



# CURRICULUM ON LEADERSHIP

Strand L2: Communications

Level 11

This Strand is composed of the following components:

- A. Listening & Cooperating**
- B. Organizing Your Thoughts
- C. Teaching Effectively



**Think, Listen, Speak, and  
Write to Influence**

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## A. Listening & Cooperating

### OBJECTIVES

#### **DESIRED OUTCOME (Self-Mastery)**

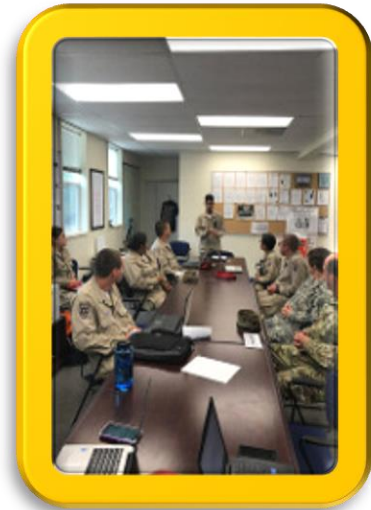
*90% of Unit Cadets are able to effectively listen and communicate with parents, teachers, and peers.*

#### **Plan of Action**

- A1. Know the six components to the HURIER model for effective listening
- A2. Know the five steps to communicating effectively with parents
- A3. Know the seven strategies of communicating effectively with teachers
- A4. Know the ten rules of communicating effectively with peers
- A5. Know the five key questions of media literacy

### A1. Listening Skills

Listening effectively is not a matter of simply hearing what someone has to say. It is an important skill that must be honed and maintained. As a student and throughout our lives, we are expected to spend much of our time listening, which all too often directly affects performance in academics, careers, and leadership. While listening at school greatly affects individual performance, excellent listeners are also incredibly valuable to organizations and businesses. In fact, listening skills provide a great competitive advantage when it comes to job selection, with a great listener being set above the rest due to their ability to absorb and process information, then respond accordingly.

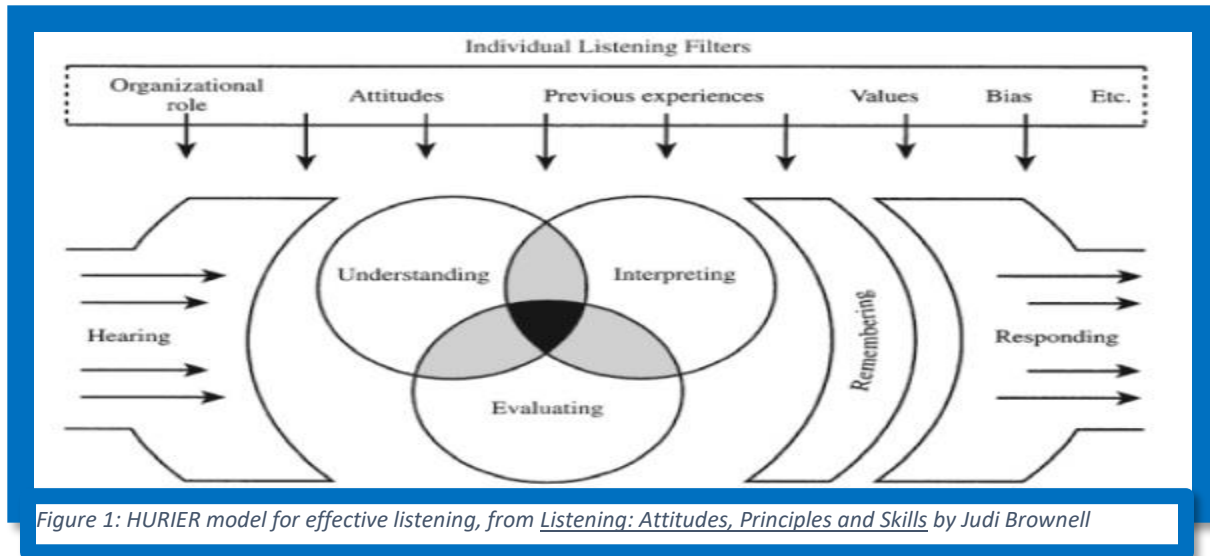


Faulty listening skills have the potential to lead to misunderstood assignments, misinterpreted conversational tones, and even affect the relationship between subordinates and superiors. As Cadets move up in leadership positions, they are required to adapt the way that they communicate with their peers. For example, as a recruit, a Cadet is required to act in a manner that demonstrates high levels of proficiency in followership, listening to the orders given by their superiors, and enacting them **proficiently**. However, as that recruit develops within the program, they will reach higher levels, such as a Cadet First Sergeant, which would require them to not only follow the commander's orders and carry out their intentions, but to do so while leading their subordinates. In order to accomplish this, these Cadets must have a fundamental understanding of basic listening skills.



