FOCUS: A Learning Strategy for Listening

Good learners are strategic, meaning that they possess a variety of ways to meet cognitive challenges. Good listeners use strategies that improve their performance when they are asked to listen.

**FOCUS** is the mnemonic developed to outline this learning strategy. Each key word is an action verb that cues students on what to do.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Memory Device</th>
<th>Intended Associations</th>
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| **Focus on speaker** | F1. Eyes and mind on the speaker.  
                         F2. Resist talking to your neighbors.  
                         F3. Keep your hands and feet quiet. |
| **Open your mind** | O1. Clear your mind of distracting thoughts. (Ignore distractions)  
                         O2. Be ready to learn and remember.  
                         O3. Set your mind on the subject.  
                         O4. “Your brain is like a parachute. It only works when it’s open.”  
                         O5. Think about what is being said.       |
| **Connect**      | C1. Try to relate what you are hearing to things that you already know and are related to the lesson.  
                         C2. Create a picture in your mind of the new information.  
                         C3. Listen to other students’ related comments. |
| **Use your eyes** | U1. Pay attention to the book, chalk board, worksheets, overheads, or other visual materials. |
| **Select**       | S1. Select the important parts so you know what to remember.  
                         S2. Say the important parts to yourself in your own words.  
                         S3. Ask questions to make sure you understand. |