

**S V COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING****II B.TECH-II SEM****SOFT SKILLS (EG20ASO401)****UNIT-II CRITICAL THINKING****Active Listening Skills: Definition and Examples**

Active listening is the ability to focus completely on a speaker, understand their message, comprehend the information and respond thoughtfully. Unlike passive listening, which is the act of hearing a speaker without retaining their message, this highly valued interpersonal communication skill ensures you're able to engage and later recall specific details without needing information repeated.

Active listeners use verbal and non-verbal techniques to show and keep their attention on the speaker. This not only supports your ability to focus but also helps ensure the speaker can see that you are focused and engaged. Instead of thinking about and mentally rehearsing what you might say when the speaker is done, an active listener carefully considers the speaker's words and commits the information to memory.

**Why is active listening important in the workplace?**

Whether you're seeking a new job opportunity, striving to earn a promotion or working to improve in your current role, improving your active listening skills will help you succeed. Much like critical thinking and conflict resolution, this soft skill will help increase your value as an employee.

**Here are several benefits of being an active listener:****1) It helps you build connections**

Active listening helps others feel comfortable sharing information with you. When you demonstrate your ability to sincerely listen to what others have to say, people will be more interested in communicating with you on a regular basis. This can help open up opportunities to collaborate with others, get work done quickly or start new projects. All of these things can help lead you to success in your career.

**2) It helps you build trust**

When people know they can speak freely to you without interruptions, judgement or unwelcome interjections, they'll be more likely to confide in you. This is especially helpful when meeting a new customer or business contact with whom you want to develop a long-term working relationship.

**“Believe in yourself not as what you are, but as what you can be.”**

**3) It helps you identify and solve problems**

Actively listening to others will help you detect challenges and difficulties others are facing or problems within projects. The more quickly you're able to spot these issues, the sooner you can find a solution or create a plan to address it.

**4) It helps you increase your knowledge and understanding of various topics**

Great employees are always striving to learn something new and grow their knowledge base. Because active listening helps you retain information, it will also help you better understand new topics and remember what you've learned so you can apply it in the future.

**5) It helps you avoid missing critical information**

Because active listeners are highly engaged with the speaker, they're able to recall specific details. This is especially important when the speaker is proving instructions, training you on a new process or delivering a message you're responsible for passing along to others.

**Observation**

Observational listening trains the listener to let go of his or her own goals and intentions and concentrate on the reactions evoked. In other words, the listener tries to find out what the question meant to the other. In this way, the listener will “get it”, and be able to bring depth into the conversation in a natural way, without resorting to tricks.

It means that the listener observes the reactions of his or her conversational partner during the conversation. And to be able to correctly ‘read’ these responses and judge their value, it helps to know a little more about emotions.

**Curiosity**

Curiosity means a strong desire to know or learn something. The sense of curiosity creates an innovative mind to know new things and creates a sense of discovery. When we listen with curiosity we don't listen with the intent to reply or respond to the speaker. We listen to understand and interpret the speaker's words.

Listening with curiosity is really listening to what another person is saying, not to our inner chatter, not to have the answers in the mind, asking questions with curiosity which will make us explore and it is for empowering the human thoughts.

**There are some benefits for listening with curiosity:**

- It creates openness for more dialogue and possibilities.
- It creates a safe environment to be honest by removing judgement.
- It is empowering as it respects the thoughts, ideas, feelings and opinions of others.

**For example:**

When you were a child, there is a sense of curiosity, everything is new and there is a sense of discovery.

**Introspection**

Introspection is the examination of one's own conscious thoughts and feelings. In psychology, the process of introspection relies on the observation of one's mental state, while in a spiritual context it may refer to the examination of one's soul. It is closely related to human self-reflection and self-discovery and is contrasted with external observation.

**Analytical Thinking**

Must be able to **identify and define problems**, extract key information from data and develop workable solutions for the problems identified in order to test and verify the cause of the problem and develop solutions to resolve the problems identified.

**Steps in the Analytical Thinking Process to Solve Problems**

- Gather Information.
- Break Down Information into Parts
- Examine the Parts to Find Connections and Relationships.
- Formulate Theories.
- Test Theories.
- Develop Possible Solutions.
- Evaluate Solutions.

**Open-mindedness**

Being open-minded means welcoming new ideas, arguments, and information that you typically do not align with. Open-mindedness is a positive character quality and it enables those who use it to think critically and rationally. It is so important to be able to step out of your comfort zone and consider other ideas and perspectives, especially in this day and age.

### Importance Of Open-Mindedness

- Open-mindedness is not easy and requires concentration so as not to lead to cognitive dissonance when learning new thoughts that conflict with existing beliefs. Being able to change outdated or incorrect beliefs is an important part of learning and personal growth. This all stems from learning and unlearning close-minded behaviors. When a person is close-minded, they typically are not unwilling to accept or even think about anyone's viewpoints but their own.
- Being close-minded could lead to unwanted thoughts and behaviors that in turn lead to arguments and eventually resentment. Do you see the rabbit hole that close-minded people dig them into? This is where compassion comes in. Having compassion during arguments where one or both people are closed off to the other's goals, viewpoints and ideas is not an argument at all. It's a power struggle. This is where one person fights to make the other person see things from a certain point of view, the "right" point of view, aka, their point of view.
- With compassion, both people should come together in an argument and make a sincere effort to understand how the other person feels, the importance of the other person's beliefs/goals, and to empathize with one another. If both people are showing compassion for one another, then both people will be able to resolve a disagreement and creates a more open-minded conversation that can include new talking points and outside ideas that might not have come about when people are arguing out of anger leading to deeper connections in your relationships with others.
- The main goal here is to try to understand one another by being open-minded and showing compassion. Both will take practice, but with assertive communication, disagreements, where people have an open mind and are showing compassion, will lead to both parties feeling understood, important and valuable.

So what are the benefits of being open-minded and using compassion?

- Gaining greater insight into new ideas and topics you otherwise would not have
  - Having new, exciting experiences
  - Achieving personal growth
  - Becoming Mentally Strong
  - Ditching the glass half empty negative vibe
  - Continued learning – hey this also keeps your brain young!
- Being open-minded can take some time to accomplish as it takes practice and a deep look into one's self to understand where those thoughts and beliefs come from in the first place. Using compassion also takes some work, and most likely doesn't come naturally, but once you get the hang of it, you step back and assess each disagreement as they come, and approach with kindness, caution, and respect, you will achieve so much more than those who fight out of anger that leads to resentment.

### CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking is a skill which lets you consider things from a fresh perspective and different angles. It's an inventive thought process which results in surprising conclusions and new ways of doing things. Creative thinking can be aided by brainstorming or lateral thinking to generate ideas.