Learning to listen takes time and consistent effort – you must *choose* to listen. This is often difficult, because listening may conflict with your performance in other areas. In the execution of close order drill, a Cadet who is still learning basic drill movements may have trouble listening to the commands given while also maintaining their **military bearing**.

In order to understand the components of listening, we use the HURIER method. The HURIER method is a six-step process used as framework to build listening skills. The six letters in the HURIER process represent the six interlocked listening processes: hearing, understanding, remembering, **interpreting**, evaluating, and responding. This model is demonstrated in the figure below.



### Hearing

Hearing involves not only the accurate reception of sounds, but focus, discrimination between sounds, and concentration on the information. Hearing is a constant part of daily life. Music, sounds, and surrounding noise all play a part in how we participate in the listening process. Hearing becomes more important in social interactions, as information being portrayed must first be heard to be understood, remembered, interpreted, evaluated, and responded to.

### Understanding

Understanding is a matter of **listening comprehension**. This step involves not only grasping the points of conversation, but in “setting the stage” for the rest of the interaction, especially when it comes to interpreting, evaluating, and responding.

### Remembering

Remembering is vital to retain information as well as to recall past experiences in order to properly utilize information. Remembering interactions and the information that is presented is the most important step in the listening training process.

## CONTEXT

Con·text /'kæntekst/

*noun*

the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed.

### Interpreting

**Interpreting** a message comes in two parts: taking communication **context** into account, and letting the speaker know that they’ve been understood. Taking the **context** into account allows the listener to emphasize and therefore better understand the meaning of the message from the speaker’s point of view.

Nonverbal communication methods, such as facial expressions and body language, play a huge part in how the speaker learns to communicate with the listener.



### *Evaluating*

Evaluating communication involves utilizing your own unique outlook and pre-conceived **perceptions** in order to form or restructure your viewpoint on the subject. Objectivity is key to this listening component, as effective listeners are able to reduce the influence of their own viewpoint until the speaker has presented all of their points and ideas. This

component is especially important to analyze language and propaganda, using these communication skills as a foundation for assessing credibility.

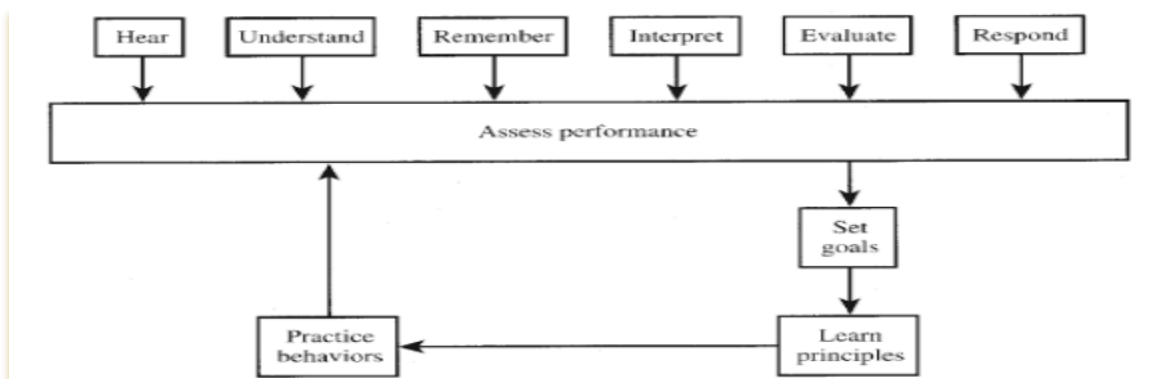
### *Responding*

Responding to the speaker plays a huge part in the way that the speaker interprets your listening skills. Throughout your interaction, the speaker's attitude is affected by their **perception** of your responses. As the HURIER model approaches each participant in the communicative interaction as both speaker and listener, responding becomes an instrumental part of the process and dictates how effective the interaction will be.

Applying the HURIER model is entirely individualized and based on five steps of self-assessment. Below are the steps as outlined by Judi Brownell, a Professor at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, in her book Listening: Attitudes, Principles and Skills.

1. Assess your performance in each of the six skill areas
2. Set personal goals by identifying the component(s) you would like to improve
3. Learn relevant principles
4. Acquire specific skills by practicing your new listening behaviors
5. Be assessed on exactly what you have listened and practiced

This self-assessment process is illustrated in the figure below (Brownell).



