

IEEE-HKN Advanced Learning Workshop

# Effective Listening Skills

**Instructor(s)**

**Date**

**E-mail (s)**

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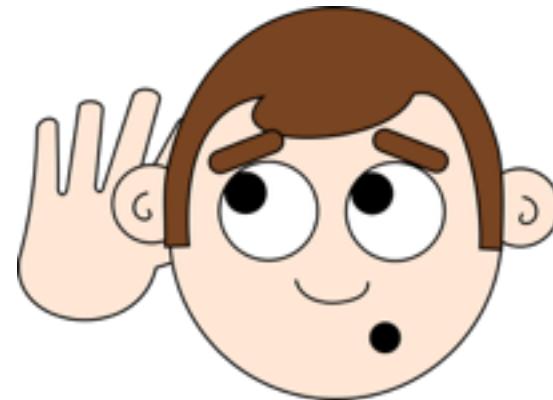
# Learning Objectives

**Goal: To learn how to listen effectively in class and in life**

- Develop students listening abilities,
- Teach basic listening strategies,
- Address difficulties faced in effective listening, and
- Expose students to different listening situations through activities.



The following saying summarizes the importance of listening: "We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak."





# What communication skill can be more basic than listening?

- We spend more time listening than any other activity except breathing, yet we listen at only a fraction of our potential. Because we believe ourselves to be good listeners we seldom make an effort to improve.





# What is Effective Listening?

- **Effective listening skills** are the ability to actively understand information provided by the speaker, and display interest in the topic discussed. It can also include providing the speaker with feedback, by asking pertinent questions so the speaker knows the message is received.
- **Effective Listening** is a skill using multiple senses to comprehend the message being sent by the speaker.



# Importance of Listening

- The importance of listening extends far beyond academic and professional settings. Understanding how to practice good communication even in your day to day life, among friends, family, and significant others, is important for a number of reasons: fostering good self-esteem, maximizing productivity, improving relationships, and even becoming a better speaker.



# Listening: as a communication skill

- Listening is one of the most important communication skills
- We probably spend more time using our Listening Skills than any other kind of skill
- Like other skills, Listening takes practice
- Real Listening is an active process
- Listening requires attention



# Characteristics of Listening

**L** = Look interested

**I** = Involve yourself by responding

**S** = Stay on target

**T** = Test your understanding

**E** = Evaluate the message

**N** = Neutralize your feelings





# 10 Steps to Effective Listening

**Step 1:** Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.

**Step 2:** Be attentive, but relaxed.

**Step 3:** Keep an open mind.

**Step 4:** Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.

**Step 5:** Don't interrupt and don't impose your "solutions."



# 10 Steps to Effective Listening (2)

**Step 6:** Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.

**Step 7:** Ask questions only to ensure understanding.

**Step 8:** Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.

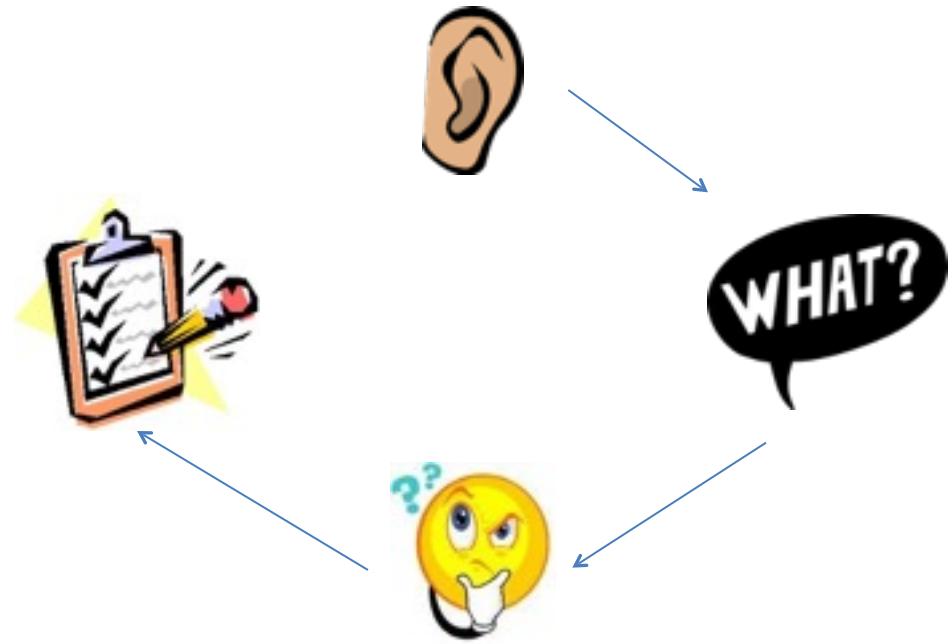
**Step 9:** Give the speaker regular feedback.

