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Look and listen

This session will explore the first LEADS strategy: **Look and Listen**. WITS **LEADerS** are those who effectively look and intently listen to others. How we look and listen is influenced by our feelings and impressions of the person or experience. It is important that we are aware of our thoughts and feelings when we encounter a new person or situation.

Introduction

To begin, show students the LEADS poster (see witsprogram.ca/pdfs/schools/media-resources/witsleadsposter.pdf), and introduce the first strategy: **Look and listen**. Discuss the following questions:

1. What does it mean to take a close look at something or someone? *Take time to look longer and pay close attention. Block out the distractions of other things you see.*
2. What are some ways we can actively listen to others? *Introduce the Whole Body Listening poster (see witsprogram.ca/pdfs/schools/media-resources/whole-body-listening-poster.pdf).*

Activities

Each activity in this segment will take one or two classes to complete. Activities are divided into three levels:

- **GETTING STARTED:** Suitable for students being introduced to LEADS for the first time
- **NEXT STEP:** Used to reinforce LEADS strategies that have been introduced in a previous session or year
- **REINFORCEMENT:** Suitable for students who have been using the LEADS Programs for two or more years

GETTING STARTED ACTIVITIES

Complete one of the Getting Started Activities below and then read the book *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson. Use the questions and activities in the book's associated lesson plan (see witsprogram.ca/schools/books/each-kindness.php) to reinforce the **Look and listen** strategy.



IMPORTANT IDEAS: What is happening when we look at an object?

The brain processes the information taken in by the eyes. What we “think” we see is affected by patterns our brain has received in the past. This is called “perception.” To create new perceptions or patterns our brain sometimes needs more time to take in and reorganize the information collected by our eyes and other senses. Reorganizing thinking patterns is important when we meet new people or have new experiences. Our brain will begin to make sense of the patterns we are seeing, hearing, feeling and even smelling, but it can sometimes take a little longer to fully understand the meaning of this information.



1. WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Materials

- [What Do You See? handout](#) (see page 6)

Exercise

Distribute or project the [What Do You See? handout](#) to students. Ask them to look at each of the pictures and describe what they see at first glance and then what they see the longer they look at each picture. Use the key below to identify the different images depicted in each illustration:

- A. *There is an apple core and the profile of two faces.*
- B. *The picture is of a woman, trees, and a face.*
- C. *A picture of a man and, when the picture is rotated, of a dog.*

Discussion

1. What happens when we look a little longer at each of the pictures? *We see something different.*
2. What happened when we didn't see the other images immediately? *Other people pointed out and described the different images that they saw. This may have helped us see all the images in the pictures.*



2. LOOKING FOR THE DETAILS

Exercise

Group children in teams of three or four. Pick one volunteer to stand at the front of the room for one minute while the others observe him or her. Ask the child volunteer to leave the room and then give the students two minutes to write down as many observations about the child as they can. *Examples include:*

- *What colour is the child's hair?*
- *What kind of clothing is the child wearing?*
- *What colour are his or her eyes?*
- *Was the child wearing any accessories (bracelet, necklace, watch, etc.)?*
- *What kind of shoes did the child have on?*
- *How was the child feeling (angry, scared, happy, excited, etc.)?*

Discuss what was easy to remember and what was difficult to recall.

Play the game again, but this time ask students to carefully observe details about the person before he or she leaves the room. How was the observation process different this time? *Possible answers:*

- *I paid attention to the details of the person's form and clothing.*
- *I looked at the expression on the person's face.*
- *I blocked out other things I see in the room to focus on the person.*



WHAT KIDS SAY: Why is looking important?

- "We can see how they're feeling."
- "To actually hear them."
- "Eye contact and paying attention."
- "To concentrate on what they are saying."
- "When looking, we know how serious they are in telling us information."

NEXT STEP ACTIVITIES



1. LOOKING BEYOND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Materials

- [First Impressions Questions handout](#) (see page 7)
- [First Impressions Photos handout](#) (see page 8)
- [First Impressions Biographies handout](#) (see page 9)

Exercise

First impressions are judgments we make about people based upon their appearances and our first guesses about them. In this activity, students will be creating a first impression description of someone based solely on a photo.

