Listening Skills

Listening Skills are the primary means of acquiring information from lectures. There is a difference between hearing and listening.

**Hearing is passive:**

- Hearing is a spontaneous act.
- Sound waves received by the ear must be more than just physically present during a lecture.

**Listening is active:**

It is something you choose to do. It requires the use of the ears for hearing and the brain for comprehending. The absorption of meaning requires three activities:

- Listening to absorb requires concentration, an activity involving processing and interpretation of incoming information.
- Listening to absorb requires paying attention. You must be intentional, purposeful and deliberate.
- Listening to absorb requires dynamic listening where you focus on content, not the delivery. Focus on ideas not just facts. Listen for central themes. Listen for the lecturer's remarks and organizational pattern.

**Signals to watch for when actively listening to the lecturer:**

- Write down what teacher puts on board. Print the material in capitals or mark with "OB." If it was important enough to put on the board, you will need to know it.
- Write down definitions, rather than "see page 266." Listen for enumeration words like, "the four steps. ..," then number and list them in order.
- Listen for, "This is important," or " A point that will keep coming up , later. ..," or "Pay special attention to...."
Be sure to write the important statements down and write in the margin, "imp" or mark (*) to show its importance.

• Listen for points that are repeated. You can usually assume it is important. Write "R" for repeated in the margin so that you will know later that the instructor stressed that idea.

• Listen to the instructor's voice. If is slows down, becomes louder, or otherwise signals that you are expected to write down exactly what is being said, word for word.

• Watch for nonverbal clues. The instructor may walk toward their audience or may pace as they stress an essential concept or may tap on the desk or use the hand to make a point.