

Listening Circles

Overview: Reading and Listening Circles are very successful in encouraging students to engage more deeply with texts by approaching them from different perspectives and unpacking their different elements before repacking them with a better understanding of the whole ('bigger picture').

Aims

The aims are that students engage with and unpack lectures, and ultimately demonstrate an understanding and response to their content and the *Circle* process. An important aspect of Listening Circles is the development of learner engagement and autonomy; they should be student-led. However, within the procedure there is flexibility for the tutor to guide students towards appropriate lectures and to grade post-lecture activities.

Process

Listening circles should be run in a two-hour class and work best if run over a course / semester. The students are divided into groups of four. Each week the students listen to a short lecture and each student within that group has a specific role/task to perform while their listen. After the lecture they hold a discussion to share their findings and discuss the key ideas in the lecture.

Student Roles

The students take notes around these areas while they watch the lecture and share their findings in the group discussion. Each week they change roles.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Language and Meaning | Background and Context | Structure and Organisation | Delivery |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|

Videos / lectures

Lectures can be on any academic topic but it is better if the students decide what to watch. Start off with short lectures of 5-10 minutes long and increase each week to a maximum of 30 minutes. Decisions on what to watch can be done by the groups researching possible lectures before the lesson and pitching them to the class for a group vote. It's better if they choose lectures that include visual slides for authenticity. Lectures can be shown to a whole a class or in individual groups using laptops and headphones. The lectures can be played twice.

Discussion

After the lecture, provide quiet time (10 minutes) for the students to organise their notes and think about what they want to say. Then begin the discussion. Each student shares their findings with the other members who take notes. The final stage of the discussion is the reflection and review - what is the stance of the lecturer? Did the lecture meet your expectations from the title? Was there anything you would like to research further?

Listening Circles: Student sheet

Aim: to engage and develop a more detailed understanding of lectures as a group through specific roles and discussion.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Listening circle group: | 4 students. |
| Time: | Every week. |
| Lecture Topic: | An academic subject with visual PPT (if possible). Each student in the group researches a lecture and pitches it to the group. |
| Lecture time: | 6 – 30 minutes (start off with a short lecture and increase the time each week). |
| Roles: | Each week you have a specific role (see below), you then change this role the following week. |
| Discussion: | After the lecture, your group has a discussion where you discuss your findings and try to identify the main ideas together. |

Roles

| Language and Meaning | Background and Context | Structure and Organisation | Delivery |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Write down specific language terms.</p> <p>Write down any useful language.</p> <p>Define any difficult terms.</p> <p>Note useful academic language.</p> | <p>Who is the speaker?</p> <p>What is their background?</p> <p>Why are they giving this lecture?</p> <p>What is their stance?</p> <p>Anything else that helps understand why this is important.</p> | <p>How is the lecture organised?</p> <p>Is there an outline?</p> <p>What are the key concepts?</p> <p>What examples are given to help understanding?</p> <p>What's the conclusion?</p> | <p>Visuals?</p> <p>Gestures? Facial expressions?</p> <p>Signposting language?</p> <p>Speed?</p> <p>Accent?</p> <p>Anything else?</p> |

Listening Circle Timeline

Follow this procedure for listening circles

| | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| 1 | Lecture | Choose a lecture / share lecture with group / class |
| 2 | Clarification | Clarify roles for that day in the group |
| 3 | Research | Research the lecture on the internet (look at summary / transcript / research background) |
| 4 | Lecture | Watch and take notes on your specific role / main ideas |
| 5 | Organisation | Tidy / organise notes (think about what you will discuss) |
| 6 | Lecture | Watch the lecture again (add to notes) |
| 7 | Preparation | Individual time: analysis of your notes / extra research / dictionary work |
| 8 | Discussion | Discussion (share your findings and discuss the main ideas) |

Discussion

Share your findings with your listening circle group. Take notes on what your listening circle members say. Then discuss the key ideas of the lecture together. Finally, review and respond to these key points:

- Were the **topic(s)** and **key points** as you expected?
- Was the lecture **successful** (consider the audience and purpose)? Why / Why not?
- What is the author's **stance**? How do you know? Do you agree with them? Why / Why not?
- Did you carry out your **role** successfully? How do you know? Did you experience any **challenges**? Could you do anything **differently** next time?

Possible Lecture Websites:

TED: <https://www.ted.com/>

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com>

Khan Academy: <https://www.youtube.com/khanacademy> -

Royal Institution: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheRoyalInstitution>

Student sheet

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Lecture name | |
| Lecture title | |

| |
|-----------------------------|
| Summary / key topics |
| |

| | |
|---|--|
| Your role: | |
| <i>Take notes (use extra paper if necessary):</i> | |
| | |

Discussion

Take notes from your listening circle group

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Language and Meaning | Background and Context |
| Structure and Organisation | Delivery |

Discussion

- Were the **topic(s)** and **key points** as you expected?
- Was the lecture **successful** (consider the audience and purpose)? Why / Why not?
- What is the author's **stance**? How do you know? Do you agree with them? Why / Why not?
- Did you carry out your **role** successfully? How do you know? Did you experience any **challenges**? Could you do anything **differently** next time?

Group Planning Sheet

Group Members

Add the names of all the group members here:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Student 1 | |
| Student 2 | |
| Student 3 | |
| Student 4 | |

Schedule

Decide which role each member will take each week and who will select each lecture.

| Week | Lecture | Language & Meaning | Background & context | Structure & organisation | Delivery |
|------|------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Lecture 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | Lecture 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | Lecture 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| 4 | Lecture 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| 5 | Lecture 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6 | Lecture 6 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7 | Lecture 7 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| 8 | Lecture 8 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| 9 | Lecture 9 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | Lecture 10 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Lectures

Keep a record of each lecture, using the Harvard referencing system:

(<https://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>)

| |
|-------------|
| Lecture 1: |
| Lecture 2: |
| Lecture 3: |
| Lecture 4: |
| Lecture 5: |
| Lecture 6: |
| Lecture 7: |
| Lecture 8: |
| Lecture 9: |
| Lecture 10: |