needed greater competency to be a better listener. Students arrived at the agreement that they needed a whole array of behaviors of listening to be used in various settings.

This observation seems consistent with the tests students took. The HURIER test has six components as part of the behaviors of listening. The Carlson test has five components that are suggested as differing styles of listening for different contexts. Both of these tests suggest that listening is a combination of several behaviors and styles. No one behavior or style is considered listening in itself.

Important to an understanding listening and any training in listening is the consideration that listening is a cluster of behaviors one must learn to use. No one

behavior is sufficient for every situation or time. One must learn to exercise differing behaviors and styles for different contexts.

Effects of This Experience in My Life

I was pleased to finally be able to teach a class on listening, but I was somewhat anxious. I knew I wanted to teach such a class and I was convinced of its importance for our ministry majors at Mid-America Bible College. But I was concerned. Could I design a class where the students would end the semester believing that their lives had been enriched and that they had genuinely learned some of the behaviors of listening? I am thankful that the students reported that they were helped to become better listeners.

Another effect in my life was in the area of my conviction about the importance of listening training. I started the semester not knowing if others would recognize the importance of listening and its role in the education process—a recognition that I gained over several months of study and research. I knew that my enthusiasm over listening was born of study and slow meditation on listening. But would others recognize the importance of listening in general the importance of this project in particular?

From the beginning of the semester, and throughout, students reaffirmed my belief in the importance of this project. Students came to class almost every time we met with some example of how this class was enriching their lives. This confirmed my belief that listening could be taught and that it is important to teach it to college students. I am convinced that what we studied about listening is important and is making a difference in the lives of the students who took the class. My believe in the importance of this kind of class is based in some semester summaries in which some students wrote that this was one of the most important classes they had taken in their college experience

Students from the class still see me and talk to me as to how much they learned about themselves and listening. It continues to be a significant part of my conversation with the students who took the class. These continual conversations with students who completed the class as to the importance of listening is a significant element of evaluating the project. As most classes in undergraduate work students appear to take a class, complete it, and move to the next one. At our school we are constantly reminding our students that they need to make the transfer of knowledge with their classes. In other words, they need to take what they learned from former classes to the remainder of their classes.

Since completing the class and the students receiving their grades I have been thankful for the continual conversation about listening. I know that the students have been changed in their view of others, the value of listening, and the place that this behavior continues to occupy in their lives.

So, I am convinced that training in listening is necessary for college students preparing for ministry. Training in listening gives ministry candidates a tool that can help them face the challenges of working with numbers of people in vocational ministry. This training also gives people in ministry a tool that enables them to apply the biblical concept of the value of human beings. Listening is a way one can concretely express that value to others by listening to them.

I have been affected by this experience of leading this project and discussing listening with the students of the class that there are some practical and theological implications of listening in the life of the church. These implications have to do with the existence of pervasive conflict in many churches. In fact, I saw some of the implications

of listening and dealing with conflict in the comments and reactions of some of the students in the listening class.

Some conflict likely occurs in churches because pastors and leaders have an inaccurate view of their responsibilities in listening. In my denomination, leaders tend to operate on the assumption that they are to listen to God, to the exclusion of the people in their congregation. This appears to be particularly true when it comes to vision, direction, and priorities for the local congregation. Where there is little practice of listening to the members of the body of Christ, in a particular church, as a way of understanding the direction from the head of the Church (God), pastors and leaders may simply move ahead with the notion that they are in leadership and have heard from God. How could anyone oppose their direction unless they are unspiritual or in opposition to God's plan? The students resonated with this understanding of the lack of listening and the presence of conflict.

The very notion that pastors and leaders are to listen to God is undeniable. But the way this works out in practical terms seems to be at the root of so much conflict in churches today. There must be a new appreciation that listening to God also includes listening to the members of the body of Christ, the Church, to whom the Holy Spirit also speaks, and in whom the Holy Spirit works together with the leaders.

This project has confirmed my concern and interest in the relationship conflict and a lack of listening to one another in local churches. I hope to study the relationship of a misguided spiritual formation that causes pastors and leaders to not listen to the people of God because of some hyper-spirituality that causes the pastor or leader to only listen to what they think is God's communication to them.

This experience has caused me to evaluate my own listening, especially in times of attempting to know the direction of God for a congregation. I see that I have to be willing to listen to others and not assume that I have the direction of the Spirit of God because I am a leader.

Due to the responses of students in the listening class, and comments by faculty members who knew of the class, I intend to suggest to the school's academic dean that this listening class be taught again to ministry majors. Several students that were unable to take the class told me that they would love to take a class on listening. Faculty members who learned of my teaching this class said that they thought it ought to be a required course for all our students! After reading the reports of the students in this first class, I am more certain that this is an important class for students preparing for vocational ministry.

Overall, this project affected me in my personal commitment to learn more about listening. I do not have a reputation of being a listener. In fact, when I decided to pursue this project of teaching behaviors and styles of listening, I had to prepare my friends for this news. I had the people who know me well to sit down before I told them the nature of my research and project. Some of them laughed out loud; others smiled and wondered if I were telling them a joke. After the incredulous nature of this proposal wore off, they thought that this might be a good idea. My friends and colleagues thought that this project would provide necessary training for ministry students, as well as address an area of need I have.

In reflecting on this project, I know that I have changed. I have a greater interest and expertise in listening behaviors and styles. I approach situations with an increased

awareness that each situation with people requires different styles and behaviors of listening. I cannot assume that each listening situation will require the same response.

I have also noticed that I attend with much more interest and understanding. I find that I am less likely to talk in social situations and more likely to listen. When listening, I am attuned to both the nonverbal and verbal communication. I know that I am no expert, but I am learning to be a much more focused and intent listener. While some of these improvements may be related to my age and maturity, I know that much of it is related to the research and learning of some specific behaviors of listening.

I hesitate to be dramatic, but I do believe that this project changes some significant aspects of my life. I also believe that the changes in learning how to listen more effectively make me a more effective minister of the gospel. For this research opportunity I am thankful.

Limitations of This Project

The first limitation of this project has to be the instructor, a novice at teaching behaviors and styles of listening. My introduction to listening, on an intentional level, began in June of 1998 as I took the last content class in my Doctor of Ministry degree program. My specific interest in this project and its design began in October 1998, and I was in the process of designing the class from January 1999 to July 1999. In those six months, I focused on clarifying my own understanding of the behaviors and styles of listening as well as designing thirty-one class sessions with the intention of positively influencing students behaviors and styles of listening. I believe that someone with greater comprehension and experience in teaching listening behaviors and styles might

post even more significant results in a classroom treatment of undergraduate students preparing for some form of vocational ministry.

Another limitation of this project is the composition of the listening class and the control groups. The control group and listening class were regular classes on the college's fall 1999 semester schedule. There was no random assignment of the students. The control group was established to control for the rival hypothesis of maturation. The class used for the control group was an intact upper division class on statistics. The lack of random assignment poses some problems addressing validity (Wiersma 139). To make allowance for this weakness in the selection, a class of students approximating the academic ranking (juniors and seniors) of those in the listening class was chosen.

The listening class was comprised of undergraduate college students going into some form of vocational ministry (only 1 was not). I did not have the opportunity to have another class of students not preparing for some form of vocational ministry to receive the treatment.

Furthermore, I was not able to deal with second career students who are entering ministry preparation. There was only one such person among the class who fit this category.

A limitation in interpreting the results from written listening tests may be dependent on reading and writing skills and not listening (Brownell 53). In other words, students scores may more accurately reflect their level of comprehension of a particular question and not the real level of their skill. Furthermore, students may not be the best at evaluating their own listening abilities, since listeners determine the meaning of what other persons say (Clampitt 42).

There was no attempt to isolate listening in any single aspect (remembering, empathy, etc.). The HURIER and Carlson listening tests were used to teach a behavioral approach to listening.

Another limitation of this study is based upon the fact that there is no single, agreed upon definition of listening. Furthermore, a study conducted by Baker and Fitch-Hauser in 1986 identified 315 variables associated with listening (Brownell 45). Any project that attempts to assess listening has to concern itself with some specific measures that the test used in the project is proposed to assess. There is not a single listening test that assesses some universally, agreed upon definition of listening.

A final limitation of this study is that it assessed the measures of the HURIER and Carlson tests. Insofar as one accepts these measures as representative of behaviors and styles of listening then the project succeeded. But to suggest that these eleven measures represent all that there is to assess about behaviors or styles of listening is to miss the clear testimony of the published literature on the subject of listening.