**Step 10:** Pay attention to what *isn't* said—to nonverbal cues.



# The Process of Listening can be categorized into 4 main areas

- **Hear**
- **Clarify**
- **Interpret**
- **Respond**





# Hear

To listen actively and effectively, one must be a good hearer. Hearing involves picking up the sounds of the speaker by performing these actions:

- Allow the other person to talk.
- Avoid interruptions.
- Clear one's mind of distractions.
- Encourage the speaker to elaborate on what is being said through verbal and nonverbal cues.
- Focus on the speaker; e.g., maintain eye contact.
- Listen to what is said and not how it is said.
- Model the speaker's physical behavior to encourage further talking.
- Observe nonverbal behavior as well as what is said.
- Recognize that hearing is a psychological and physiological process.
- Use open-ended questions to encourage the speaker to continue talking.



# Clarify

Often, what is said is not completely or accurately heard. Although the speaker has the responsibility to ensure that what he or she said is understood, the reality is that the listener must make some effort, too. Here are some steps to help clarify what was said:

- Ask open-end questions to probe for further detail.
- Avoid asking leading questions to get the desired comment or response.
- Avoid coming to conclusions before the speaker finishes.
- Be cognizant of the speaker's choice and application of words.
- Encourage feedback through questioning.
- Keep all of your questions pertinent to the topic.
- Look for synchronicity between what was said and body language.
- Maintain two-way communication.
- Paraphrase what was said and verify for accuracy.
- Try to separate assumptions from facts and data.



# Interpret

After clarifying what the speaker said, be ready to interpret the message. Interpretation requires ascertaining not only the credibility behind what the speaker said but also an understanding of what was said. Here are some steps for interpreting a speaker's remarks:

- Avoid taking what the speaker says at face value by looking at feelings as well as body language.
- Communicate your interpretation and verify its accuracy.
- Concentrate on facts and data, not perceptions.
- Distinguish between assumptions, and facts and data.
- Identify the main ideas.
- Pay attention to nonverbal communications to determine sincerity about what is said.



# Respond

Sometimes we have to respond to what the speaker says. Of the four steps, this one is optional. Any response will have a physiological, emotional, and psychological aspect to it. Here are some steps to respond effectively:

- Be sincere.
- Conduct follow-up, if necessary, on any resulting request by the instructor or the speaker.
- Demonstrate a physiological (e.g., body language) and psychological response.
- Exhibit empathy rather than sympathy.
- Exhibit verbal and nonverbal cues that build bridges rather than walls between the project manager and the speaker.
- Seek feedback on your response.



# Why Few People Listen Effectively

- Listening sometimes does not come easy.
- Often, the difficulty is not because people are not willing to listen but because they are unable to do so.
- Their mind does not allow them to see the total picture because they are only able to see the world in one dimension.
- This inability to listen using both sides of the brain can cause miscommunication, misinterpretation, and miscalculation.

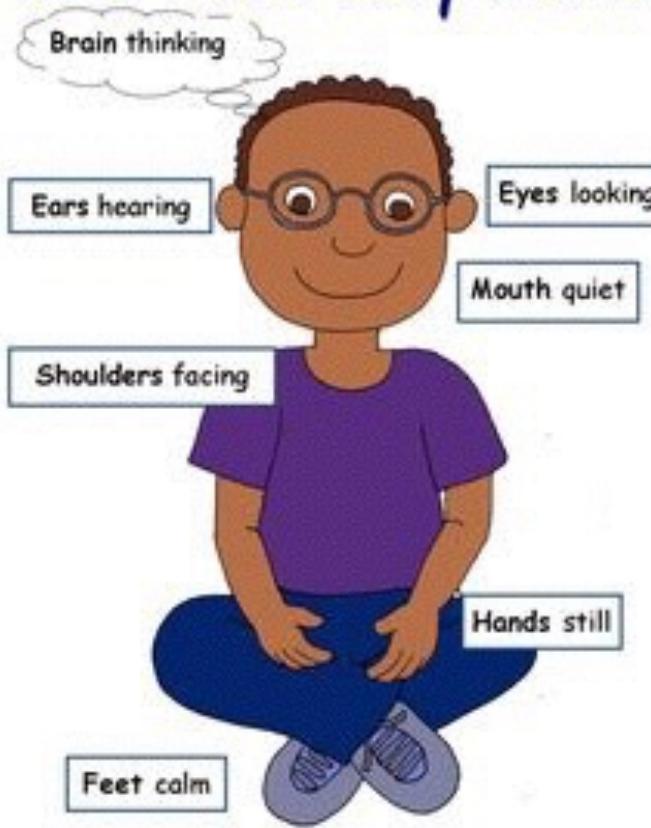


# Why Few People Listen Effectively (2)

- The result can be a listener who is unable to deal with not only the logic of a relationship but with the emotional component either.
- Hence, this asymmetrical use of the brain often results in the inability of the listener to absorb all the necessary cues from the person speaking.
- Effective and active listening requires, using both sides of the brain. Unfortunately, few people understand this fact.
- Instead, they see this skill as one reflecting the use of the right or left side of the brain.



