

Now I ask you men to look at it with me. Sixteen percent of our communication time we read. Three thousand researches tell us how to read better. Forty-five percent of our communication time we listen, and 14 years ago there was but one really important research with the word "listening" in its title.

But a very dramatic decade has just passed. Today most of our notable universities are teaching listening under that label. More importantly, they are doing graduate-level research in the territory. We have ground out 125 Ph. D.'s in the past 10 years alone in the field of listening comprehension. Scores of industries have instituted their own listen-training programs. Three departments of the Federal Government have followed suit. And it is very gratifying to me to report that every branch of the military services, at least for selected officer personnel, now has some listening training for their people.

In view of this sudden surge of interest in effective listening, essentially developing in 10-years' time only, this morning I should like to raise just two questions with you gentlemen and very closely pursue answers to them.

Question No. 1: Is bad listening a problem? Well, it certainly is in school. The first man to throw light on it there was Professor Harry Jones of Columbia University. Several years ago, one fall, he was placed in charge of all the beginning sections in psychology for freshmen at Columbia. He had 486 youngsters enrolled in these sections. He made it his practice one day each week to bunch up this population of freshman, give them an important weekly lecture, and then immediately test their comprehension over what he had said. Every time he did this he got more and more depressed. It just did not seem to him that he was getting much of anything through to the brains of these freshmen.

But he hit upon a very novel idea for an experiment. He talked 50 of his colleagues on the faculty at Columbia into cooperating with him. Each professor represented a different subject-matter field. Each professor promised to come in and give a 10-minute cutting of his own, favorite lecture in his own subject-matter territory, to Jones's freshman population. Furthermore, each professor submitted this 10-minute excerpt to Jones ahead of time, who painstakingly built an objective test over its content.