Unexpected Discoveries

I was surprised at the effect this class began to have on the campus of Mid-America Bible College. Students not taking the class began to discuss the listening class in the dorms and other places that students gather. I received reports from the students taking the class that there were several discussions going on around campus about the listening class. The general content of these discussions revolved around these students' interests in taking the listening class. I had several students ask me if I was to teach this class again. They all expressed interest in taking this class.

I also was genuinely surprised at the interest of the students in the listening class. I discovered early on that these students were genuinely motivated to take this class and that they were applying what they were learning. This is in direct contrast to many classes that I teach which students appear to be taking them simply because they have to. This difference is probably related to the fact that this class was an elective.

Finally, I was surprised at the synergy this class created between the students and myself. I found myself taking notes on insights the student offered in class discussion. I realized that while my lesson plans were used to direct the class, students offered insights clearly important to the lesson plan of the day. I did not anticipate the quality of interaction and insight offered by these students. It became a time that I saw myself as a facilitator as much as a teacher. As the class progressed through the semester I found myself being more adragogical in my leadership of the class.

Direction for Future Research Raised by This Study

A direction for further research based on this study would be an exploration of the relationships among or correlation of the behaviors of listening (HURIER test) and the styles of listening (Carlson). One might discover relationships that can be established between increases in scores of specific behaviors of listening and increases in scores of specific styles of listening.

Another study might assess and correlate the results of student's HURIER test and the Carlson test. Students taking a listening class would identify a trusted friend or relative to assess them at the beginning of this class using the HURIER and Carlson tools. This trusted friend or relative would then assess this student listening with a post-test. The students scores on pre-test and post-test could be compared and see if there is any

similarity in the scores of the student and their trusted observe. This project would give students some objective data as to their listening competency in two ways. First, students would not simply be assessing the results of a written test. There is a great deal of difference in listening and taking a written test about listening (see limitations). And second, this kind of design gives an assessment that is based on an observation base. The trusted friend or family member has week to evaluate changes in real life situation and not simply filling in some questions on a specific day called test day.

A future study, designed based on some of the findings of this study is one that correlates changes in behaviors and styles of listening in two classes. These two classes would be a class for vocational ministry students and a class of students preparing for careers other than vocational ministry. In this design both classes would receive the treatment of a semester of instruction in listening. This study would allow researchers determine if the scores from pre-test and post-test had any relationship between classes.

Summary Observations

My conviction as to the importance of listening has been strengthened as a result of this project. I am convinced that listening is one of the critical skills needed by people who are responsible for leading others. I am also convinced that the importance of listening is related to assertion that listening behaviors and styles can be taught. Therefore, my conviction of the importance of listening is grounded in the suggestion that listening can be taught.

As a result of this study I have a new appreciation and understanding of the place listening takes in what it means to live in community in the local church. This conviction comes from the combined effects of being exposed to a review of the literature on

listening, passages from the Bible that speak to the importance of listening, and the experience of teaching listening to vocational ministry majors.

However, the evidence of a Biblical basis for listening is based in more than a few passages in the Bible that speak of the value of listening. Listening is rooted in a correct understanding of the Church as the body of Christ. In Chapter 1 I discussed how the context of Christian living is experienced in the body of Christ. This most frequent imagery of the Church as body of Christ requires each person in the life of a church to listen to each other as members of that body. A misunderstanding of the imagery of the Church as the Body of Christ contributes greatly to the absence of listening to one another in this body.

Listening to one another is a way to live faithfully to the biblical call to live one's faith out in the community of God's people. And listening can be a means of ameliorating interpersonal conflicts that are inevitable as one lives life in this community of faith; the church. Listening then becomes a tool to help churches face the great challenge of living in the church of the 21st century by dealing with conflict as we listen carefully to one another.

The results of this project have caused me to rethink and plan some changes in the curriculum of the Pastoral Ministries ministry major at Mid-America Bible College. There must be some training in behaviors and styles of listening. This training must be offered to students preparing for vocational ministry, in order to help students prepare for the significant challenge of working with people in vocational ministry.

This study began with an observation of an engineer's insight as to the importance of working with people. As a result of this project I am convinced that persons planning

to enter vocational ministry must be given training in developing greater competence in listening. This competence certainly involves the ability to understand and apply behaviors and styles of listening.

APPENDIX A:

Daily Lesson Plans for the Listening Class

Listening Class
Session 1
August 24, 1999

Objective(s):

- To orient the students to the syllabus and goals of the class.
 - To begin the process of informing students of the importance of listening.
 - To discover if students have any former, and formal training in listening behavior or skills.
1. Give some information as to the place this class plays in my dissertation.
 2. Pass out syllabus, go over it, and pass out informed consent sheet.
 3. Share with them some of the goals I have for this class:
 - a.) to have a class that teaches one of the most important people skills, demonstrated by studies (give them some of this information);
 - b.) to have a class that demonstrates that listening behaviors and the use of listening styles can be done, so this class will continue on the class schedule.
 4. Have them share some of the goals they have for this class.

Listening Class
August 26, 1999

1. Explain the syllabus and the materials on reserve in the library.
2. Go over the assignment for next Thursday (we don't meet Tuesday). Assign the completion of the Carlson test and turn in with their self-assigned 4-digit number. They are to turn in the completed test next Thursday.

OBJECTIVES:

To have the students reflect on their experience of taking Brownell's test, and begin to appreciate (dealing with motivation here) the importance of listening in daily life, through discussion of their own lives and the prevalence of listening in business, church, and politics.

Class procedure/methods

1. Have them de-brief on the Brownell test. List their observations.
2. Discuss times that they have seen a lack of listening be a problem.
3. Discuss what listening communicates to others (value & importance).
4. Discuss how businesses and ministries are taking listening seriously, and specifically how this is being done.

E.G. restaurants that ask you to fill out a response card, as a way to listen to their customers. The number of restaurants doing this seems to be increasing.

The example of Indian Creek Community Church where the pastor has people critique his sermons by filling out a form...he wants to listen to their perceptions and concerns, even though he doesn't know who is doing the critique.

Briefly discuss the decision of Hillary Clinton to communicate to the people of New York her interest in their concerns by having a "listening tour." Discuss how this tour communicates value in the people of New York. Ask the students to answer: "would you vote for a person that says they are listening to the things that are important to you?"

5. Ask the students if the configuration of the class room is not contributing to the behavior of listening...it probably isn't and we will put the chairs into a circle.
6. Ask students to make some sense of why we don't do so well at listening. Show them the figure (box 1-1). Some of our problem may be related to our training, or really the lack of any training, not simply selfishness.

APPLICATION:

1. Read pages of text for next class.
2. Have students ask a waiter at a restaurant what they do with the cards that people fill out?

Listening class

Sept. 2, 1999

1. Acknowledge that a couple of students in the listening class are also in the statistics class.....I need you both to not say much about what you are learning, so it won't affect the test scores of the control group.
2. Report on any responses they received from asking waitress/waiter what a restaurant does with the response cards they ask patrons to fill out.
3. Have students give me their 2 dominant listening styles (along with the actual scores) on a piece of paper with their 4 digit code.
3. Report on their journal entry, as much as they choose to report.

OBJECTIVE(S): To get an overview of the HURIER model and some of the general aspects of listening. These general aspects are self-awareness as a listener (identifying high self-monitors and low self-monitors), the elements of constructive feedback, the assertion of listening as a systems approach and the communication framework of listening, and what we know about listening

1. Discuss the HURIER model as a 6 step approach to listening.
2. Discuss the presence of listening filters, those things that affect our ability to hear others.
E.G. what are some filters that affect our hearing? How is your listening filtered when you hear something negative about your best friend, or when you hear something negative about your worst enemy?

What are some of the listening filters we have?

3. Discuss text on the idea of listening beginning with self-awareness, which is understood as having two expressions: high self-awareness and low self-awareness.
E.G. tell the story of a missionary doctor reprimanding a medical assistant publicly for a serious failure in the operating room. The doctor had been trained in a fine medical school and was trained to deal with mistakes immediately and swiftly. The assistant finished his job and left politely. He invited the missionary doctor to his home for dinner that night and resigned in shame. He stated that he could not ever come back to the hospital again. The missionary doctor was in shock. He had no idea how this medical assistant had received his action. He simply assumed that the assistant would accept the American form of discipline and keep working. The doctor exhibited low self-monitoring.

Perhaps the beginning of learning to be a high self-monitor is taking these listening tests.....HOW HAS TAKING THE CARLSON TEST HELPED YOU BE A HIGHER SELF-MONITOR?