Organize students in groups of three or four. Distribute a copy of the [First Impressions Questions handout](#) and the [First Impression Photos handout](#) to each group. Ask students to guess the answers to the questions based on their first impressions about each photo.

Ask students to share their first impressions with another group or the whole class.

Discussion

Read aloud the real biographies from the [First Impression Biography handout](#) and have each group compare their first impressions to the person's real life story. What did they miss by using only their first impressions to judge someone? Have them re-answer question 5 now that they know the person's true situation.

Extension Activity

Ask students to write a quick reflection on how easy or difficult it was to create the first impression descriptions. What clues did they rely on? What have they learned from this activity?



2. FLASH JUDGMENTS

Exercise

First impressions are judgments that we make about people based upon their appearances and our first guesses about them. Sometimes these impressions happen "in a flash" without you even realizing it.

Have students respond in writing to the following prompts:

1. Think of a time when someone (or a group of people) made a flash judgment about you. Describe what happened and how it made you feel.
2. Describe a time when you made a flash judgment about someone else. What did you base your flash judgment on? Did your flash judgment change? If yes, why did it change?

Discussion

Ask students to share their reflections in small groups or through a classroom discussion. Ask them to discuss the commonalities among their experiences and the emotions that come up when someone is judged "in a flash."

Ask students to brainstorm a few strategies to use to be aware of their own tendencies when they make flash judgments about someone. How can they work on not being so quick to form an opinion? Create a list of strategies on the board or have them do this in small groups.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES



1. LISTENING FOR DETAILS

Exercise

This activity is an exercise in developing active listening skills. Ask students to write the lyrics of a favorite song or the text from a favourite poem or quotation on a piece of paper. On a second copy, ask students to rewrite the text and to change the words in a number of places within the text. Tell them how many changes they should make.

Organize the students into small groups of four. Ask each student to read aloud their passage twice – once with the original words and the second time with the changed words. Ask the listeners to identify which words were changed from the original by writing their answers on a separate piece of paper. Ask the listeners to compare their answers with the objective of identifying the new words in the second reading. After the small group discussion, the speaker may share the “answers” - the words that were changed in the second reading.

Discussion

1. What strategies did you use to identify the words that had changed?
2. What did you hear in the speaker’s voice that helped you identify a changed word?
3. What did you see in the speaker’s facial expression that identified a changed word?
4. What was challenging about the exercise?



2. BLOCKS TO LISTENING

Materials

- Blocks to Listening poster (see witsprogram.ca/pdfs/schools/media-resources/blocks-to-listening-poster.pdf)
- [Blocks to Listening Reflection handout](#) (see pages 10-12)

Exercise

Show the Blocks to Listening poster to students and use this brief introduction to help students think about the blocks illustrated in the poster: Listening to other people sounds easy, but in reality it is one of the most difficult aspects of good communication. It means understanding the blocks that may stop you from listening effectively to others. These illustrated blocks will help you think about barriers you may face when trying to listen to others.

Read aloud the descriptions on the poster. While reading aloud the descriptions ask students to think about times when they were daydreaming, rehearsing, filtering, judging, or feeling distracted when trying to listen to someone else.

Distribute the [Blocks to Listening Reflection handout](#) and ask students to answer the questions about each of the blocks.

Discussion

When students have finished writing their reflections ask them to discuss in small groups. After the small group discussions ask students if they noticed any patterns with the communication blocks they explored and discussed.

Notes:

Look and listen: What Do You See?

What do you see when you first look at the images below? What do you see when you continue looking at the images?

A



B



C



Images from
123opticalillusions.com
moillusions.com
anopticalillusion.com

Look and listen: First Impressions Questions

Name(s): _____

1. Who is this person? Give the person a name, ethnic heritage, age, occupation, educational background, etc.

2. Where does this person live? Where did this person grow up?

3. What kind of hobbies does this person have? What is the most notable thing this person has done in his/her life?

4. What are his/her biggest challenges?

5. Could this person be a potential friend of yours? Explain why or why not.

Look and listen: First Impressions Photos

A



Photo source: vigorevents.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/0013729e4abe0bb65a83431.jpg

