

# THE LISTENING PROJECT



## PURPOSE

*The Listening Project* is a professional development community of Tufts faculty members and graduate students with teaching responsibilities in the natural sciences and mathematics.

It formed in response to a challenge framed by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute for U.S. colleges and universities to "substantially and sustainably increase their capacity for inclusion of all students, especially those students who belong to groups underrepresented in science."<sup>1</sup>

*The Listening Project* is designed to support instructors in welcoming students to the learning process by eliciting and engaging with students' thinking. It is based on the premise that all students can exhibit productive beginnings of meaningful disciplinary thinking, and that it is our responsibility as instructors to create an environment in which students are equitably supported in developing as disciplinary thinkers.

## BENEFITS

Through practice in a relatively relaxed atmosphere, and with the help of colleagues from different disciplines, we

- **Improve our skill at listening to students' disciplinary thinking** in-the-moment (i.e. during class discussions and while giving feedback or grades for written work)
- **Learn about our students' disciplinary thinking**, becoming better informed for supporting its development
- **Support each other** in making listening to students' disciplinary thinking a more substantive part of our teaching

Our students benefit too: when we give them a chance to express their thinking, and when we engage seriously with it, they learn better and feel more welcome, in class and in the discipline.

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Across a full academic year, Tufts faculty and graduate students in the natural sciences and mathematics meet regularly to consider data from our own classes — excerpts from video-recordings and samples of students' written work.

We explore these data for what they have to say about what disciplinary ideas students may be expressing and how students may be approaching learning in our courses. We consider possible implications for instructional moves, in the specific context of a given interchange and more generally.

Activity occurs across three different settings:

- Each semester kicks off with a 120-minute gathering of the **full cohort**.
- Participants are **paired with peers** from other disciplines with whom they meet for 90 minutes, four times per semester.
- **Larger groups** (of 8-10 participants) meet for 90 minutes, four times per semester.

## REQUIREMENTS

Now recruiting our third cohort, *The Listening Project* welcomes **Tufts faculty and graduate students from the natural sciences and mathematics** who will be teaching during the upcoming academic year and can allocate **14 hours per semester** for the full academic year.

Participants receive a stipend for their time.

In AY2021-22, participants will have the option of participating virtually.

For more information or to register:

**[listeningproject@tufts.edu](mailto:listeningproject@tufts.edu)**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhmi.org/science-education/programs/inclusive-excellence>