Discuss JOHARI window....

4. The elements of feedback. How important is feedback?

Sept. 2, 1999

Page 2

E.G. to an airplane pilot that is flying on instruments?

To a person about to drive a car into 300 miles of desert?

To a doctor trying to prescribe medicine?

Go over these general guidelines for feedback (Box 1-3, page 20).

5. Listening from a systems viewpoint...

E.G. systems as when you get ready in the morning and everything is done but you can't get your hair right.....it affects how you feel about yourself, maybe even what you end up wearing, etc. You have to take the whole system of how you look into account and not simply isolate one aspect.

And what we know about listening....

Listening Class
September 7, 1999

REVIEW:

1. What are we speaking about when we speak of people who are high self-monitors and low self-monitors?
2. Report on the survey you did with a leader in small groups. Report your findings, and what you consider significant.

NEW WORK:

Objective(s): to expose the student to the important function of feedback as well as learn some behaviors of good feedback. The student will also be able to identify the behavior of listening in the larger context of communication.

1. The importance of feedback.....a class I had that I didn't get my paper back for 3 months. I was anxious for a good deal of the time....

Classes you have taken where you don't get your papers back in
A timely manner, or not at all. How does that affect you?

Feedback is critical:

Driving a car into 300 miles of desert. What feedback do you need from
your car?

A doctor prescribing a powerful antibiotic. What feedback does he want?

2. The characteristics of good feedback on page 20 of Brownell.

Descriptive not evaluative.

AE: think of a time you experienced either

Focus on behavior, not characteristics

AE: think of a time you experienced either

Specific not general

AE: think of a time you experienced either

Timed appropriately not delayed

AE: think of a time you experienced either

Offered not imposed.

AE: think of a time you experienced either

3. Listening from a systems approach.

A systems approach is the notion that all the parts of a system are necessary to understand and work any part of the system correctly.

E.G. The solar system works together

E.G. A family comes in with a problem with a teenager. The parents say to the counselor that there is something wrong with the child and that he/she needs help. A competent counselor will bring the entire family in and see what is wrong with the teenager's acting out. What is wrong in the system of the family?

Listening is a part of a communication system.

4. Go through text and discuss 7 myths of communication.

Listening Class

Sept. 9, 1999

Objective:

To help students recognize the role that listening plays in communication, as well as begin to recognize the areas of communication they need to concentrate to listen and communicate better.

Assessment:

Students will be able to write a paper that explains what they know about communication, from class and readings, and how listening is part of their understanding of communication.

Communication Principles

“I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I’m not sure you realize that what your heard is not what I meant.” Anonymous, Brownell, 103
(I believe this is a quote from Richard Nixon when he was responding to the press about a statement he made and they reported it in a way that he was not happy).

Listening is a part of the larger event called communication.

1. Listening, not speaking becomes the central feature of effective interpersonal communication (Brownell, 38).

What do you think about this?

2. The most effective communicators listen effectively.

What do you think about this? What would make you believe this is true?

2. Senders (of communication) are at the mercy of the receivers (of that communication) who interpret what they hear (Brownell, 39).

4. We all have perceptual filters/biases that affect what we hear based in our past experience, so we must be high self-monitors and be aware of the presence of these filters/biases.

E.G. A person at church comes up with a new idea and someone says that it won’t work because the church tried that 3 years ago. There is no way that this person is going to hear you, because they have already made up their mind that what you are talking about will not succeed.

E.G. You had a bad experience with your father; you have a specific reaction and view when you hear that God is father.

E.G. The other day I was in a situation with a guy I know, who is a real adherent to the Reformed theological system. He has so aggressively argued for this position that I really have to be ready for him. The other day we were speaking about aspects of Judaism. He said that there was the reformed system that is what most people are. I

Sept. 9, 1999

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heard the term reformed and I was immediately ready to defend my position, when he was not talking about this at all, he was speaking of Reformed Judaism.

E.G. Over-familiarity with someone may cause you to not listen because you think you know what they are going to say, when you can't always know what another person is thinking or trying to say.

5. Any communication rests upon coming to a shared meaning, which is often the result of listening to each other and making sure each knows what the other is speaking.

E.G. When parents say for you to be in at a decent hour. We have to listen to each other to align our behavior to the share

There are myths related to communication:d meaning of a certain communication.

Listening Class
Sept. 14, 1999

OBJECTIVE: To finish the importance of listening in some overall understanding of communication, allow the students to demonstrate in their writing and discussion the place that listening occupies in communication. It is also the objective to introduce the students to a definition of listening, and discuss the place listening occupies in the Bible.

METHOD:

Remind students of the reading assignment listed in the syllabus. Also give them the adjusted writing assignment to be completed by Thursday (9-16)

1. Have students, in groups, share about their papers.
2. Finish the myths of communication
3. Give a basic definition of listening given by Brownell from Wolvin & Coakley.
“The process of receiving, attending to, and assigning meaning to aural and visual stimuli” (Wolvin & Coakley, qtd. in Brownell, 46).

Talk about this definition and what you think about it.

We will invest a great deal of time this semester in working out the behaviors necessary for accomplishing this task of listening (receiving behaviors, attending behaviors, and behaviors which enable us to assign meaning).

4. Go over the material I had them read from my Biblical/Theological section on Listening. Have them reflect on this. This is the material they will continue to reflect on to write the Thursday paper.

Listening Class
September 16, 1999

Clarify the assignments and when they are due.

OBJECTIVE: To have the students read and reflect on a Biblical basis for listening. Students will be able to integrate what they have read in diagnosing how a Biblical view, or unbiblical view, of listening has affected their home church, or the church they attend now.

PROCEDURE:

1. Have students discuss the Biblical basis for listening. Have them respond where they agree, disagree, or would improve the article.
2. Have students identify how their own tradition supports or hinders listening as a part of congregational life.
3. What impact has the support or hindering of listening had, as far as they can tell in their own church life?

ASSESSMENT:

1. Students will begin to articulate their understanding of the important theological and biblical notions of listening.
2. Students will be able to defend those notions in discussion of this matter in their small group, as well as when they report to the entire class.

Listening Class
September 21 & 23, 1999

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

It is the overall objective of this session to begin the process of actually dealing with behaviors that impede listening, so as to bring about self awareness and change. This objective correlates with the first of 4 strategies of listening given by Wolvin and Coakley (Understand the self, Motivating the Listening self, Listening Actively, and Sending Feedback, p. 111ff)

1. Students will comprehend the pervasive nature of barriers; within oneself and those of the environment (volume, time, proximity)
2. Students will be able to identify a personal listening barrier and begin to discuss ways to alleviate this barrier as a pervasive barrier. Students will verify or contradict this finding by interviewing a trusted friend or family member about any barriers to listening they see in the student.

ASSIGNMENT (adjustment to syllabus)

Read pages 73-90, concentrate on pages 82-90 for Thursday

Make a list of barriers to listening from their readings and our class discussions. Have them ask a trusted friend or family member what barrier to listening they think you may have a tendency toward (share the list we went over in class today). Have them turn in the results of this and a reading report on Steinke, pages 13-18 next Tuesday September 28, 1999

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT TOOL:

Have students fill out this motivation assessment tool (I designed).

Give the students a definition of listening that we will work with throughout the semester:

DEFINITION: Listening is the process of receiving, attending to, and assigning meaning to aural and visual stimuli (Wolvin & Coakley, 69).

CE- a story or discussion of barriers that we have experienced:

GIVE STUDENTS A CHANCE TO THINK OF SOME, IF NOT I HAVE SOME READY.....

A sports team is unable to get to the playoffs because of a team that is a barrier or a series of injuries to key players.

The inability to sing at an important setting because the singer is hoarse and unable to make sounds.

A student that cannot get financial aid because a parent has not filled out the right paper work.

What do you do with barriers?

- a.) you have to first understand them and recognize their presence
- b.) you have to have some strategies in alleviating them.

Today we will work at understanding barriers to listening

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Listening barriers:

Have students report from their readings.....I will respond with the list I have compiled and give some clarification or responses.

1. Gender issues that create challenges in listening (Brownell). Men tend to move in combative and winning in communication, while women tend toward more cohesive types of communication and relational. Women are more empathic in listening while men are more interested in facts.

A common complaint in marriage is that women feel frustrated because they feel that their husband does not listen to them (Brownell 358).

Men need to be more supportive, by using pauses in their speech and interrupting Less (Brownell 358).

2. Cultural issues that create challenges in listening (Brownell). We don't always know how to communicate certain ideas and ways in cultural context.
3. Emotional reactivity creates a barrier to listening as a person ceases listening and goes into a defensive mode of existence. Limbic brain system....make sure they understand this (Steinke, pages 13-18).
4. Anticipating what you think a speaker means without hearing the person. This often happens with people who have known each other for some time. You assume that you already know what the other person is thinking or saying, this is a serious mistake.
5. Dichotic listening. We find ourselves attending to several messages competing for our attention. For example, we may not listen well to a person pouring their heart out to us when we are listening for our mate to tell us if they found their car keys.
6. Having biases and stereotypes one allows unchallenged in one's listening and relating to others. An example of this is the time President Clinton admitted that he had an inappropriate relationship with Monica Lewinski. People who support the President and his policies heard contrition and humility in his statement, while people who do not support the President and his policies declared that he had shown no humility and true sorrow. People's biases caused them to hear 2 different things when hearing the president.

The same is true when we hear people we either agree with or disagree. We hear what we want to hear, or what supports our biases. In fact there is reason to believe that we filter what we hear according to our biases.

7. A third barrier to listening has to do with the challenge of recognizing non-verbal communication. Some people do not listen well because they assume that all communication is in words. If one would reflect on this assertion, one would recognize that communication is not uniquely verbal (Change Agent Skills 175). In fact, communication research suggests that 65 percent of a person's communication is non-verbal (Johnson 104). One's communication takes the form of kinesics, appearance, proxemics, and other non-verbal cues (Wolvin and Coakley (174-187).

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page 3

The reality is that any communication between persons has a profound non-verbal level.

In the communication process, non-verbal communications are sent as parallel messages with the verbal content (Face 83). Therefore, it is a poor habit to listen only to words (Barbara 43.) In fact, people rarely put their emotions into words; they express their emotions thorough tone of voice and gestures (Goleman 96). It is critical to understand that when a person talks, all of that person talks (Satir 60). So one must become aware of the parallel messages being sent in communication.

Some people may not listen well because they are not equipped to recognize non-verbal communication. This may not be a conscious decision people make but a lack of awareness or training in recognizing non-verbal communication; but is a significant barrier to effective listening. This causes some people to say that others have not heard what they said when they have been listened to with great interest. Some people have trouble recognizing the non-verbal messages that others believe they are sending.

Have students share any other barriers they can think of that create problems in listening.....

B. Discuss the reading of Brownell on “receiving.”

Note that this is the first step in learning to listen if we take our definition of listening.

Allow students to respond to what they have read (agree, disagree)

Share some information on **attending** (from lit.review and “SOLER” model)

Do the exercise on page 100 in text (Brownell)

Listening Class
September 28, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: Read article on reserve on Non-Verbal attentive behavior and feedback by Thursday. Be prepared to discuss both articles, especially the 5 type of questions used to facilitate understanding between speaker and listener.

OBJECTIVE(S): To help the student really identify a (some) listening barrier(s) that they have had a trusted friend or family member identify, and how they might begin to address this barrier in specific ways.

Introduce students to the presence of non-verbal communication, and a 5 step strategy for recognizing its presence through the behavior of attending. This addresses a myth of communication, the myth that we communicate primarily with words.

CLASS SESSION:

1. Have students respond to the readings from *Goleman* and *Steinke*. What principles and practices can they suggest from these readings?
2. Have students share the general outlines of the discoveries they have about their listening barriers after interviewing a trusted friend or family member. Remember that this exercise is rooted in the theory of the JOHARI Window, that people know things about us that we don't even know.
3. Discuss a final listening barrier that will move the class to discuss and practice the behavior of attending.

Another barrier to listening has to do with the challenge of recognizing non-verbal communication. Some people do not listen well because they assume that all communication is in words. If one would reflect on this assertion, one would recognize that communication is not uniquely verbal (Change Agent Skills 175).

In fact, communication research suggests that 65 percent of a person's communication is non-verbal (Johnson 104). One's communication takes the form of kinesics, appearance, proxemics, and other non-verbal cues (Wolvin and Coakley (174-187). The reality is that any communication between persons has a profound non-verbal level.

In the communication process, non-verbal communications are sent as parallel messages with the verbal content (Face 83). Therefore, it is a poor habit to listen only to words (Barbara 43.) In fact, people rarely put their emotions into words; they express their emotions thorough tone of voice and gestures (Goleman 96). It is critical to understand that when a person talks, all of that person talks (Satir 60). So one must become aware of the parallel messages being sent in communication.

Some people may not listen well because they are not equipped to recognize non-verbal communication. This may not be a conscious decision

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September 28, 1999

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people make but a lack of awareness or training in recognizing non-verbal communication; but is a significant barrier to effective listening. This causes some people to say that others have not heard what they said when they have been listened to with great interest. Some people have trouble recognizing the non-verbal messages that others believe they are sending.

(Optional, if we have time) IN GROUPS: Discuss a time when you were aware of non-verbal communication and how you were aware of its presence. Also discuss a time when you were unaware of non-verbal communication and how were you aware of this?

Non-verbal communication usually falls into the categories of:

Confirming/complementing....give example(s)

Contradicting.....give example(s)

Discuss the reading of Brownell on “receiving.”

Note that this is the first step in learning to listen if we take our definition of listening. And our receiving has to involve verbal communication, but it must also involve non-verbal communication. How do we learn to receive both of these levels of communication?

Give students the “SOLER” handout....

Share some information on **attending** (from lit.review and “SOLER” model) as one way of receiving and hearing what another person says, recognizing the presence of non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication.

Complete the exercise on page 100 in text (Brownell)

Listening Class
September 30, 1999

ASSIGNMENT:

Tell students that they will receive a note in campus mail about an assignment. You are not to talk to anyone about this assignment. The assignment is # 2 on page 100 of Brownell. Give them several class periods to complete this assignment.

Pass out sheet that has the following assignment: Read pages 114-125 in Brownell and over the weekend be aware of the times you observe feedback occurring (yourself and/or others). Make a list of the kind of questions you see being used (if there are any) from the article list and Brownell's list on page 117. Reflect as to whether you think the questions used are appropriate.

OBJECTIVE(S):

Continue to discuss the presence of non-verbal communication, and a 5 step strategy for recognizing its presence through the behavior of attending. This addresses a myth of communication, the myth that we communicate primarily with words.

Begin the discussion on "understanding" in the HURIER model and the place that feedback plays in this process. This behavior begins to address the myth of communication that words mean the same thing to our listener as they do to us.

CLASS SESSION:

Use my hoarseness to illustrate the need to attend.....we readily recognize the need to attend closely when a person is hoarse, but we need to equally recognize the importance of attending when we can hear people clearly (theoretically)

Discuss the reading of Brownell on "receiving."

Note that this is the first step in learning to listen if we take our definition of listening. And our receiving has to involve verbal communication, but it must also involve non-verbal communication. How do we learn to receive both of these levels of communication? Learning the behavior of attending.

Discuss article on Nonverbal Attentive Behavior:

The Value of good attentive behavior:

1. Listener-attentive behaviors benefit the speaker (p.88). What do you think about this statement? Why do you think it is true/false?
2. Good listening requires good attentive behavior (p. 88).

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Coded Behaviors of nonverbal attention and their nonattending counterparts:

ATTENDING:	NONATTENDING:
Eye contact	gaze away from speaker
Forward lean	backward lean/slouch
Head nod	head still
Smile/frown	straight face
Laughing	no laughing
No talking	talking

Give students the “SOLER” handout....and go over it as an acrostic for the behaviors we just went over from the article on Nonverbal Attentive Behavior (JILA; vol. 5, 1991)

Share some information on **attending** (from lit.review and “SOLER” model) as one way of receiving and hearing what another person says, recognizing the presence of non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication.

George Hunter says that feedback is the breakfast of champions.

Feedback is the behavior we employ to make sure we have come to a shared meaning.

Think of times you have not had a shared meaning and the result was not so pleasant/it was pleasant.

Discuss the importance of feedback in our daily lives:

E.G. Our gas gauge on the car.

Returned tests from our classes

Get students to reflect on other sources of feedback.

Other forms of feedback: quarterly sales reports, youth group attendance trends for the last 6 months,

Go over article and 5 types of questions. Have students explain the different types of questions that assist feedback.

Listening Class
October 5, 1999

Class objective(s):

1. To understand the importance of coming to a shared understanding in being an effective listener.
2. To begin to understand the different kinds of questions one may ask, and then how to ask questions, and provide feedback, that will ensure shared understanding.