# Be a Whole Body Listener





# Benefits of Effective Listening

- Enhances productivity
- Improves relations
- Avoids conflict
- Improves understanding
- Improves negotiation skills
- Helps you stand out
- People will appreciate it





# Must Have Soft Skills for Engineers Career Success

- While speaking, writing, and listening are everyday actions, many professionals underestimate the importance of communication skills. Engineers tend to prioritize technical skills over communication skills, not realizing that they cannot be fully effective in their jobs if they are inadequate speakers, writers, and **listeners**. Yet it is particularly in the engineering fields that effective communication skills are crucial to success.
- In a survey conducted by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers of both society members and nonmembers in engineering-related positions, respondents said they believe communication skills -- such as business writing, technical writing, public speaking, and presentation preparation -- are “crucial” for success as engineers work in and among more varied groups.
- The interaction between stakeholders, whether it is internal in an organization or external with partners or clients, is fraught with opportunities for misunderstanding. That is why **effective communication also involves listening**, which is an essential soft skill. Without actively listening to customers, clients, or project partners, problem-solving becomes much more difficult and time-consuming.



# Engineers as Effective Listeners: The Real Deal

- Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process.
- Listening is key to all effective communication, without the ability to listen effectively messages are easily misunderstood – communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.
- If there is one communication skill you should aim to master then listening is it.
- Learn more at:

[http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-  
skills.html#ixzz3uz0Gwzys](http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html#ixzz3uz0Gwzys)



# Listening Exercises

**Listening Games**



Practice listening skills, making observations with your ears, and following directions with these fun activity ideas!

inspirationlaboratories.com





## Listening Exercises: Games to Improve Attention

- Paying close attention to a speaker is the first requirement of active listening. Maintaining attention isn't easy, especially when the speaker or topic isn't interesting. Improve attention skills with games that require players to observe and remember details. Matching games -- like those that require players to remember the location of concealed images or find discrepancies between identical pictures -- build attentiveness. Make your own listening game out of reading a descriptive excerpt to players. Ask the players to list as many specific details as they remember, such as colors, dates, and names. The player who can accurately recall the greatest number of details wins.



# Listening Exercises: Concentration Games

- Even when a college student consciously pays attention when listening, outside distractions can break his concentration. Memory games improve concentration skills by requiring players to recall images, sequences and patterns. To play a listening-based memory game among a group of students, begin a story and then instruct the group to take turns adding to the story. For example, start with, "I'm going on vacation and I'm bringing my bathing suit." The first player to your right repeats the sentence and adds an item to the list. Continue until someone breaks the order.



# Listening Exercises: Additional Resources

- [http://blog.trainerswarehouse.com/  
communication-and-listening-exercises/](http://blog.trainerswarehouse.com/communication-and-listening-exercises/)
- <https://blog.udemy.com/listening-skills-exercises/>



# Summary

- Spend more time listening, and less time talking.
- Find interest in the other person.
- A Good listener keeps the communication path open.
- Read between the lines, a message has both content (words) and feelings.
- Take notes, we think faster than we talk.
- Assume the proper stance, assuming the stance of an attentive listener can actually improve listening.
- Beware of your filters, people have different filters based on their cultures, upbringing and genders. Men and women often have different kinds of filters that can cause listening problems.





# Questions





# Contact Information

***List the speakers/presenters and provide contact information (email)***





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- [http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-  
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2012/11/09/10-steps-to-effective-listening/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/womensmedia/2012/11/09/10-steps-to-effective-listening/)



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- <http://www.educationcorner.com/listening-skills.html>
- <http://blog.readytomanage.com/top-20-best-books-on-communication-and-listening/>
- <http://www.engineering.com/Jobs/JobArticles/ArticleID/5630/Which-Communication-Skill-Is-Most-Important.aspx>



# Suggested Readings

- Power Listening: Mastering the Most Critical Business Skill of All, by Bernard T. Ferrari, 2012
- Active Listening 101: How to Turn Down Your Volume to Turn Up Your Communication Skills Kindle Edition, by Emilia Hardman
- The Lost Art of Listening, Second Edition: How Learning to Listen Can Improve Relationships Kindle Edition, by Michael P. Nichols
- <http://www.wolaver.org/teaching/listeningskills.htm>
- <http://www.slideshare.net/smileyriaz/listening-skills-11545165>