

ERASMUS+

SECTOR SKILLS ALLIANCES

Mu.SA: Museum Sector Alliance

575907-EEP-1-2016-1-EL-EPPKA2-SSA

[www.project-musa.eu](http://www.project-musa.eu)



**MuSA**  
museum sector alliance

**W23.1.1.c**

**ACTIVE EMPATHIC LISTENING  
APPROACH**

**LEA WALTER - MELTING PRO**



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

ERASMUS+

Mu.SA: Museum Sector Alliance

SECTOR SKILLS ALLIANCES

575907-EEP-1-2016-1-EL-EPPKA2-SSA

[www.project-musa.eu](http://www.project-musa.eu)

Module:	W23.1 Active Listening
Unit:	W23.1.1 Active Listening: what it is and how to practice it
Learning Object:	W23.1.1.c Active Empathic Listening (AEL)" Approach
Author:	Lea Walter - Melting Pro
Technical Reviewer:	Christos Pierrakeas (HOU – Hellenic Open University), Panagiota Polymeropoulou (HOU – Hellenic Open University)
Scientific Reviewer:	Ana Carvalho, ICOM Portugal
Abstract:	This learning object illustrates the "Active Empathic Listening (AEL)" Approach developed by Drollinger et al. (2006) as a method to help workers to assess their level of active listening skills. Active listening is only part of the skills. Active empathic listening shows that you also understand what's going on inside the mind of the speaker as if you were that person.
Keywords:	Active Empathic listening, AEL - Approach



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The document created in 2018 for the project Mu.SA – Museum Sector Alliance, funded under the Erasmus+/KA3 programme (project number 575907-EEP-1-2016-1-EL-EPPKA2-SSA).



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute endorsement of the contents which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Layout design:

DAISSY research group, Hellenic Open University  
(<http://daissy.eap.gr>)

Project coordinator:



Project partners:



More information about the project:

 [www.project-musa.eu](http://www.project-musa.eu)

 [musa@daissy.eap.gr](mailto:musa@daissy.eap.gr)

 @MuseumSectorAlliance

 #MuseumSectorAlliance



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## **Aim and objectives**

This learning object illustrates the “Active Empathic Listening (AEL)” Approach developed by Drollinger et al. (2006) as a method to help workers to assess their level of active listening skills. Active listening is only part of the skills. Active empathic listening shows that you also understand what's going on inside the mind of the speaker as if you were that person.

## **Learning outcomes**

After studying this resource, you will be able to: illustrate the principle of active empathic listening.

## **Keywords**

Active Empathic listening, AEL - Approach



## Contents

1. Introduction .....	6
2. Active Empathic Listening (AEL) Approach .....	6
3. List of references .....	8
4. Further reading .....	8
5. Glossary .....	8



## 1. Introduction

The **“Active Empathic Listening (AEL)” Approach** was developed by Drollinger et al. (2006). It is a method to help workers to assess their level of active listening skills. Active listening is only part of the skills. **Active empathic listening** means that you also understand what's going on inside the mind of the speaker as if you were that person.

## 2. Active Empathic Listening (AEL) Approach

Lastly, we would like to introduce the **“Active Empathic Listening (AEL)” Approach** developed by Drollinger et al. (2006) as a method to help workers to assess their level of active listening skills.

The AEL has eleven key items that **indicate how well you sense, process, and respond when you listen to a communication partner**. The eleven items break down into three scales representing the three stages you need to go through in order to be an effective empathic listener.

Active listening is only part of the skills. Active empathic listening shows that you also **understand what's going on inside the mind of the speaker as if you were that person**. It is a concept that traces back to the client-centered approach of the well-known psychologist Carl Rogers. When you're empathically listening, **you do more than hear, you show that you know how the other person feels**.

The three stages of AEL involve **sensing, processing, and responding in empathic ways**.

In the **sensing stage**, you indicate that you are taking in all of the outward and inward features of another person's communication.



Empathically sensing means that **you understand not only what is said but how it is said.**

In the **processing stage**, you put the pieces of the conversation together to construct a **"narrative whole" that provides you with the essence of what is being communicated.**

Finally, in the **responding stage**, you ask questions to make sure **you understand what the person is saying.** You also show, verbally and nonverbally, that you are paying attention to the speaker.

With this background, see how you rate on the AEL's three subscales:

Sensing:

1. How sensitive are you to what others are saying?
2. Are you aware of what others imply but do not say?
3. Do you understand how others feel?
4. Do you listen for more than the spoken words?

Processing:

5. Do you assure other that you'll remember what they say?
6. Do you summarize points of agreement and disagreement when appropriate?
7. Do you keep track of the points that others make?

Responding:

8. Do you assure others that you're listening by verbal acknowledgements?
  9. Do you assure others that you're receptive to their ideas?
  10. Do you ask questions that show you understand others' positions?
- 



11. Do you show others that you're listening by your body language?

These items all are scored positively so that a "yes" gives you a score of plus 1. In the actual scale, you would rate yourself on a 1-7 scale of never to always true.

A quick check of the number of plusses you received out of 11 will show you how you stand on the AEL overall, and as you look at the subscales, where you need to work on your empathic listening more specifically.

### 3. List of references

Drollinger, T., Comer, L. B., & Warrington, P. T., "Development and Validation of the Active Empathetic Listening Scale." *Psychology and Marketing*, 23, pp. 161-180, 2006.

### 4. Further reading

Elif M. Gokcigdem, *Fostering Empathy Through Museums*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016.

### 5. Glossary

**Active Empathic listening:** when you're empathically listening, you do more than hear, you show that you know how the other person feels.

**AEL – Approach:** the "Active Empathic Listening (AEL)" Approach was developed by Drollinger et al. (2006) as a method to help workers to assess their level of active listening skills. The three stages of AEL involve sensing, processing, and responding.