To Come to shared meaning/understanding one must:

1. Have an appreciation of the impact of language (Brownell, 114). Words are living things and our use, inflection, and non-verbal attachments make language a challenge.
 - e.g. Some words have such emotional baggage that we are unable to listen: the word “father” may have a number of emotional consequences, the pitch or volume we speak may trigger a reaction in someone.
 - e.g. Words have a particularly egocentric connotation that influence the interpersonal dynamics of the encoder and decoder, especially in highly ardent contexts. **WHAT DOES THIS STATEMENT DO TO YOU?**
2. Become other-centered (oriented). Individuals who are disinterested in the ideas and feelings of others find it difficult to improve their listening; it takes effort (117). This is difficult, due to our tendency toward concern over our own inward conversations and emotional reactivity.

Essentially we **have to moderate** listening to our own inner voices and listen to all that the person is saying to us.

ACTIVITY: In groups relate, if you care to, some of the inner speech that you have had to this point in class...reporter will reveal general ideas and not the person. How has this inner speech affected your ability to listen?

HOW CAN WE DO THIS?

Box 4.2 (118) for three suggestions to “Let the Speaker Finish.”

3. Feedback:

REPORT from homework assignment: What kind of questions did you observe in feedback attempts by people this weekend?

The ability to ask appropriate questions and check perceptions (Brownell, 114). After all is not the failure to check perceptions a central reason people make mistakes in communication and listening?

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The use of questions enables the listener to seek needed clarification and obtain additional information (116). This is essential if shared meaning is achieved.

Box 4.1 (117) gives some general kinds of questions...discuss them.

Now, in groups, and relate them to the reading you did about the 5 different kinds of questions from Listening in Everyday Life, 2nd Edition, edited by Purdy and Borisoff, pp. 45-48).

Listening Class

October 7, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: (I passed this out on a sheet of paper to the students)

Read pages 144-159 in Brownell and write on one sheet of paper 1 thing you learned that you can apply to your daily life to increase your ability to remember. Then identify a major obstacle you have in being effective in memory (Due: Tuesday Oct. 12)

Just read 175-192 in Brownell, and 2 pages I took out of some of my writings on feedback (on reserve at the library circulation desk) by Tuesday Oct. 12.

OBJECTIVE(S):

1. To go over the suggestions on page 118; how to let a speaker finish.
2. To discuss and role play with the suggestions on asking questions (as a function of feedback)

Box 4.2 (118) for three suggestions to “Let the Speaker Finish.”...Go over list of why we interrupt others and don’t listen well....when:

We evaluate what others are saying is not important to us (ego-centric) so we interrupt them.

We believe the speaker has gotten off track and not staying with the point.

People are too long-winded in their responses, they tend to monopolize the situation to the point that it is not a conversation.

We get emotionally reactive or threatened

Feedback: “the key to most effective listening behavior (Hyatt & Kernisky 1989, qtd in: Listening in Everyday Life, 2nd ed., p 46; Purdy & Borisoff)

Mark 4:1-10. The disciples ask a question to seek feedback and understanding.

Respond to this statement: A listener has the critical obligation of asking questions, in order to make sure that they have arrived at the same meaning of what is communicated as the speaker has.....

The ability to ask appropriate questions and check perceptions is a critical behavior of feedback, and of listening in general (Brownell, 114). After all is not the failure to check perceptions a central reason people make mistakes in communication and listening?

The use of questions enables the listener to seek needed clarification and obtain additional information (116). This is essential if shared meaning is achieved.

Box 4.1 (117) gives some general kinds of questions...discuss them and suggest different situations they might be used.

In groups relate them to the reading you did about the 5 different kinds of questions from Listening in Everyday Life, 2nd Edition, edited by Purdy and Borisoff, pp. 45-48) and REPORT from your homework assignment: What kind of questions did you observe in feedback attempts by people this weekend? Or, did you find people not very interested in feedback? Why do you think this is so?

Listening Class:
October 12 & 14, 1999

ASSIGNMENT:

1. Use the strategy you identified in your reading to increase your memory one time by Thursday Oct. 14.
2. Re-read pages 175-192 and outline the chapter for 10-14-99
3. Begin to develop a list of "CORE VALUES" you believe are necessary for listening. Give some rationale for each value. I would like to see this at the end of the semester and see that you have taken some time to do this.

OBJECTIVE(S):

1. To reinforce the student's knowledge of paraphrasing questions as a behavior of feedback.
2. Consider the role memory has in listening, along with identifying a barrier and a strategy for improving one's memory. Also to do some exercises in the book which address the issue of memory.

CLASS TIME:

1. Review the practice of paraphrasing questions, where we are repeating in our own words what we think we have heard the person say. We are checking for accuracy of the facts and feelings we have heard. Take out their notes from last class session on "building your vocabulary" with paraphrasing questions.

Discuss the action of attuning to another person's feelings and not trying to correct or make things better. Share Romans 12:15 as a basis for this behavior.

Warn students that it is easy to try and correct people's feelings, help people get a biblical perspective on their feelings, or any other number of things. Show them that this is an unhelpful response at first. One might go back later and suggest some ways to deal with this but one should concentrate on attuning to begin with.

Also, students will be unable to give feedback that suggests that they understand the other person's emotions if they try to identify with something that happened in their life. This takes that focus off the person sharing and puts it on the hearer.

Role play or practice this in the classroom with this behavior. Have students get in groups of 2...have them count off 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 1,2,3,4,5,6. I will take the 13th person. Have each student share a positive or negative event in their life...the other person is to listen and then paraphrase facts and feelings in a paraphrasing question, always with a question mark...have the students report how the other person practiced feedback in a way that made them know that their feelings were understood.

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Students report the behaviors they associate with a person that is showing feedback that they understand the speaker's emotions and feelings.

October 14, 1999

ASSIGNMENT:

Read pages 227-247 and outline the chapter...with material that supports the major points, sections, and sub-sections.

Use the insights gained from this chapter to evaluate a speaker this weekend, or any other time before Tuesday Oct. 19. Record the strategy you use to be as objective as possible (p. 231-233). What made this speaker credible for you (p. 234-235)? What sort of evidence did the speaker supply (p. 236-237)? Identify logical fallacies, and then rate how persuaded you were and why. I suggest that you make a sheet of these aspects you must evaluate, with the specific material from the text, so you can go through this material as the speaker is speaking.

Make weekly entries into your journal on how the material you are studying is beginning to affect your competence in listening. Also include challenges, insights, etc. you are having with the behavior of listening.

2. Have students share from their readings and writing. What major principle did you learn from your reading on memory? What obstacle did you identify, and why? What did you learn that might increase your memory?

By Thursday Oct. 14, practice that habit at least once and be prepared to tell us about it.

3. Introduce the section on *Interpreting*.

Think of a time that you misinterpreted a passage from the Bible. Why did that happen?

Use the story, "Burger World," to illustrate the difficulty in interpreting....why was Jane frustrated? Why was the manager, Mark, frustrated? What made the difference in Jane's response?

4. How to begin to be a better interpreter in listening.
 - a.) question your assumptions. HOW DO YOU DO THAT?
 - b.) Modify your conclusions based on new information. HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

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5. Practice the behavior of empathy to make sure you interpret correctly.

Episode from Frazier: where he is on the radio and says "I'm Listening." Have you ever noticed that he does something with his voice when he says this? What is it?

The behavior of Empathy: Philippians 2:1-8

Empathy is not to completely forget about ourselves or our needs, but it is to balance our ego-centric concerns to be willing to empty ourselves of our preoccupation with ourselves and care for another.

Empathy is considered by many as much a behavior as it is an attitude. It is understood as a self-emptying of one's attention on personal issues and focusing on another's needs and problems (M. Nichols 125). Empathy occurs when one is willing to suspend meeting one's own needs while investing energy and time in relating to another.

This self-emptying exemplifies eagerness and determination to understand things from the speaker's viewpoint. It is listening in a way that hears from the speaker's frame of reference (Banville 54). Empathy attempts to assume the internal frame of reference of another as the hearer empties himself or herself of personal concerns (Carkhuff & Truax 285).

Can one learn this behavior? Is this something only certain gifted people are capable of doing? Certainly one can learn to act in this way with others if there is sufficient desire and need to listen. It is well within the ability of any person to act and live this way.

STRATEGIES OF EMPATHIC BEHAVIOR:

- 1.) Understand the situation from the other person viewpoint (Cognitive).
- 2.) The (willingness) ability to interpret non-verbal communication and a person's underlying feelings (Perceptive).
- 3.) The ability to demonstrate verbal and nonverbal clues that you are listening and care about the other person. This is often communicated by listening in a way that does not attempt to evaluate or judge (Behavioral).

