MODULE 1

INTRODUCTION TO LISTENING

MODULE OBJECTIVES
This module is aimed at:

(i) Introducing students to listening skills
(ii) Discussing the importance of listening in communication

LEARNING OUTCOMES
At the end of this module, students should be able to determine the reasons for listening and how to listen effectively, with more focus on academic listening. In addition, students must be able to clearly identify the difference between hearing and listening. Lastly, they should clearly state the importance of listening as a communication skill.

MODULE 1: UNIT 1
DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

What is Listening?
Listening test!

Introduction

Communication has been defined as a continuous process of meaningful interaction between two or more people who are trying to inform or persuade each other. This implies that while one person is speaking, the other person is expected to listen. Later on, the listener become the speaker and vice versa. This is referred to as turn-taking. Therefore, one major characteristics of a good communicator is in his/her ability to listen. That is, a poor listener is as good as a poor communicator. Hence, it will be impossible to achieve our communication objectives without listening to others.

There are about 4 major communication skills which are further subdivided into 2.

1. Expressive skills, which allows people to be able to express themselves properly. These skills are the **writing and speaking skills**
2. Receptive skills, which allows people to be able to internalize information (messages). These skills include **listening and reading**
What is Listening?

Listening is a receptive communication skill that involves the process of creating meaning through understanding and interpretation of messages in a communication process. Listening is also a process of receiving, interpreting and reacting to the messages received from the communication sender. Like every other communication skill, listening is an art that must be cultivated consciously and carefully. Listening involves active efforts of interpreting the sounds, verbal and non-verbal cues as well as the ability to retain information and respond or react to the message.

There is a difference between listening and hearing. Hearing refers to the sounds that enter the ears. It is a physical process that is passive and unconscious. Hearing helps you to perceive sound. You can often hear even when you do not want to. Listening, on the other hand, is an active and deliberate activity. Listening begins with hearing, but goes beyond hearing. An active listener pays attention to the language, tone and body language of what is being said. Active listening process begins when the listener pays attention to the verbal and non-verbal messages and also interprets the message. Listening requires focus and concerted efforts, sometimes mental and physical efforts. Listening brings about a pleasant and productive conversation. Therefore, listening skills are learnt and developed over time.

Listening is important to an effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are not properly understood, which can lead to misunderstanding.

Diagram based on the research of Adler, R; Rosenfeld, L. and Proctor, R. (2001). Interplay: the process of interpersonal Communication (8th Ed), Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt
According to the diagram, adults spend an average of 70% of their time in some communication activity. They are either reading, speaking, writing or listening. Research further shows that an average of 45% of this time is spent on listening compared to 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing.