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Speaking and Listening Dos and Don'ts

We help our students understand and practice general presentation skills through an activity we call *speaking and listening dos and don'ts*. We usually spread this lesson out among two class periods.

We first ask students to create a simple T-chart by folding a piece of paper in half and labeling one side *Do* and the other side *Don't*. We then post *Figure 30.2: Speaking Dos and Don'ts* on the document camera and display the first statement (the rest we cover with a blank sheet of paper).

We read the first statement “Make eye contact with the audience” and ask students if this is something they want to *do* when they are giving a presentation or if it is something they *don't* want to do. Students write the statement where they think it belongs—under the *Do* column or *Don't* Column. Students then share their answer with a partner and discuss *why* they put it in that column. After calling on a few pairs to share with the class, we move down the list repeating the same process of categorizing each statement as a *do* or a *don't*. Students write it on their chart and discuss why it should be placed there.

After categorizing the statements for speaking, we give students *Figure 30.3: Listening Dos and Don'ts*. We tell students to work in pairs to categorize the statements as something they *do* or something they *don't* want to do when listening to a student presentation. This time, we ask students to make a quick poster with the headings *Dos* and *Don'ts* for listening. Under each heading students must list the corresponding statements—the teacher can circulate to check for accuracy.

Students are asked to talk about why each statement belongs in each category and should be prepared to share their reasoning with the class. Students must also choose one *do* statement and one *don't* statement to illustrate on their poster. Students can present their posters in small groups or with the whole class. This serves as a great opportunity to apply the speaking and listening *dos* they just reviewed and heightens their awareness of the *don'ts*!

A fun twist, which also serves as a good review on a subsequent day, is to ask groups of students to pick two or three *dos* and *don'ts* from speaking and listening to act out in front of the class.

Figure 30.2

Speaking Dos and Don'ts

- Make eye contact with the audience.
- Mumble or whisper so only the people in front can hear.
- Apologize for making mistakes.
- Look down at the floor or look at the ceiling.
- Speak loud enough to be heard clearly by everyone in the room.
- Read my notes to the audience.
- Stand up straight and face my audience.
- Chew gum.
- Speak to the audience, looking at my notes only when needed.
- Turn my back on the audience.
- Relax and remember everyone makes mistakes when they are learning.
- Speak very quickly.

Figure 30.3

Listening Dos and Don'ts

- Look at the speaker and lean in.
- Look down at my phone or put my head down.
- Laugh when the speaker makes a mistake.
- Interrupt the speaker to share a comment or ask a question.
- Turn my body toward the speaker.
- Talk to other students while the speaker is presenting.
- Let the speaker know I am understanding their words by nodding my head.