Group Activity: To help students identify non-verbal clues.

8 on page 210.

Group # 1---anxiety

Group # 2---sympathy

Group # 3---defensiveness

Group # 4---lack of concern

Listening Class
October 19, 1999

OBJECTIVE: Understanding the nature and behavior(s) of Evaluating:

ASSIGNMENT: Number people off into groups of 3 and do “Group activity # 1, bottom of page 249, by Thursday October 21. Come prepared to report on the experience.

CLASS SESSION:

Until you are confident that you share the speaker’s meanings (how do you do this? *Feedack*) and have taken nonverbal and situational aspects into account (how do you do this? *Attending*), you cannot make a wise decision or come to a valid conclusion.

Remaining objective:

The ability to evaluate is based on the ability to remain objective. What do we mean by remaining objective?

Remaining objective is difficult when one is emotionally involved or defending your personal viewpoint. These are highly emotionally reactive situations and create some real challenges to listening and being able to evaluate accurately.

Remember that UNDERSTANDING precedes EVALUATION. You can reduce any tendency to immediately judge what you hear ONLY if you deliberately work to control your mental processing

Read work on “decisions too quick” from *admin/leaders/leadership-proverbs*. Discuss these passages and how they fit into the behavior of remaining as objective as one possibly can.

Have each student reveal, from their homework assignment, what strategy or strategies they used to keep objective in evaluating a speaker since our last class period...see below and pages 232-233.

7 Principles for maintaining objectivity:

1. There’s always more to know
2. Be ready to modify your position.
3. Consider differences as well as similarities. This is because we tend to stereotype people and groups to “always” and “never.” This is to miss the differences in each person and situation.
4. Recognize self-fulfilling prophecies. The study done at a school district where teachers were told that a certain group of students were better than another group. The fact is the groups were the same, but the grades were different because teachers treated them differently.
5. Use Indexing to focus on individuals rather than categories. Paying attention to the differences between people and that each person is to be seen independent of generalizations.
6. Date your information and constantly reassess. Because someone did something a year ago does not mean they will do it again...taking into account maturity and other factors.
7. There’s a lot of gray between black and white.

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Evaluating speaker credibility.....

What made this speaker credible? Character or competence?

- a.) previous experience with this person (trust or non-trust)
- b.) dynamism; did the speaker make you believe that he/she believed what he/she was saying?
- c.) Expertise: did you know the speaker knew what they knew about that which they were talking?

Did the speaker's credibility change? Before, during, or after? What happened to make this change?

Listening Class

Speaker evidence.

Fact

Opinions

Inferences

Logical fallacies?

Rate your level of being convinced

Listening Class
October 21, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: By Tuesday, before class, October 26, 1999 you are to complete the following. A weekly journal entry on how this class is affecting your listening behavior. You will use these self-reflections to write an end of semester summary of your listening ability. I will only read the summaries. Read pages 263-282 (Brownell), and make a list of principles you learn from this chapter that you can identify, explain what the principle is, and how to apply each to your own responding behavior. This list should contain no less than 7 significant principles (1 from each major section of the chapter).

OBJECTIVE: Finish discussion and application on the nature and behavior(s) of Evaluating. Introduce the material on Responding.

Continuing discussion on Evaluating.....

Did the speaker's credibility change? Before, during, or after? What happened to make this change?

Speaker evidence.

Fact (a difficult one when we bring the Bible in as evidence, because not everyone accepts the Bible as a fact or inspired book)

Opinions

Inferences

Logical fallacies?

Report on Group activity # 1, bottom of page 249.

RESPONDING:

“Recognizing and identifying your own response, and the manner in which it is perceived by others, IS THE FIRST STEP to improving your overall listening competence” (Brownell 263).

Listening Class
October 26, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: By Thursday Oct. 28, 1999, review class discussion and readings. Be ready to discuss a listening situation you were a part, between Oct. 26 and 27. Identify your transactional state as you began to listen (child/parent/adult), what you had to do to adjust your transactional style, your response style (assertive, nonassertive, aggressive or supportive, and if you had to adjust your response style what did you do? Make some notes after you reflect on these answers and bring those notes with you to class.

OBJECTIVE: To introduce students to the final phase; responding. To practice the behaviors of responding based on transactional analysis, along with the responses of asserting and supporting, in class and as a homework assignment.

RESPONDING:

“Recognizing and identifying your own response, and the manner in which it is perceived by others, IS THE FIRST STEP to improving your overall listening competence.” Others judge the effectiveness of your listening by the nature of the response you make to what you hear. Your response can be overt or covert, verbal or nonverbal (Brownell 263).

Principles about “Responding:”

1. Your partner can only judge the quality of your listening through the responses you make. Your partner cannot read your mind so conclusions about your listening effectiveness are based on your behavior. So one must respond in a manner that will facilitate shared meaning (266).

2. We all have habitual responses we have developed over time (266-267)

3. You need several response styles to communicate your understanding effectively. These styles must enable you to accomplish tasks and maintain or develop relationships. Those who have effective responses, and multiple responses are high self-monitors and those who do not have multiple responses are generally low self-monitors (267).

4. Our transactional state effects our listening. If we are in the child ego-state we are usually emotionally involved to the point that we cannot listen effectively (remember the material on the limbic brain?). If we are in the parent ego-state we may be rigid in our thoughts, either sympathetic or critical. So that people adhere to strict values, etc. even when the circumstances call for something else (parent tapes) (269-270). In the adult ego-state we are able to care for another without being too involved. One is able to stay concerned along with being differentiated.....

look at the different kinds of responses (272) and consider these as behaviors we can identify and behaviors we can learn.

Listening Class
October 26 & 28, 1999

5. Responses that are assertive or supportive.

Assertive responses do not come natural but can be learned. They are responses that deal directly with the problem(s) and not to other people. They are direct, honest, and objective responses, as opposed to indirect, emotional responses.

The assertive person seeks to resolve the problem and not “win” the conflict.

A list of assertive responses is found on pages 274-278.

- a.) Broken record
- b.) Negative inquiry: acknowledge the other person’s position, ask for more information to understand (not for future attack), and listen
- c.) Fogging: listening openly and honestly to a person’s criticism, and proposing a solution.
- d.) Workable compromise
- e.) Express feelings verbally, don’t expect people to read your mind.

Steps to more assertive behavior (box 8.6, page 278)

October 28, 1999

Go over their homework assignment....sometime before Tuesday go by library and take the HURIER test again, leaving your 4-digit number on the test.

Review in a list what you think are the essential behaviors you have learned about listening from Brownell’s text.

Discuss the work they were to do for class today....

Supportive responses are responses that create and maintain environments which contribute to open, nonevaluative interaction. This is difficult for Christians who have to judge and correct every wrong idea. People who are not well differentiated have real problems with this.

The fact is that the more defensive a person becomes the less they are able to listen effectively.

Suggest that these supportive responses are the means to understanding and not judging....that is one of your primary goals anyway, to listen not judge...

Do the application exercise on pages 293-294...

Listening Class
November 2, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: Review the 5 listening styles from your Personal Listening Profile Tests. Come to class (Thursday) with a short summary of each of these listening styles.

Find 3 Internet sites that deal with listening training (record the URL site in your reflective writing). Reflect (in writing) the strengths and weakness you see in this sites approach, as it relates to the important behaviors we have discussed in learning to listen (Tues. Nov. 9), and finally, review the sites to see if they discuss or offer training in styles of listening (or differing listening strategies).

1. Take the HURIER test as a posttest and record the findings.

2. Hand out the "4 Listening Strategies." Go over each in a classroom discussion. Then have students self-identify in small groups of 3 which one of these strategies is the most needed in their life. Have them brainstorm how they can apply this strategy in their life by the next class-period.

Listening Class
November 4, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: Continue to work on your web site searches and evaluations of any of them having anything close to the notion of styles of listening.

OBJECTIVE: To review general listening behaviors (4 Listening strategies) and have students react to this with what they have learned up to this point, along with specific ways to implement these strategies. To introduce the material on Styles of Listening in general and specifically to understand the nature of Appreciative listening and strategies to apply this style of listening.

CLASS SESSION:

Go over handout:

- a.) reviewing 4 Listening Strategies and discussing ways to apply each strategy in the students behaviors. Put students in groups of 3 and have them self-identify which of these strategies they need to concentrate, then have the group brainstorm on ways of applying each of these 4 strategies.
- b.) Introduce the material on listening styles in general. Have students report on their homework here. They were to review the 5 styles of listening....have them give their summary of these styles, which they wrote.
- c.) Introduce the material on Appreciative listening: its nature, some contexts for this style, and some strategies for improving this style.

