

Walk the Line

Listening strategy focus:

Adjusting/checking, connecting, self-questioning, visualising

What is it?

Walk the Line is a physical activity that requires the listener to change physical position, posture or body part orientation to signal a personal response to a spoken text. Students are forced to reflect on their own understanding, make judgments about the spoken text, and justify their opinion.

Why use it?

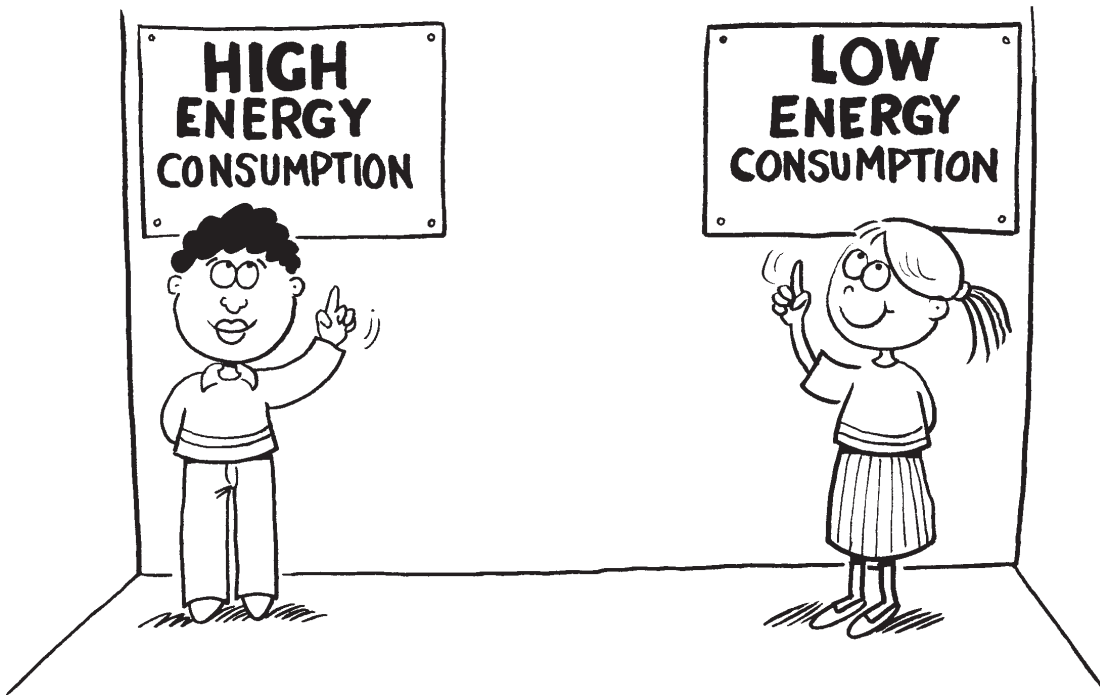
Effective listeners reflect on their own understanding and value judgments as they listen. This enables them to summarise their understandings and beliefs in preparation for using the spoken information or responding to the speaker.

How do you use it?

1. Prior to a spoken text, students are provided with a breakdown of the existing floor space. This could be a continuum, with opposites at each end, a set of axes with four designated zones, a target, with concentric circles, or any other arrangement that provides degrees of distinction. For example, a simple continuum could be agree/disagree, true/false or even understand/don't understand.
2. A number of students are selected to physically orient themselves, according to their reactions to the spoken text, moving as their reactions change. A spoken text may be made up of a series of related statements, and the positions of the students may change with each statement. For example, a new process being explained in science may result in four out of six students moving towards the 'don't understand' end of the continuum following the delivery of part of the explanation. This enables the speaker (who need not always be the teacher) to be clear about what part of the message is unclear.
3. The speaker may choose to amend the spoken text as it is delivered, or the audience may simply observe the weighting and variations in the reactions of their peers.

Possible adaptations:

- Where space and time is limited, or students are difficult to manage, students may simply be asked to use a range of body language to indicate shifts in reactions. For example, two hands skyward means agree; two hands outstretched horizontally means disagree.



Where and how could I use this Tactical Teaching Activity in my learning area?