B



Photo source: contactmusic.com/pics/ln/20130613/130613_make_a_wish_foundation_gala/bethany-hamilton-make-a-wish-foundation-gala_3719141.jpg

C



Photo source: speakerpedia.com/speakers/easton-lachappelle

D



Photo source: lookoutnewspaper.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Navy-Run-family.jpg

Look and listen: First Impressions Biographies

A. NICHOLAS "NICK" VUJICIC was born with tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare disorder characterized by the absence of all four limbs. He grew up in South Africa and graduated from Griffith University at 21 with a Bachelor of Commerce. He is an actor, writer, and motivational speaker, travelling internationally and focusing on teen issues. Having addressed over three million people in over 24 countries on five continents, he speaks to corporate audiences, congregations, and schools. His hobbies include swimming, fishing, and surfing. He is married and has a young boy. Watch a video clip of Vujicic at youtube.com/watch?v=XKTg_INHgpc.

C. EASTON LACHAPELLE is a 17-year old high school student from Mancos, Colorado, who is using free online resources and 3D printers to develop a functional prosthetic arm and hand. His projects earned him an invitation to the White House, and he's now working at NASA on the Robonaut team. His hometown of Mancos is a small town with a population of 1,200. The nearest Radio Shack is 30 minutes away. He likes it, he says, but as a kid found there wasn't much to do except ride a bike, and, in his case, "take apart most everything" that had pieces or a motor. "It was good that I was forced into boredom and trying to figure out something else to do." His hobbies include playing with Lego (he built his first robotic hand with it) and biking. Watch Easton's TEDX talk at youtube.com/watch?v=CfmNXPMjChs

B. BETHANY HAMILTON was born in Hawaii and started surfing when she was just a child. At age 13, an almost-deadly shark attack resulted in her losing her left arm. She was back on her surfboard one month later. Two years after that, she won first place in the Explorer Women's Division of the NSSA National Championships. She wrote about her experience in the 2004 autobiography *Soul Surfer: A True Story of Faith, Family, and Fighting to Get Back on the Board*. In April 2011, the feature film *Soul Surfer* was released, based on the book. Her hobbies include cooking and running.

D. KALLIANA "KALLI" KING lives in Cowichan Bay, BC. In 2009, at the age of 8, she came home from school and asked her mother if she could shave her head to raise funds for Muscular Dystrophy. To begin fundraising Kalli wrote the following letter: "Hi, I'm Kalli King. I'm eight years old and I would like to cut off all my hair for Muscular Dystrophy because my friend Adam Sohye has MD and he is in a wheelchair. So I am going to raise money for all of those kids who have MD. I hope I raise a lot of money for those kids in need." Kalli was as good as her word, going to family, friends, teachers, and classmates to raise money. She raised \$14,600 from her small community. Each year she spends her free time thinking of other ways to raise money for this important cause.

Look and listen: Blocks to Listening Reflection

Daydreaming

In what situations do you find yourself daydreaming?	When you find yourself daydreaming, with whom are you talking in your dream?
When you find yourself daydreaming, what is the conversation about?	When you are daydreaming, how do you feel about the other person?

Rehearsing

In what situations do you find yourself rehearsing?	When you find yourself rehearsing, with whom are you talking?
When you find yourself rehearsing, what is the conversation about?	When you are rehearsing, how do you feel about the other person?

Filtering

<p>In what situations do you find yourself filtering conversations?</p>	<p>When you find yourself filtering conversations, with whom are you talking?</p>
<p>When you find yourself filtering conversations, what is the conversation about?</p>	<p>When you are filtering conversations, how do you feel about the other person?</p>

Judging

<p>In what situations do you find yourself judging?</p>	<p>When you find yourself judging, with whom are you talking?</p>
<p>When you find yourself judging, what is the conversation about?</p>	<p>When you are judging, how do you feel about the other person?</p>

Distractions

<p>In what situations do you find yourself distracted?</p>	<p>When you find yourself getting distracted, with whom are you talking?</p>
<p>When you find yourself getting distracted, what is the conversation about?</p>	<p>When you are distracted, how do you feel about the other person?</p>

Adapted from *The Communication Skills Workbook: Self-Assessments, Exercises & Educational Handouts* by Ester A. Leutenberg and John J. Liptak