Listening Class
November 9, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: Reading assignment is from Listening, on reserve at the circulation desk. Read pages 270 on focusing attention; 272- 278 on developing a supportive climate. Do something that applies these 2 specific behaviors (focusing attention & developing a supportive climate) in your listening experience by Thursday Nov. 11, 1999. Be prepared to report of this assignment in class.

Read pages ; 279-284 listening with empathy; 284, 289-299 about appropriate responses. For empathy do assignment # 4 on page 303. Identify a listening situation where an appropriate response would have helped, and which appropriate response you suggest by Tuesday Nov. 16. Turn in a report of this assignment.

OBJECTIVE: To introduce the students to the principles and behaviors of Appreciative listening, then to do the same with Therapeutic (Empathic) listening. To also lead the students into practice and assignments that apply these behaviors for listening styles..

CLASS SESSION:

1. Discuss what students have found on the Internet about listening styles or strategies.
2. Briefly discuss the characteristics of Appreciative Listening.
3. Go over the readings they have done on Appreciative listening...how to improve it....from Wolvin & Coakely.

Listen to tape, Irish Dreams, and have them listen appreciatively.

Read story from McDonald's Discovering the Character of God, pages 151-152.

HOW DID YOU EMPLOY APPRECIATIVE LISTENING BEHAVIORS WITH THESE 2 EXERCISES?

4. Discuss the material on Empathic (Therapeutic) Listening from Profile test.

Skills involved in Therapeutic Listening:

1. Focusing attention
2. Demonstrating attending behaviors (I think we have gone over this pretty well)
3. Developing a supportive communication climate.
4. Listening with empathy.
5. Responding appropriately

Listening Class
November 11, 1999

Added assignment: Read pages 63-68 in Perceptive Listening, on reserve in the library by Tuesday Nov. 16.

OBJECTIVE: To introduce the student to the empathic style of listening and then to investigate behaviors consistent with this style of listening.

Empathic Listening style:

1. The characteristics of the empathic style of listening:

- a.) The style where the listener acts as a sounding board and empathizes while listening. They tend to be patient and focus on the speaker's feelings and emotions.

Empathy is considered by many as much a behavior as it is an attitude. It is understood as a self-emptying of one's attention on personal issues and focusing on another's needs and problems (M. Nichols 125). Empathy occurs when one is willing to suspend meeting one's own needs while investing energy and time in relating to another.

This self-emptying exemplifies eagerness and determination to understand things from the speaker's viewpoint. It is listening in a way that hears from the speaker's frame of reference (Banville 54). Empathy attempts to assume the internal frame of reference of another as the hearer empties himself or herself of personal concerns (Carkhuff & Truax 285).

Can one learn this behavior? Is this something only certain gifted people are capable of doing? Certainly one can learn to act in this way with others if there is sufficient desire and need to listen. It is well within the ability of any person to act and live this way.

- b.) They tend to be non-judgemental.
c.) Lets the sender know that they care through attunement and attending.
d.) Ask open-ended questions so the sender can really do the talking.
e.) Remains relatively silent.

2. The Context(s) for empathic listening

3. Behaviors to increase empathic listening:

Skills involved in Therapeutic Listening:

4. Focusing attention
5. Demonstrating attending behaviors (I think we have gone over this pretty well)
6. Developing a supportive communication climate.
7. Listening with empathy.
8. Responding appropriately

Listening Class
November 16, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: Read pages 170-174 in Listening and pages 49-51 in Perceptive Listening by Thursday Nov. 18. Go back and review Brownell's material on the types of questions to ask (5 different). Write out this list of 5 questions and relate what you have learned since we studied them the first time.

Have the students report on their homework.

Appropriate responses are crucial to effective therapeutic (empathic) listening (Wolvin & Coakley, p. 284).

Some inappropriate responses:

Interrupting, sending an unrelated message, focusing on self, discounting the sender's feelings, philosophizing, evaluating, advising, etc.

Some appropriate responses:

1. Being a sounding board

Traits of a sounding board: willingness to listen, capacity to care, Desire to understand, discretion: don't play amateur psychologist, honesty: willing to let the other know that they are not the right person for his situation, patience and faith: that the sender can solve their own problems if given the right support.

2. Responses are "furthering" responses; they encourage the sender instead of inhibiting the sender's self-exploration, by communicating acceptance to the sender.

Probing responses (this is not interrogation or inappropriate interest in detail). One is interested in understanding the sender's feelings and thoughts and uses open-ended questions and restatement questions.

PRACTICE

Feeling response which indicates you recognize the feelings that this person is experiencing.

PRACTICE

Perception-checking response is to tentatively phrase what you think you have heard (words and emotions). E.G. "Are you feeling, are you thinking?"

Hard for some people to communicate their feelings because they have an inadequate "feeling vocabulary." They use too general/vague terms.

PRACTICE

Listening class

Nov. 16, 1999

page 2

Thought response is one that is testing the listener's understanding.

PRACTICE

Feeling and thought response, is an attempt to understand the sender's thoughts and feelings.

PRACTICE

In essence all these responses are PARAPHRASING, which enables the listener to convey their understanding of what they have heard and allows the sender to confirm or correct.

If I understand you correctly, you are saying...

Let me tell you what I'm sensing. You...

What I'm hearing is....

Let's make sure I'm clear. You feel.....

Listening Class
November 18, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: Review Brownell's work on memory strategies for Discriminating Listening. Listen to someone give a sermon, Sunday school lesson, presentation, etc. before class Nov. 30. Identify the main ideas and supporting ideas as you listen. Be prepared to share this in class the 30th.

Read pages 232-239 in Listening and review the material in the Listening Profile test on Comprehensive Listening.

CLASS OBJECTIVE: To give students more time to share and evaluate each other's empathic responses to their assignments. Give students an opportunity in class to demonstrate their empathic skills in a lab situation.

CLASS SESSION:

Have last 2 groups report on their application of empathic listening assignment. Each person is to report and evaluate how they believe their partner did in responding empathically in their assignment.

LISTENING LAB EXERCISE IN CLASS: Students identify the situation of their life by using a weather condition, then allow students in the class respond empathically to each other. Go completely around the room and let everyone who is willing respond. The instructor will simply attempt to guide the discussion and move it along to involve all who wish to be involved.

Listening Class
November 30, 1999

ASSIGNMENT: Re-read pages 232-239 in Listening and review the material in the Listening Profile test on Comprehensive Listening and be prepared to discuss this material Thursday Dec. 2, 1999.

CLASS OBJECTIVE: To review the materials the students have read on Discerning listening style. To discuss the behaviors most associated with the Discerning listening style, and practice in class these behaviors (identifying the nonverbal principles of visual discrimination).

Finally, have the students share their experience in Comprehensive listening with the assignment they have for class.

PRESENT ACTIVITY:Discriminating Listening

Need to review what they have read on pages 170-174, because our last class period went in a different direction as we practiced empathic responses, using a weather condition to explain our situation.

Show video by Maxwell with the sound off. Have students identify non-verbal behaviors.

Discuss their reading on discriminating listening, giving particular attention to the readings on non-verbal principles (6) from Wolvin & Coakley, p. 171ff.

GIVE STUDENTS HANDOUT I PREPARED ON THE 6 PRINCIPLES OF NONBERVAL COMMUNICATION (from Wolvin & Coakley, p. 171ff)

Show video by Maxwell with the sound off. Have students identify non-verbal behaviors (clues) and discuss their possible meanings. After this exercise re-run the video with the sound on.

Review Brownell's work on memory strategies for Discriminating Listening. Listen to someone give a sermon, Sunday school lesson, presentation, etc. before class Nov. 30. Identify the main ideas and supporting ideas as you listen. Be prepared to share this in class the 30th.

Listening Class
December 7, 1999

CLASS ASSIGNMENT: Come to class with, or email me questions you have about listening that we can address our final class period. Go over your Listening Profile and give a basic definition of each of the 5 styles of Listening.

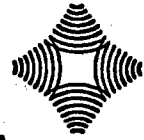
CLASS OBJECTIVE: To review the material from Brownell on Evaluating and relate this content to Evaluative Listening. Have students identify their own evaluative strategies or adopt evaluative strategies for their own listening competence.