## A2. Communicating with Parents

Communicating with Parents can be broken down into five simple steps:

1. Begin to gain their trust and faith in you in the small things.
2. Try to open up to your parents about the things going on in your life.
3. Ask your parents for advice.
4. Be honest with your parents.
5. Remember that your parents have your best interest in mind.

### *Gain trust and faith in the small things*

Gaining your parents' trust and faith comes down to personal **integrity** and **dependability**. Embodying these ideals can be as simple as keeping true to your word when you say that you will be home at a certain hour or checking in when you say you will. It's also a matter of following through on the tasks they ask of you, such as chores. These actions allow parents to instill more trust in you and make them want to give you more freedom.

### *Open up about your life*

Tell your parents about your daily life. Details and intricate happenings are not always necessary, but a general understanding of who your friends are and what you like to do with them will help your parents feel more involved in your life and better connected to you.



### *Ask for advice*

Remember that your parents were teenagers once, too! They've likely faced the same or similar situations that you're going through right now and have the benefit of **hindsight** to analyze how they handled it, and what they could've done better. Asking your parents for advice will also help to improve your relationship by giving them a better understanding of what's going on in your life.

### *Be honest*

Lying is a simple and effective path to shutting down communication and disintegrating relationships. Remember your Cadet Honor Code! "*A Cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.*"

### *Remember that they have your best interest in mind*

Your parents are not plotting against you. They genuinely care, and they want what's best for you. Remember that the rules they put into practice are there for a reason.

Follow these five simple steps to establish a strong, functional line of communication with your parents that will only serve to help you in the future.

### A3. Communicating with Teachers

Communicating with your teachers can be broken down into seven basic strategies.

1. Make eye contact with the teacher as often as possible
2. Let the teacher know if you are having problems understanding material
3. Ask questions *before* assignments are due
4. Think about your non-verbal communication with the teacher
5. Admit your mistakes and make *sincere* apologies
6. Use “I” statements rather than “you” statements
7. Be friendly

#### *Make eye contact*

Don't be afraid to look your teacher in the eye during class, it shows that you're paying attention and focusing on the material that they're teaching. It also allows the teacher to associate with you more and will lay the foundation for a better teacher-student relationship.

#### *Let the teacher know if you don't understand*

If you're having trouble understanding material, tell the teacher right away instead of waiting until it is too late; give them time to help you! Be specific about where you need help, so that the teacher can pinpoint what they need to *clarify* for you.

#### *Ask questions before assignments are due*

Don't wait until the last minute to ask questions about material that may be confusing or difficult for you. Give yourself time to ask the teacher and get feedback before you have to turn in the assignment. This will ensure that the teacher is able to *contribute* more time to help you master the subject.

#### *Think about non-verbal communication*

Your body language communicates a lot to your teacher. Be conscious of negative body language, such as eye-rolling or arm-crossing. Turn your body and head to face the teacher (Remember, eye contact!). If you're given the option to choose your seat, pick a spot at the front of the class. Seats at the front of the class help you to pay better attention and make you less likely to be distracted.





*Admit mistakes and apologize*

If you make a mistake, admit it, and accept the responsibility. Excuses are a waste of energy and will only reflect negatively on you. Apologize **sincerely** and follow through. If you promise to have better behavior, make sure it shows.

*Use "I" statements*

Use "I" statements to communicate your problems and concerns. "I feel this way when you do ..." rather than "you make me feel like..." "I don't understand." rather than "You didn't explain it well." You're explaining your thoughts – not their **adversities**.

*Be friendly*

Greet your teachers by name when you see them. This will help build your relationship with your teachers and increase familiarity, especially at the beginning of the school year. Show an interest in the subject. Keep in mind that even though you may not like the subject, you'll still have to learn it.

#### A4. Communicating with Peers

The first step to leadership is followership. In order to improve those qualities that make you a better follower, you must learn to work effectively with your peers, and therefore communicate effectively with them. Peer-to-peer communication can be broken down into ten steps.

1. Understand your communication style
2. Reflect on how others react to your communications
3. Share the best way for others to communicate with you
4. Communicate on the other person's channel
5. Learn how stress impacts communications
6. Deliver messages at the right moments
7. Use the proper tools
8. Recognize others in a way that makes them feel good
9. Be **empathetic**
10. If the communication falters, don't let it fester

##### *Understand your communication style*

In order to communicate, you must be self-aware and understand your personal approach to communication. Knowing your personal communication style is **integral** to understand how others will interpret your message, especially when you must **accommodate** for communication styles that differ from your own.