CLASS SESSION:

1. Students review Brownell's 7 strategies for evaluating in listening. Go over them, make sure the strategies are understood, as well as apply each in some concrete situation/fashion.
2. Have the students report their top 3 strategies and why they think these are their top. Have some class discussion, Have students respond to the different strategies.
3. In groups of 2 have them share how they came to their opinions/biases, and what are you doing to prevent your biases from affecting your listening ability?
4. Go over the profile on Evaluative listening. Make sure the students understand the characteristics of this style and brain-storm as to situations that this might be an appropriate context for this listening.
5. Pass out copy of "Are You Listening" and discuss the 4 types of listeners that are stated in this article. What do you think about these? Where do you agree/disagree, etc.?

APPENDIX B:

Data from development of Personal Listening Profile.



Introduction

Development of the Listening Model

The *Personal Listening Profile*[™] replaces an earlier instrument called the *Attitudinal Listening Profile System*[™], which was published by Carlson Learning Company in 1980 and revised in 1982. The *Personal Listening Profile* is a new instrument, which bears little resemblance to its predecessor and is based on new research and development.

A new profile was needed for several reasons:

1. Much of the research on listening as a factor in interpersonal communication has occurred since the instrument was developed.
2. Because listening is a culturally sensitive behavior, it needed to be revisited to ensure its relevance to business and social applications in the 1990s.
3. The need for a listening instrument was still apparent, and Carlson Learning Company wanted to respond to the need with an instrument that met current standards for reliability, validity, and applicability.

Development Steps

Survey of published literature. Published sources on listening were examined for two purposes:

- To see whether good measurements already existed, which were applicable to a work setting, and;
- To see how listening had been defined and measured to date by people doing research in this field.

A preliminary review of literature was conducted by Carlson Learning Company to determine whether the 1982 Attitudinal Listening Profile represented current models of listening attitude. When little evidence in support of this instrument's "LISTEN" model was found, a decision was made to proceed



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with development of a new measuring tool.

A more thorough review of literature was then conducted, resulting in findings related to both development purposes identified above. It was found that, while several research scales had been developed, they had not produced psychometrically satisfactory results so far. It was also discovered that studies supported either a four-factor or five-factor model of the listening process. The International Listening Association provided a core of useful information for development of a new instrument.

After reviewing the individual research findings, material in the *Journal of the International Listening Association*, (Wolvin & Coakley, 1993), and findings obtained from the initial Carlson Learning Company review, the five-factor model was selected as the theoretical basis for a new listening instrument. Each of the factors was defined, and lists of descriptive phrases from the literature were attached to them.

Item development. Factor definitions and lists of descriptors were reviewed by five persons familiar with the concept and experienced in facilitating the development of listening attitudes and skills (i.e., content experts). Each person provided a list of potential items for trial. These were screened for their apparent relevance to each factor, understandability, reading level, and variety. An alpha version of the instrument was developed for research purposes containing 111 items intended to measure the five listening factors.

This initial, alpha test version of the new listening profile was administered to 72 individuals representing a variety of ages, backgrounds, and employment. Results were analyzed to determine via reliability analysis which items best measured each scale. From this analysis, 10 to 12 items were

Introduction



selected for each scale which demonstrated adequate to strong item-total correlations.

Uncorrected *alpha* reliabilities for scales consisting of the selected item subset ranged from .68 to .86 (average $r_{xx'} = .77$).

When these scales were intercorrelated, the coefficients ranged from -.26 to .37, showing significant differentiation between scales.

This evidence provided strong support for a five-factor model and for the use of selected items to measure theoretical factors. Further support for the model was obtained in supplementary analyses, as follows:

Examination of the Model. All 111 items were submitted to factor analysis and to configural analysis in two and three dimensions. Factor analysis revealed four factors, with theoretical factors labeled Empathic Listening and Appreciative Listening combined. Configural analysis, using a multidimensional scaling program (MDS), produced a result similar to factor analysis in two dimensions.

However, the three-dimensional MDS solution revealed separate spatial positions for most items measuring Empathic Listening and Appreciative Listening, by placing them along contrasting poles of a third dimension.

Therefore, a nonlinear relationship exists among the item sets, and Appreciative Listening is identified as a meaningfully different construct from Empathic Listening.

The MDS analysis contrasts Evaluative Listening with Empathic Listening and Discerning Listening with Comprehensive Listening. It also contrasts Evaluative Listening with Appreciative Listening. The independence of each set of items and the



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construct it measures is confirmed by scale intercorrelations reported above.

Beta Test. Four additional items were developed, to create 12-item scales for each listening factor. These were administered and scored on the same four-point Likert scale as is used in the present instrument.

171 respondents completed the beta test instrument. Because results from alpha and beta tests were eventually merged, characteristics of both samples are described in Table 1 (minus those for whom there was missing data).

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Table 1: Characteristics of Alpha and Beta Test Respondents Combined (N=234)

Characteristic	N	Percent
Gender		
Male	58	24.8
Female	176	75.2
Heritage		
African-American	4	1.7
Asian-Pacific	1	.4
Caucasian	221	94.4
Hispanic	1	.4
Native American	2	.9
Other	4	1.7
Geographic Location		
Pacific	31	13.2
Central	180	76.9
Northeast	6	2.6
Southeast	15	6.4
Industry		
Finance/Ins.	1	.4
Public Administration	12	5.1
Services (Bus, Ed, Hlth)	104	44.5
Wholesale/Retail Trade	24	10.3
Transport./Communication	34	13.2
Other	59	26.5
Age		
18-29	87	37.2
30-39	60	25.6
40-49	55	23.5
50-59	29	12.4
60 and older	2	.9



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Characteristic	N	Percent
Level of Education		
High school	29	12.4
Post-secondary	70	29.9
College graduate	103	44.0
Graduate or professional degree	31	13.2
Employment		
Secretarial/Clerical	50	21.4
Technical/Mechanical	19	8.1
Professional	62	26.5
Supervisory	8	3.4
Middle/Upper Mgmt.	33	14.1
Sales	19	8.1
Warehouse/Labor	0	0
Other	39	16.7

A comparison of mean responses by gender was obtained for each scale on the *Personal Listening Profile™*, to determine whether results were biased by the disproportionate number of females in the test sample.

In each of the five comparisons, differences between means failed to meet the significance level of $\alpha \leq .05$, meaning measured differences can be attributed to chance, and there is no significant difference between men and women, in this sample, on any of the scales.

When internal consistency reliabilities were calculated for each scale in the beta test version, results were similar to those obtained on selected item subsets from the alpha test. The arrangement of items on an MDS plot was also similar.



 Introduction

Thus, responses from both alpha and beta tests were merged; and scale reliability and independence (represented by inter-scale correlations) were measured on the combined sample of 243 respondents.

When inter-scale correlations are significantly lower than reliability coefficients, there is evidence that listening as measured in this instrument can be described in five different ways and that the model is justified. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliabilities and Inter-Scale Correlations (N=243)

	Discerning	Comprehensive	Evaluative	Appreciative	Empathic
Discerning	.82				
Comprehensive	.19	.90			
Evaluative	.06	.37	.78		
Appreciative	.29	.00	.03	.80	
Empathic	.42	.47	.07	.30	.84

Reliabilities are shown in bold face along the diagonal of Table 2. They represent Cronbach's *alpha* coefficients corrected with the Spearman-Brown formula. Inter-scale Pearson Product Moment correlations are shown in the body of the table (unbolded numbers).

Relation of Empathic Listening to Discerning and Comprehensive Listening. While the inter-scale correlations obtained for these three listening scales are modest--i.e., the scales overlap only 18 to 22%--their magnitude is nonetheless interesting. The relationships help explain what empathic listening entails. Apparently one cannot listen empathically without also listening, in part, to discriminate and comprehend what the person is saying. This position is also found in our review of literature (Wolvin & Coakley, 1993).



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It is clear that evaluative listening plays no role in empathic listening--i.e., the correlation between Evaluative and Empathic listening is nonsignificant (at $r_{xy}=.06$.)

In summary, the *Personal Listening Profile™* is a highly reliable instrument that can be used with confidence to help individuals identify their most natural listening approaches used when communicating.

About the Publisher

CARLSON LEARNING COMPANY is a subsidiary of Carlson Companies, Inc., a privately held diversified service firm with over 50,000 employees worldwide. Carlson Learning Company is committed to developing resources that simplify complex issues to help people discover and capitalize on their strengths, value their differences and work together successfully. For more than twenty years, developing innovative resources that tap the natural ability of people to learn, create, adapt and succeed has been a tradition. Carlson Learning Company publications have helped individuals and organizations, worldwide, to improve performance and achieve their full potential.

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