##### *Reflect on how others react to your communications*

Consider past conversations and the way that the person(s) you were communicating with interpreted your message. **Contemplate** the aspects of the conversation that were successful as well as the aspects which were unsuccessful. What differences are there? What can you do to improve?

##### *Share the best way for others to communicate with you*

Communication styles are not a physical quality for all to see. In order for others to understand how they can best communicate with you, you must let them know. **Assumptions** can lead to miscommunications or confusion, and therefore severely impact relationships.

##### *Communicate on the other person's channel*

Understand how others like you to share information. There are numerous ways to deliver information (text, email, face-to-face, etc.), and everyone prefers a different delivery method.

Clarify the best method to use with other people in order to establish an effective line of communication.

*Learn how stress impacts communications*

Stress effects how people deliver their messages as well as how they react to communications. Stress is often accompanied by desperation, forcing an urgency to deliver information that may **infringe** on the performance of those around you. Monitor and manage stress to prevent faulty or flawed communication.



*Deliver messages at the right moments*

Learn to read the cues that people show. Non-verbal communication plays a large role in how messages are delivered and received. If you recognize that there could be a better time to communicate with someone, find a better time. Scheduling meetings or sending emails are excellent methods of delivering messages at the right moment.

*Use the proper tools*

The **medium** by which the message is delivered is incredibly important. While some messages may require only a simple email, others may call for a phone call or a formal meeting. Each method can make all the difference in how your message is **perceived**.



*Recognize others in a way that makes them feel good*

Accomplishments call for recognition. This is not only a job for superiors and commanders, but for peers as well. Congratulate your peers when they've done something well, such as earning a ribbon or promotion. This will affect how they react to your communication in the future and help forge relationships.

*Be empathetic*

This rule aligns well with many of those above. Place yourself into the shoes of your peers and understand their emotions and motivators. Share in their accomplishments and recognize their frustrations, remembering to take note of what you can do to improve communication.

*If the communication falters, don't let it fester*

Fix your mistakes. Even the most carefully planned communications can go wrong. Rather than ignoring a situation and hindering future communications, solve the problem.

Relationships with peers determine your effectiveness as a follower and your later influence as a leader. Build relationships and work together to accomplish the overall mission (Lauby).

### A5. Media Literacy

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Media Education:

- involves all communication media, including the printed word & graphics, sound, images, and video delivered on any kind of technology;
- enables an understanding of the communication media used in society and the way media operates in relation to society
- ensures that people learn how to:
  - o analyze, reflect upon and create media texts;
  - o identify the sources, political, social, commercial, and/or cultural interests, and contexts of media texts;
  - o interpret the messages and values offered by the media;
  - o select appropriate media for communicating their own messages or stories and for reaching their intended audience;
  - o gain or demand access to media for both reception and production (UNESCO, 1999, p.273-274 ctd. in Fedorov, 2015).

The Center for Media Literacy outlines five key questions and five corresponding core concepts for media literacy.

#### *Five Key Questions*

1. “Who created this message?”
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?” (Five Key Questions of Media Literacy)

#### *Who created this message?*

Core Concept: All messages are ‘constructed.’

This first step to media literacy **emanates** from understanding the information behind the scenes, as far as the author’s ideas, qualifications, and values. Focusing on the **authorship** behind the message establishes a basis for understanding the underlying meaning in the message.

#### *What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?*

Core Concept: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

This question allows you to delve into the media with an objective outlook, taking into consideration the methods that the author uses to present their information and influence your

opinion. It requires an analysis of **format**, recognizing the structure, flow, and choice words of the media.

*How might different people understand this message differently than me?*

Core Concept: Different people experience the same media message differently.

A key factor to take into account when analyzing media is the desired **audience** that the author was trying to appeal to. Various interpretations of media can create a spectrum of message understanding that deviates from person to person or culture to culture.

*What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?*

Core Concept: Media have embedded values and points of view.

This point is a matter of media **content**. The carefully constructed message that is being distributed is entirely dependent on the information that the author chooses to include or exclude. Often, this is a matter of differentiating between author opinions, generalizations, and stereotypes.

*Why is this message being sent?*

Core Concept: Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

The focus in this concept is the message's **purpose**. The content motives behind the message are just as important as the message itself. Whether the author writes to persuade, inform, or entertain, it is important understand the motivation behind the message (Five Key Questions of Media Literacy).

## References

Brownell, Judi. *Listening: Attitudes, Principles, and Skills*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2016.

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